FAREWELL TO AN EXPERIENCED HAND

In December last year, after more than 40 years at sea, captain Cees Koops packed his suitcase onboard the tug Simoon, in Malmo, handed over to captain Jan van Driel, and began a well-earned retirement.

Cees Koops has sailed for 13 years, eight of which as a Master, and then began a 22-year spell with ITC, all in command of one of the familiar S-Wind Class tugs. Put together, the voyages that Cees Koops has sailed in his career, which has left a deep impression on him, would have taken him around the world very many times. He started his tug career with Wijsmuller and served more than 15 years with the company, before moving on to ITC.

One of the most poignant events in his career, which has left a deep impression on him, was when he was instrumental in saving the lives of 87 Vietnamese refugees from a small boat in the South China Sea. During a towage the mate spotted a 15-metre boat carrying an SOS sign. Unhesitatingly, Cees Koops pulled alongside the boat and took the refugees, the youngest less than three months old, on board and to safety. He and his wife Henny still have a regular and warm contact with some of the refugees.

Throughout his successful career, Cees Koops has been supported by his wife to whom he pays a heartfelt tribute. “She fully accepted that my work was of utmost importance to him. When our two children had grown up, Henny often joined me on board the tugs, not only for short mobilisation trips, but also during a 72-day Pacific voyage.

Although he can now fast and relax, Cees Koops still keeps himself in good physical condition for his two favourite pastimes: sailing and skiing. For a couple of weeks, each year, he and his grandchildren, who are now an integral part of his life, take a trip to the continent. His retirement is perhaps best put: “I would like to do some paid work”.

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Of course, the life of a tug captain is not all plain sailing and there have been problems of broken towes and bad weather. Recently Cees Koops showed his exceptional seamanship skills when a large barge, loaded with two fully erected container cranes, broke loose near the South African coast shortly before arriving in Durban. Despite extreme weather conditions, the towage connection was re-established only miles from the coast and disaster was averted.

During another barge tow with a large jacket, the barge became badly holed and had water on board. With part of the deck awash, Cees Koops safely made it to the port.

But he has one major disappointment. “It would have been the highlight of my career”, says Koops, “if we could have saved the Arctic Lauro”. He got a fine on board the big Dutch-built cruise liner, but saw the former Willem Ruys sunk after some explosions. “The only thing left to do was cutting the tow wire. There was no time left”.

The fuel onboard the casualty was pumped into the spare buoyant tank of the ‘Arctic Lauro’ whilst the cargo of 1600 tons bitumen onboard the vessel was transferred to the chartered off-taking tanker ‘Blitz Gulf’. Small pontoon were hired locally to prevent cargo discharge hoses from becoming damaged and wet to the extent that the bitumen would become unprocessable. Cargo discharge was completed May 2nd after which ‘Arctic Lauro’ rigged a towing connection and the casualty was refloated some day at 1000 local. The ‘Arctic Lauro’ casualty was towed to Djibouti anchorage, where the vessel was safely rehandled to her Owners on May 6th.
Needing the fastest possible transit for FPSO 'Saga Varg' from the building yard Keppel Fels in Singapore to Stavanger, Mr Chan Hong Hei, manager of Keppel Fels, contracted the two tugs 'Smit Singapore' and 'Simoon' to carry out the job.

Despite strong winds near Socotra, the 8800 miles voyage was completed at an average speed of 190 miles a day. Although employed by different companies, 'Simoon' master Capt Gerrit Verweij enjoyed an excellent cooperation with his colleague onboard 'Smit Singapore'. During the towage, a full complement was onboard the 'Saga Varg' to prepare the vessel for the 80-90 meter water at Varg field.

The reservoir, owned by Saga Petroleum and Statoil and operated by Saga, lies at a depth of 2700 - 2900 meters and reserves are estimated at 35 million barrels. The field is developed with an unmanned wellhead platform tied back to the 'Saga Varg' production ship which processes and stores oil before transfer to shuttle tankers. The vessel has a daily capacity of 57,000 barrels of oil and 1.5 million meters of gas. The total oil storage capacity of the 'Saga Varg' is 470,000 barrels.

Owned by Elf Camaroun, the 284 m x 44 m 'Serepca' had 400 tons of barnacles removed from its hull, while its life extension programme included the renewal of about 830 tons of steel in the cargo tanks. The Lisnave job also involved refurbishing vent and dropping lines as well as scraping, sandblasting and painting.

Without the marine growth on the tow and the counter currents experienced on the journey to Lisbon two tugs easily made eight knots during the tow to West Africa. On sailing the correct trim had to be established to minimise sheering. An ITC tow master on the vessel facilitated easy communication.

The masters of 'Suhaili' and 'Sirocco' carefully manoeuvred the vessel alongside the tripod placed in the field. The delicate operation of re-anchoring the vessel between the existing pipelines was expertly handled by Tom Dams and his team.

Eight months after the ITC tugs 'Simoon' and 'Shamal' originally took the vessel in tow for Lisbon, the 137,160 dwt 'Serepca 1' was in operation again and ready for the next seven years. Elf France managers, Jean-Pierre Basili and Jean-Paul Quillevere, were completely satisfied with the operation.

'Serepca 1' anchored again on location.
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The 'Elizabeth' was employed on a 7-day, 24-hour basis with two full crews continuously available for 12-hour shifts. The multipurpose vessel assisted the cutter dredger 'Discovery Bay' and suction dredger 'Volvox Delta'. The shoalbuster is used for towing the cutter dredger as well as towage and connecting floating pipelines. The A-frame of the 'Elizabeth' is ideal for shifting the anchors of the dredgers and to handle the 10-ton plough used for seabed levelling. Survey and supply work were also regular jobs for the crew.

Said Skipper Erik Visser: “Just before New Year we went to assist a fishing vessel some 15 miles from Onslow. The vessel was making water so we transferred pumps and towed the vessel safely back to Onslow. Working conditions aboard are rather exposed and we were facing heavy swell and three times we had to stop working because of passing cyclones. It went a long way towards proving the excellent sea-keeping behaviour of the vessel.”

Local union rules made it compulsory to employ Australians in addition to the usual full Dutch crew of the vessel. The off-shift was accommodated onshore.

Dredged spoil was pumped through a scandia floating pipeline and additional rubicons to a designated dump area. The 'Elizabeth' proved to be an ideal vessel for repairs and maintenance of the floating pipelines. With its 65 tons hydraulic crane, the vessel could take the pipelines over the side on the workdeck.

The vessel and its crew again proved their versatile capabilities to Van Cord-ACZ’s project manager Floor van Beek. Their performance was awarded with another contract by Van Cord-ACZ for which the ‘Elizabeth’ proceeded to Cochin/India.
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SABLE ISLAND
The tug ‘Sirocco’ was chartered by Saipem UK Ltd for a Corpus Christi - Sable Island - Morgan City round trip with barge ‘CMC 450-11’. Outward bound the barge carried modules for the Sable Offshore Energy Project. At location the modules were lifted from the barge by the giant crane barge ‘Micoperi 7000’. The SOEP project was supervised by Mr Lorenzo Cella and Mr Alan Foulger.

SABLE CAYE'S FIRST VISIT TO ROTTERDAM
Last February ITC’s tug ‘Sable Cape’ entered the port of Rotterdam for the first time, completing the towage of European Marine Contractors’ trenching barge ‘Bar 331’, which was contracted through Seascope Offshore Ltd of London.

The 120 meter long trenching barge was taken in tow at Singapore on 10 December 1998, for the 8230 mile voyage via the Suez Canal to Europe. Averaging 152 miles a day the Canal was reached in mid-January. After a delay caused by thick fog, the tow, under Captain Novero, was allowed through the Canal into the Mediterranean for the final stretch.

The ‘Bar 331’ was contracted for trenching work in connection with Statoil’s Europipe 2 project. Following the completion of the trench, the pipe is being laid by ‘Solitaire’ and ‘Semac 1’. The pipeline through which gas is transported, leads from Karsto in Norway to Emden in Germany. Half is for use in the German market while the rest is exported to European markets.

After redeelivery of the ‘BAR 331’, the tug spent a two weeks period with HVO to bring the vessel up to ITC standards. After leaving for Land’s End salvage station, the tug chalked up its first ITC salvage job. ‘Sable Cape’ made a rendezvous with the ‘Cast Elk’ experiencing rudder problems in the North Atlantic and escorted the fully loaded container vessel to Zeebrugge.

NORAM 253
In a joint venture with Anchor Marine Transportation Ltd, of Farnham in the UK, the tug ‘Solano’ was contracted by the Houston-based SAM Offshore, to transport mat supported jack-up rig ‘Noram 253’ from Salvador to Galveston.

AMT’s John Evans supervised the loading and sea-fastening of the rig aboard the barge ‘AMT Trader’, after which the ‘Solano’ towed the loaded barge to Galveston. Favourable currents assisted in a smooth passage and the rig was safely delivered.

SEAREX XI
ITC was contracted by Sedco Forex Singapore, through Jim Strover of High Seas Maritime Inc, Houston, to tow drill tender ‘Searex XI’ from Maracaibo via the Panama Canal to Singapore.

Captain Novero started the towage with ‘Solano’ and Captain Charlie Jagolino’s ‘Sable Cape’ took over in mid-Pacific for the completion of the final stretch. Both ITC tugs averaged eight knots. On 24 October Sedco Forex’s Far East manager, Colin Nelson, welcomed the tender at his home base.

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**SMIT AMERICAS**

While waiting for the barge 'CMC 450-11' to be ready for the round trip voyage, the tug 'Sirocco' was contracted by Smi Americas Inc for consecutive salvage jobs. The tug went to the assistance of jack-up barge 'Gulf Island V' and barge 'HPL-111'. The jack-up barge had sunk during extremely bad weather conditions and 'Sirocco' put divers on the wreck to investigate salvage prospects. The barge 'HPL-111' was safely delivered.

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KIGORIA'S SUBMARINE CABLE SERVICE

The growth in the global demand for Internet and Information technology has led to an urgent need for both cost-effective and sophisticated submarine cable installations and protection solutions to minimise damage to the cable systems.

This explosion in demand is being met by laying fibre optic cables which have capacities of many tens of gigabits. One of the leading companies which carries out this work is the Houston-based Oceaneering International Inc.

Under the command of Dutch ITC masters, Gerrit Verweij and G.J. Dijkdrenth, the vessel was employed for grappling, trenching, cable-laying and site survey work employing one of Oceaneering’s ROVs.

The Phoenix is Oceaneering’s latest generation of mid-depth cable maintenance vehicles and was developed and built by Oceaneering. The Philippine crew overcame icy condition to complete the task after which the ‘Kigoria’ went off-shore California for a short stint performing the same duties. The ‘Kigoria’ has been re-chartered by Oceaneering for follow-up jobs near Oregon and Whittier.

The Phoenix Remotely Operated Vehicle (ROV) is a reliable cable maintenance system capable of post-lay inspection, burial, cable cutting and retrieval and other underwater manipulation tasks to 2,000 meters of water depth and includes topside support systems. Phoenix is also outfitted with a state-of-the-art cable location and tracking system and a jetting skid for post-burial and unburial services. The Phoenix is Oceaneering’s mid-depth cable maintenance vehicles and was developed and built by Oceaneering.

Joe Collada copes with the snow.

The ROV is put overboard.
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After almost 30 years of service with the British, Dutch and Argentinean navies, the former flagship of the Royal Dutch Navy, the aircraft carrier Hr Ms ‘Karel Doorman’, was towed by the ITC tug ‘Suhaili’ to its final destination at Alang.

The carrier was built at Cammel Laird’s Birkenhead shipyard and entered service with the Royal Navy on 17 January 1945 as HMS ‘Venerable’. The only war service the carrier saw was off Hong Kong in August 1945.

In April 1948, the ship was bought by the Royal Dutch Navy as flagship of Squadron 5. During the hostilities between the Dutch and Indonesia when the latter wanted Dutch New Guinea to become part of Indonesia, the vessel was in the area. The intervention of the United States prevented the ‘Karel Doorman’ becoming involved. It undertook a number of ‘showing the flag’ voyages until, in April 1968, a serious fire in the engine room brought an end to its service. It was considered that the cost of repairs made continual service uneconomic. The vessel was sold, in 1969, to the Argentinean navy who re-named it ‘Veinticinco de Mayo’. Also as flagship of the Argentine navy, the vessel was hardly put into action. Even during the Falkland war, the ‘Veinticinco de Mayo’ was kept in port. The vessel was too slow and therefore too vulnerable for modern warfare.

Connecting up outside Bahia Blanca.
After 30 years of service for the Argentinean navy the ship was sent to the Alang breakers by ‘Suhaili’. Captain Arano and his crew covered the 8,500 nautical mile journey in 45 non-stop days averaging 190 miles a day. The transport was carried out for Wirana Singapore through Barry Smith of Chart Shipping UK.

Kigoria’s Submarine Cable Service

Oceanic engineering has chartered the ITC-managed ‘Kigoria’ to assist in the installation and burial of the Whittier-Valdez cable section of the Alaska United Fiber Optic Cable System.

This 2330 mile cable system will unite Alaska’s major cities with a communications system of unprecedented reliability and capacity to meet current and present needs. The cable will connect the cities of Anchorage and Seattle via a subsea route with an extension to Fairbanks via Whittier and Valdez. As demand increases capacity can be quadrupled to support almost 130,000 simultaneous clear channel voice or data circuits.

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FINAL VOYAGE

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Alongside quay at Karachi Blanca.

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NEW PREMISES

After being established in a stately building in Haarlem for some 23 years, ITC has now moved to new headquarters in a former country estate at Heemstede, just south of Haarlem. Called ‘Berkenrode’ it was, at one time, the home of the well-known Dutch writer Godfried Bomans. ITC occupy spacious and comfortable offices located along a marbled floored hallway.

ITC’s 25-YEAR HISTORY

The long awaited book on the 25-year history of ITC, by Dutch maritime writer Henk de Winde, was launched recently at a well-attended reception with many former employees present. The first copy was presented to Captain Henry F. Tschudi who, in 1973, put the management of T & E tugs and barges into the hands of Messrs Jonkman and Burghoudt, thus laying the foundation of ITC. The dual language book, in Dutch and English, describes the 25 years of ITC in a series of anecdotes told to the writer by ITC masters and staff. It is a book of almost 350 pages with over 250 photographs, some in full colour. The book is on sale in Dutch bookshops, through Lekko magazine and from the Dutch National Towage Museum at Maassluis. Copies will be presented by ITC to a number of people in appreciation of their support over the years.

ITC TUGS IN MADURODAM

This spring our tug ‘Solano’ will be operating in the port of Madurodam - but don’t start looking on a map to find out where this is. It does not exist!! Madurodam is, in fact, a small scale miniature town situated near The Hague. On a 1:25 scale visitors can see Holland in a 'bird's-eye' view with buildings, churches and landscapes reconstructed in the smallest detail. The Haarlem based Modelboot Club constructed several tugs of the S-Wind Class and put the tug ‘Solano’ at work in Netherlands’ smallest port.
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CARIBBEAN SHUTTLE

In October 1998, the ITC tug 'Sandy Cape' was linked up with barge 'AMT Trade' for three Caribbean round-trips for Schlumberger-Sedco Forex of Venezuela. During the voyages a total of three drill barges, a lift boat and six cargo barges were transported from United States Gulf ports to Lake Maracaibo.

Ribbing layout and sea-fastenings designed by Dutch-based Marine Heavy Lift Partners, were installed with Gulf Copper Manufacturing at Port Arthur under the supervision of AMT’s John Evans who had operational control of the total project.

The Prisa project consists of a 10-year contract between state oil PDVSA and Schlumberger. The barges will work initially on three fields: La Salina, Langunillas and Bachaquero. These fields are well established producers on the east side of Lake Maracaibo.

The load-out operations were conducted in the Taylor Bayou Basin at Port Arthur. Captain Ray Abagatnan took the first cargo across and returned with the ... job, which was carried out by ITC/AMT on a joint-venture basis, was obtained through High Seas Maritime Services, Houston.

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BOW SECTION

Following an extensive general maintenance programme the tug 'Sirocco' sailed from Ulsund to tow a 86 m x 42 m newly-built bow section from Ferrol to Cadiz. Mr Joaquin Nieto, of Vapores Guardiaz Andalusia SA of Cadiz, was instrumental in securing the towage to Cadiz where the bow section was fitted to the 'Navion Hispania' to make it a complete vessel again.

A CONVERSION JOB COMPLETED

Early April the barge 'Seacamel 393-12' was redelivered by charterers Lamprell Offshore at the completion of an 11-month contract for Mansar Offshore of Qatar. The contract included the conversion of the barge-accommodated landing craft 'Meranti 38' into the jack-up work barge 'Leen'. Together with Marine Heavy Lift Partners, ITC engineered and supervised the loading and discharge operation at Jebel Ali. The contract was obtained through Tony Liverton of Bibby Line Ltd at Dubai.

Early in January 1999, the tug 'Sirocco' under the command of Captain Ruben Gajo, left Rotterdam with launch barge 'Intermac 600' in tow. The barge was loaded with two large stingers and some additional equipment.

The old saying 'a calm comes before a storm' proved to be true in the case of the subsequent voyage. While favourable weather made the trip through the Channel swift and pleasant, it deteriorated rapidly after that and for over 20 days the crew continually battled Force 7 winds and 5-meter seas. It improved during the final part of the voyage in the lower latitudes. The barge was redelivered at Morgan City to J. Ray McDermott.
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CARIBBEAN SHUTTLE

In October 1998, the ITC tug ‘Sandy Cape’ was linked up with barge ‘AMT Trade’ for three Caribbean round-trips for Schlumberger-Sedco Forex of Venezuela. During the voyage a total of three drill barges, a lift boat and six cargo barges were transported from United States Gulf ports to Lake Maracaibo.

Ribbing layout and sea-fastenings designed by Dutch-based Marine Heavy Lift Partners, were installed with Gulf Copper Manufacturing at Port Arthur under the supervision of AMT’s John Evans who had operational control of the total project.

The Prisa project consists of a 10-year contract between state oil PDVSA and Schlumberger. The barges will work initially on three fields: La Salina, Langunillas and Bachaquero. These fields are well established producers on the east side of Lake Maracaibo.

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The old saying ‘a calm comes before a storm’ proved to be true in the case of the subsequent voyage. While favourable weather made the trip through the Channel swift and pleasant, it deteriorated rapidly after that and for over 20 days the crew continually battled Force 7 winds and 5-meter seas. It improved during the final part of the voyage in the lower latitudes. The barge was redelivered at Morgan City to J. Ray McDermott.

BOW SECTION

Following an extensive general maintenance programme the tug ‘Sirocco’ sailed from Ulsfjorden to tow a 86 m x 42 m newly-built bow section from Ferrol to Cadiz. Mr Joaquin Nieto, of Vapores Guardiaz Andalucia SA of Cadiz, was instrumental in securing the towing to Cadiz where the bow section was fitted to the ‘Navion Hispania’ to make it a complete vessel again.

A CONVERSION JOB COMPLETED

Early April the barge ‘Seacamel 393-12’ was redelivered by owners Lamprell Offshore after completion of an 11-month contract for Mansar Offshore of Qatar. The contract included the conversion of the barge-accommodated landing craft ‘Meranti 38’ into the jack-up work barge ‘Loan’. Together with Marine Heavy Lift Partners, ITC engineered and supervised the loading and discharge operation at Jebel Ali. The contract was obtained through Tony Liverton of Bibby Line Ltd at Dubai.

BATTLING THE NORTH ATLANTIC WINTER

Early in January 1999, the tug ‘Sirocco’ under the command of Captain Ruben Gajo, left Rotterdam with launch barge ‘Intermac 600’ in tow. The barge was loaded with two large stingers and some additional equipment.

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A long and notable career began with a scholarship with the former Dutch Koninklijke Pakketvaart Mij. He sailed with Wijnmuller for 13 years, eight of which as a Master, and then began a 22-year spell with ITC, all in command of one of the famous S-Word Class tugs.

One of the most poignant events in his career, which has left a deep impression on him, was when he was instrumental in saving the lives of 87 Vietnamese refugees from a small boat in the South China Sea. During a towage the mates spotted a 15-metre boat carrying an SOS sign. Unhesitatingly, Cees Koops pulled alongside the boat and took the refugees, the youngest less than three months old, on board and to safety. He and his wife Henny still have a regular and warm contact with some of the refugees.

Of course, the life of a tug captain is not all plain sailing and there have been problems of broken tows and bad weather. Recently Cees Koops showed his exceptional seamanship skills when a large barge, loaded with two fully erected container cranes, broke loose near the South African coast shortly before arriving in Durban. Despite extreme weather conditions, the towage connection was re-established only miles from the coast and disaster was averted.

During another barge tow with a large jacket, the barge became badly holed and took water on board. With part of the deck awash, Cees Koops safely made it to the port.

But he has one major disappointment. "It would have been the highlight of my career," says Koops, "if we could have saved the Ashhile Laura". He got a fine boarding the big Dutch-built cruise liner, but saw the former Willem Ruys sink after some explosions. "The only thing left to do was cutting the tow wire. There was no time left".

Throughout his successful career, Cees Koops has been supported by his wife to whom he pays a heartfelt tribute. "She fully accepted that my work was of utmost importance to him. When our two children had grown up Henny often joined me onboard the tugs, not only for short mobilisation trips, but also during a 72-day Pacific voyage."

Although he can now last and relax, Cees Koops still keeps himself in good physical condition for his two favourite pastimes - skiing, which he does in the Alps, and diving. "I would like to do some old work", he says.

Put together, the voyages that Cees Koops has sailed in, would have taken him around the world very many times. He entered the long distance record books when he was instrumental in saving the lives of 87 Vietnamese refugees from a small boat in the South China Sea. During a towage the mates spotted a 15-metre boat carrying an SOS sign. Unhesitatingly, Cees Koops pulled alongside the boat and took the refugees, the youngest less than three months old, on board and to safety. He and his wife Henny still have a regular and warm contact with some of the refugees.

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A major co-operation agreement between ITC, with its fleet of big ocean tugs, and Titan Maritime Industries USA, and its mobile teams of experienced salvage masters, engineers and divers with specialized salvage equipment, has been announced.

The fuel embarked on the casualty was pumped into the spare bunkertanks of ‘Suhaili’ whilst the cargo of 1600 tons bitumen onboard the vessel was transferred to the charterer’s own tanker ‘Blitz Gulf’. Small pontoons were hired locally to prevent cargo discharge hoses from becoming damaged and wet to the extent that the bitumen would become unpalatable. Cargo discharge was completed May 2nd after which ‘Suhaili’ rigged a towing connection and the casualty was refloated some day at 1000 local. The ‘Arabian Pride’ casualty was towed to Djibouti anchorage, where the vessel was wholly redelivered to her Owners on May 6th.