

Canadian Arctic response needs reform

STEP BY STEP



A spectator at the Africville Museum Baptist church grounds takes a photo of the Bedford Basin as the float test for the Future HMCS Harry DeWolf gets underway Saturday afternoon. **ERIC WYNNE ■ THE CHRONICLE HERALD**

Canada's newest navy vessel, Future HMCS Harry DeWolf, enters the water

PETER ZIOBROWSKI

A delicate ballet of steel and water played out on Halifax Harbour over the weekend, as the first Arctic Offshore Patrol Vessel, the Future HMCS Harry DeWolf entered the water for the first time. The launch was significant for a number of reasons. The

launch of AOPS1 — the name the DeWolf will carry until it is commissioned — was the first to take place at the Halifax Shipyard since it was rebuilt. AOPS1 is also not just the first in a new class of ship, but the first of a new type of vessel, not operated by the navy in more than 50 years. This is also the first launch to take place away from the shipyard.

When the fog cleared mid-morning Saturday, the future HMCS Harry DeWolf sat on a barge in the Bedford Basin, surrounded by support vessels and curious onlookers both on land and at sea. From Seaview park to the China Town Restaurant, parking lots were full of people with cameras and binoculars. They were about to see something

different.

Where previously the newly finished vessel would seem to slide down the now-retired launching ways into the water with splash, this would be a slower and more involved endeavor.

Since its formation as Halifax

CONTINUED ON A10

FROM PAGE A1: HMCS DEWOLF

shipyard in 1918, the shipyard had launched 102 vessels from a traditional launching way at the south end of the yard. Newly built ships would slide stern first down a gentle slope on a cradle and into the water, floating free once the hull's buoyancy took effect. The last vessel to be launched this way was the Coast Guard mid-shore patrol vessel CCGS Captain Goddard M.S.M. in 2014. It went into the water as the old assembly hall was being taken down behind it to make room for the shipyard modernization.

The launch of AOPSI was actually a three-day process.

It began Thursday, when the huge Boa Barge 37 was moved into place off Pier 8, where the new navy vessel has spent the last year after the three mega blocks that make it up were rolled out of the assembly hall and joined. A ship under construction is always difficult to name. Until it's commissioned into the navy, it's known as the Future HMCS Harry DeWolf or by its class and hull number, AOPSI.

On Friday morning, AOPSI was loaded aboard the semi-submersible barge, which is partially sunk to allow vessels to float on and off of it. Semi-submersible vessels often bring drill rigs, or other vessels into and out of Halifax harbor. In all, it took four hours to move AOPSI its own length back-

wards onto the barge.

Loading a 6,615-tonne ship onto a floating platform in tidal waters is a delicate process. Not only does the barge need to be ballasted properly to sit level with the pier and allow a smooth transfer, both the tide and the uneven loading of the barge caused by the ship being moved onto it requires water to be very carefully pumped around the Boa Barge 37's 26 tanks to keep the barge properly oriented. Mistakes with ballast control could have caused the ship to topple into the water, or even for the barge to sink. This first step of the launching was complete by 1 p.m. Friday, leaving the rest of the day for other preparations.

The launching itself began at

4:30 a.m. Saturday, with Atlantic Towing's tugs Atlantic Oak, Atlantic Bear, and Spitfire III moving the Boa Barge 37 to the basin. The barge left the shipyard around 7:30 a.m. and under cover of thick fog reached the launching location in the basin just over an hour later.

The launching location has a water depth of just over nearly 30 metres, leaving enough room for the barge to sink itself and allow AOPSI to float free. Over the course of the day, the barge slowly sunk, with the new vessel afloat just before 5 p.m.

The next step was a tow back to the shipyard.

Semi-submersible operations are slow but also potentially risky. The Halifax Shipyards own Scotia

Dock II sank while it was submerging to dock the tug Stevens Breaker in 2010, and spent several months on the bottom before it was successfully raised. The Scotia Dock II was eventually declared a loss and sold for scrap.

The Boa Barge 37 was refloated overnight Saturday, and was due to move back to the shipyard Sunday.

Within the next few weeks, the second Arctic Offshore Patrol Ship, to be named HMCS Margaret Brooke, will take its final form, as the three mega blocks that make it up are rolled out onto Pier 8 and joined. If timelines go as planned, we should see the second launching in June of next year.

HALIFAX HARBOUR

The Alliance drops one of its Halifax calls

SHIPPING NEWS

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Peter Ziobrowski has been reporting on the comings and goings in Halifax Harbour online since 2008.

The container shipping business is in a constant state of change, with shipping lines looking to find every efficiency in order to stay profitable. Routes get rejigged, and alliances form and change as various smaller carriers are acquired. Recently announced changes by The Alliance and ZIM affect both Halifax terminals.

The Alliance, consisting of shipping lines Hapag-Lloyd, ONE and Yang Ming, has dropped Halifax and Livorno from its AL6 Mediterranean service.

This service currently uses five panamax ships and calls at Fairview Cove. The reconfigured AL6 will be combined with the Oceans Alliance (CMA-CGM/COSCO/OOCL) Amerigo Service, and use six 8,000 20-foot-equivalent-unit vessels.

The ability of the port to handle vessels of this size at Fairview Cove may have been part of the decision to cancel the Halifax call. Eight-thousand TEU vessels are large enough that reliably passing under the bridges becomes problematic, especially on west bound legs when ships are lightly loaded with empty containers.

Israel-based ZIM typically has operated alone, outside of alliances. Faced with large losses, ZIM recently has begun chartering container slots on other carriers ships and joining alliances to cut operating costs. ZIM's ZCA service, which already calls in Halifax, will pick up the Livorno stop east from AL6.

The ZCA service currently serves many of the same ports that are covered by the AL6 service, and it appears The Alliance is now marketing ZCA itself as AL7, so it's likely traffic for Hali-



The Fairview Cove container terminal. Shipping routes are being rejigged, and alliances form and change as various smaller carriers are acquired. Recently, the Alliance and ZIM separately announced changes, which will affect both Halifax terminals. **FILE**

fax will simply change services and the port won't actually see a decline in traffic as a result.

Since my column last week on the coasting trade, I have become aware of the Duzgit Endeavour — a Turkish registered products tanker. Built in 2013 in Turkey, the ship was time-chartered to Quebec based Petro-Nav and was permitted to join the coasting trade.

A time charter sees Petro-Nav directing the movements of the ship, while paying the vessel owner a day rate for ship and crew covering the ships port and fuel expenses. The ship's Turkish owner remains responsible for management of the vessel.

The ship received a Port State control inspection in Quebec City on Aug. 8. While no deficiencies in the ship itself were noted — issues with labour standards were reported.

I have since learned that the crew has not been paid since the first of July, and two members

have not been returned home despite their contracts having ended.

The ship has been sailing out of Montreal, carrying refined product to Sydney, Corner Brook, N.L., and Oakville, Ont.

Port State inspections are coordinated by an agreement known as the Paris MOU, which is administered by a group of the same name. There are currently 27 state signatories to the document, which attempts to eliminate the operation of sub-standard ships through a harmonized system of port state control.

In Canada, Transport Canada inspects ships at Canadian ports with respect international safety, security and environmental standards, and that crew members have adequate living and working conditions.

A search of the database reveals no ship detentions in Halifax, and mostly minor issues. The containership ZIM Yokohama was detained for two days at Vancouver's

Delta Port over issues with crew wages in July of this year.

That ship called in Halifax the last week of September. The containership MSC Anahita was detained in Montreal this past March with 19 deficiencies, including cracks in her deck, corroded structural members, missing and broken safety equipment and inoperative machinery.

These three vessels are operating in Canadian waters. How is it safe to have an unpaid crew working beyond contract operating a tanker in confined waters? Port State inspections can address the international ships, and those admitted to the coasting trade should be held to Canadian Labour Standards.

■ The new Halifax Transit Ferry Rita Joe sailed into the harbour for the first time on the afternoon of Sept. 29. Built by A.F. Theriault in Meteghan, it is the fifth and final ferry to be built for Halifax Transit and will replace the 1987 built Woodside 1. The

ferry was launched Sept. 21. The Rita Joe will undergo trials and certification with Halifax Transit before being put into service.

■ HMCS Sackville, the Second World War corvette that normally is tied up on the waterfront, spent the summer in the shed at the Royal Canadian Navy's fleet maintenance facility. The Sackville emerged on September 28, and will re-entered the water the first of October. The work period dealt with corrosion issues, replaced thinning hull plates, and gave the ship a re-paint.

■ On Friday, the future HMCS Harry DeWolf actually becomes HMCS Harry DeWolf, when the Navy holds a naming ceremony at the Halifax Shipyards, officially assigning the name to the ship.

■ Oct. 9 is the busiest cruise day of the year, with five ships — Anthem of the Seas, Norwegian Dawn, Norwegian Jade, Aidaviva, and Seabourn Quest — bringing 13,680 passengers to the waterfront.

Survey trip no Odyssey for fast new Leeway Striker

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Halifax-based Leeway Marine could have called their new vessel Kokomo.

Like the line from the Beach Boys' song, the newly bought and named Leeway Striker will get there fast and then take it slow.

Leeway specializes in research and survey operations in inshore and midshore waters.

With a top speed of 100 kilometres per hour, the Striker will get to its destination quite a bit faster than the company's mainstay, the Leeway Odyssey, before dropping down to a fraction of that speed to do the surveying.

Leeway has been operating the Odyssey out of Halifax since Jamie Sangster started the company in 2015 after leaving the Royal Canadian Navy.

Built in 1977, the Leeway Odyssey is the former CCGS Louis M. Lauzier, which was retired and sold by the federal government when the new Hero Class mid-shore patrol vessels entered service. Leeway converted the vessel and charters it out to conduct hydrographic surveys, and other scientific work.

Leeway Marine recently bought a new vessel, the Leeway Striker, and sailed it to Halifax. Built by Riverhawk Fast Sea Frames of Tampa, Fla., the boat was built at a cost of \$10-million. Thanks to an unsuccessful bid on a U.S. Defense Department contract by



The Leeway Striker, a mid-shore surveillance and patrol vessel built by RiverHawk Fast Sea Frames, now owned by Leeway Marine, drives by HMCS Harry DeWolf at the Irving Shipyard in September.
ERIC WYNNE ■ THE CHRONICLE HERALD

its builder, the boat was available at a significant discount.

The boat is designed to be fast and stealthy. Constructed of fiberglass, its top speed is just over 100 km/h, thanks to its three diesel engines which produce over 5,000 horsepower. Given all that power, the boat is amazingly quiet. The boat is currently painted in a grey and purple digital camouflage pattern, making it hard to see, hear and pick up on radar.

When the boat arrived, there was much speculation about what it would be used for. Given the

intent behind the design, applications in law enforcement and fisheries patrol were obvious possibilities, and several naval applications come to mind as well.

Last week, Leeway Marine signed a partnership with Newfoundland's Kraken Sonar Systems. Kraken, which also maintains an office in Dartmouth, builds a synthetic aperture sonar sensor, along with towed and autonomous vehicles to operate the sensor from. The synthetic aperture sonar is used to image the sea floor, and collect bathymetric data at higher resolutions

than traditional side scan sonar systems. Kraken's technology allows it to deliver high resolution images cheaper than other imaging systems. And that's why they partnered with Leeway Marine.

Currently sonar surveys are typically conducted by large vessels which can take several days to reach a survey location, perform the survey and then return to port. These large ships have a minimum required crew, and 24 hour operations require at least double the crew of a day trip.

I spoke with Kraken's director of business development, Jeff

Bartkowski, at the recent DefSec Atlantic conference. He told me that little can be done to speed up the actual survey which is limited to about eight knots or 14km/h. Any faster and the sensor won't collect data.

Bartkowski envisions Leeway Striker enabling midshore surveys to be done in a day. Using the speed of the Leeway Striker to its advantage, considerable savings can be had by quickly getting to and from survey sites.

For comparison, Halifax to Sable Island is about 290 kilometres. The Leeway Striker makes the trip in three hours, while the Leeway Odyssey cruises at 22km/h making the voyage to Sable Island a 13-hour trip.

An added benefit of being able to complete a survey as a day trip, in a smaller vessel, is that a much smaller crew is required. By shortening the amount of time the vessel needs to be chartered to complete the survey, and reducing the number of people required, considerable savings can be had.

There will always be a need for larger research vessels. They allow for longer surveys, higher cargo capacities, and onboard lab facilities. The partnership between Leeway Marine and Kraken Sonar Systems will make advanced seabed surveys accessible to more organizations than ever before.

■ The French submarine FS Amethyst tied up at Shearwater on Oct. 5. The U.S. Coast Guard Icebreaking tug Katmai Bay sailed for Sault Ste. Marie Michigan on the 7th. The tug is headed back to the lakes after a refit.

■ The asphalt tanker Feng Huang AO, Antwerp for New York, suffered an engine room fire and was disabled on Oct. 5, southeast of Nantucket. The ship limped in to New York on the 8th under power.

HALTERM CONTAINER TERMINAL

Fillmore ignores port expansion

SHIPPING NEWS



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Halifax MP Andy Fillmore appears more interested in upholding his professional planning dogma than he is in supporting the Port of Halifax and good jobs for Haligonians.

The federal cabinet recently rejected the port's request to fund the expansion of the Halterm container terminals by extending pier 41 / 42 seaward, according to CBC.

The ask was for \$30 million, and the federal government has so far handed out over \$300 million for port improvement projects in Vancouver, Montreal and Quebec City.

In August, the Port of Halifax released a plan that would see the existing container pier at Halterm widened to 65 metres and lengthened by 135 metres seaward. The expansion would allow two container ships each capable of holding more than 10,000 twenty-foot equivalent units to tie up at once. The port presented the plan as an affordable short-term solution, and construction was scheduled to begin in the first quarter of 2019.

Scott Brison, president of the Treasury Board, told the national broadcaster that cabinet rejected the bid because of issues with truck traffic downtown and concerns that it might not be the best use of federal land. Both of these issues fall squarely in the realm of planning conversations in Halifax.

Brison also said the feds are "studying the best way for Nova Scotia to capitalize on larger container ships."

To be clear, truck traffic downtown is an issue that needs to be dealt with, but kneecapping the



Halterm Container Terminal Limited, located in Halifax. According to CBC, the federal cabinet recently rejected the port's request to fund the expansion of the Halterm container terminals. **CONTRIBUTED**

port is the not the way to do it.

Truck traffic is a percentage of overall containers handled by the port, and in recent years that has been creeping up. But expanding the pier isn't about increasing the number of containers; the port already has unused capacity.

The expansion is required to handle larger ships carriers are using. The expansion is needed to preserve existing traffic into the future. As container lines consolidate and work to find efficiencies, ports will be dropped. The Alliance, consisting of shipping lines Hapag-Lloyd, ONE and Yang

Ming, already dropped Halifax from its AL6 Mediterranean service, likely, in part, due to a move to larger vessels.

The highest and best use argument for port lands also comes out of planning circles. Many people in Halifax salivate at the thought of the development potential for the port lands. Halifax doesn't currently need the land. There are already several undeveloped lots downtown, and the Cogswell redevelopment will open up significant new land in the area.

Canada Lands, the Crown

corporation responsible for divesting federal lands, already has Shannon Park and the Ralston building downtown in the pipeline. Those holdings sit fenced off and unused.

The comment about studying the best way for Nova Scotia to capitalize on larger ships suggests the federal government is supportive of the proposals for container terminals in Sydney or Melford. These greenfield sites would need all infrastructure to be developed at considerable cost, and then service providers and shipping lines would have to be

incentivized to move operations.

Halifax's primary advantage is the speed at which the port can move containers. That advantage would be lost in Sydney or Melford, so there would be little reason for shippers to utilize one of those facilities.

Given significant federal funds for other ports and over \$90 million for road building in Nova Scotia, that the Port of Halifax expansion be rejected on grounds of land use and traffic suggests Fillmore had an influence on a decision that works against the interests of his constituency.

Efficiency drives demand for larger ships

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The Halifax waterfront used to be a very different place.

The docks were home to large transit sheds. Cargo would arrive by rail or truck, and be unloaded into the sheds where it would wait for the vessel hired to carry it to arrive. Ships could spend days or weeks in port, as cargo was loaded on board the ship, hand packed into the ship's holds, in much the same way you would pack your car's trunk to maximize the amount stuff you could carry.

A single shipment could be split up throughout a hold, maximizing cargo volume, at the expense of the amount of time to load and unload. Tramp steamers travelled between ports loading and discharging cargo. The ships operated with no fixed schedules, and picked up and discharged whatever cargo they could at intermediate stops along the way.

All that changed on April 26, 1956, when Malcom McLean picked the first shipping container off a truck and loaded it onto the deck of the Ideal-X, a converted Second World War tanker that could carry 58 33-foot containers on its deck. That first shipping container took seven minutes to load and a total of 58, the capacity of the ship, were loaded on that day with the ship sailing that evening.

The shipping container drove down the cost of handling one ton of cargo from more than \$5 to 15 cents. Containerization meant that ships could now sail on a predictable schedule. When your cargo is loaded in Europe or Asia, the shipping line can tell you what day it will arrive at the Port of Halifax with great certainty.

One of the first realizations was that if a ship could carry more shipping containers, the cost per container went down. It wasn't long before the Ideal-X was carrying 62 containers, kicking off



CMA CGM Tage, the biggest container vessel to ever call on the Port of Halifax, may be a sign of new trend of larger ships arriving in our harbour. **FILE**

shipping's ongoing race to carry more cargo more cheaply — a trend that continues to this day as container ships get bigger and bigger.

Today, shipping lines are all building bigger ships. This drives the price per container down, creating efficiencies in transport and an abundance of capacity. The price drop causes competitors to lower their rates so as to retain market share and then go searching for their own efficiencies, which perversely leads them to build even bigger ships. This adds even more capacity to the market causing the whole problem to repeat.

This constant downward pressure on shipping prices is so great that it currently costs just less than \$1,500 to ship a 40-foot container from South Korea to Canada.

To deal with low prices, the container shipping lines have undergone numerous mergers, acquisitions, alliances and bank-

ruptcies in recent years. Hanjin went bankrupt; the Japanese carriers NYK, MOL and K-line merged their container businesses to form ONE; the two Chinese container lines COSCO and CSCL merged under the COSCO banner; Hapag-Lloyd merged with CSAV, and acquired UASC; CMA- CGM acquired APL and NOL; Alliance was formed as an agreement between ONE, Yang-Ming, and Hapag-Lloyd; the Oceans Alliance was formed between OOCL, COSCO and CMA-CGM, and the 2M alliance between Maersk and MSC.

The alliances reduce competition on routes, ensure that the vessels travel more fully loaded, and reduce the capital requirements for the shipping lines.

This is causing smaller Panamax container ships to be laid up, and sold for scrap. In 2005, the largest container ship in the world was the Colombo Express, able to carry 8,749 twenty-foot equivalent units. Now 12

years later the largest container ship is almost three times as large, carrying 24,000 TEU. The Panama Canal can now take vessels up to 14,000 TEU, so it is reasonable to expect those vessels will start calling on Halifax in the near future.

Containerization in its early years left many ports behind. Those that didn't want to upgrade infrastructure were bypassed by the container lines. Felixstowe replaced Portsmouth in England, New Jersey replaced New York, Singapore grew out of nothing to become the busiest port in the world, handling a fifth of all containers shipped.

Shipping lines need cargo and ships to move in and out of ports quickly and reliably. A port that can do that will have business, and this is where the Port of Halifax excels. Containers don't dwell at the terminals waiting shipment, and can reach inland destinations faster through Halifax, than they can through closer ports.

It is unlikely that Halifax will become a mega port handling millions of TEUs per year. But our port has a good business, and with some investment can get a lot better.

In other news:

- ACL, which has been calling in Halifax for more than 50 years is consolidating North American operations in the U.S. Fifteen people were laid off from the office in Halifax, leaving a staff of six.

- ACL's ship, Atlantic Sea, spent a week tied up at Fairview cove with a ramp problem. It was repaired, and the ship sailed early Monday morning. To get back on schedule, the ship offloaded cargo bound for New York, and will bypass the port. The New York cargo will be loaded on the Atlantic Star, which sailed for New York Tuesday morning.

- The new Halifax Transit ferry Rita Joe has her dedication ceremony Friday, 2-3 p.m. at Alderney ferry terminal in Dartmouth.

Weather still a challenge, as it was in 2012

SHIPPING NEWS



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Hurricane Oscar is currently churning around in the mid Atlantic. While it presents no threat to Nova Scotia, it certainly is a risk to mariners.

Six years ago Monday, Hurricane Sandy acted out her part in the sinking of *The Bounty* off the North Carolina coast.

The *Bounty* was built in Lunenburg by Smith and Rhuland, and launched in late August 1960. The ship was commissioned by the MGM Studios for use in the 1962 film *Mutiny on the Bounty*, starring Marlon Brando.

The ship was built to be larger than the real *HMS Bounty* to accommodate the production. The studio intended to burn the ship after filming, mirroring the fate of the original *bounty* at the hands of the mutineers on Pitcairn Island. Brando intervened and the ship was spared.

Bounty spent the rest of its life working in films and as a tourist attraction. It changed hands a number of times, finally ending up owned by a non-profit foundation set up to operate the ship. While some work was done to the ship, it was in rough shape and in



The *HMS Bounty*, a 180-foot sailboat, is shown submerged in the Atlantic Ocean during hurricane Sandy approximately 145 kilometres southeast of Hatteras, N.C., Oct. 29, 2012. Of the 16-person crew, the U.S. Coast Guard rescued 14. **PETTY OFFICER 2ND CLASS TIM KUKL**

need of a major overhaul.

The *Bounty* visited Halifax in July 2012 for the Tall Ships event and was dry docked that fall, re-entering the water Oct. 17. The *Bounty*, the ship's captain Robin Wallbridge, and crew member Claudene Christian were lost Oct. 30, while attempting to sail around Hurricane Sandy to St. Petersburg, Fla.

Ultimately the investigations into the sinking cited the captain's decision to sail given the weather forecast as the major contributing factor to the incident, with the condition of the ship and the lack of experience among the crew as additional factors.

Modern weather forecasts and global positioning system naviga-

tion make it easy to forget that well into the 1950s it was all too easy for ships to succumb to hurricanes and other weather. A storm's position was only known when it was reported, and there were no reliable predictions for the path of the storm. Navigation was still largely dependent on using a sextant to determine where you were with any degree of accuracy, and that required being able to see objects in the sky.

Despite the massive technological improvements, weather can still play havoc with ships — the crew of the schooner *Sorca* had to be rescued in 2017 after the boat began taking on water in heavy swells sailing from Lunenburg for

Bermuda. The search and rescue techs of the Canadian Armed Forces, and the boat crews of the Canadian Coast Guard, work tirelessly to search for and rescue those in need. All too often their work goes unnoticed, but they deserve our support and thanks.

In other weather and rescue related news:

■ The cruise ship *Insignia* was due for an afternoon stop in Halifax on Sunday. Weather kept the ship from boarding a pilot, and the *Insignia* finally made it into the harbour at 7:30 p.m. Sunday, three hours after it was scheduled to have departed. The ship tied up, took on fuel, and then sailed at 3 a.m. for Quebec City, skipping the call in Sydney.

■ Weather caused several other delays with ships being unable to enter or exit the harbour due to conditions at the pilot station off Chebucto Head. *Dalian Express* and *Horizon Star* spent Sunday tied up at Fairview Cove.

■ Two new Canadian Coast Guard lifeboats, the CCGS McIntyre Bay, and CCGS Pachena Bay, are currently at the Canadian Coast Guard base in Dartmouth. Despite complaints from fisherman in southwest Nova Scotia, about the age of the rescue craft in their area, the boats are intended to be stationed in British Columbia. I have been told the lifeboats will be travelling as deck cargo on the *Atlantic Raven* — an offshore supply vessel that was awarded a multi-year standby towing contract for the coast guard in B.C.

■ The federal government has purchased 12 of the new Bay-class boats. The coast guard currently employs 10 Arun-class boats modelled on the U.K.'s Royal National Lifeboat Institution design, and 36 Cape-class lifeboats, which are based on the U.S. Coast Guard's 14-metre motor lifeboat. The current boats were all built in the '90s.

■ The Royal Fleet Auxiliary's *Tidespring*, a supply ship of the U.K.'s Royal Navy is in the midst of a port visit. The ship arrived Friday, and is tied up next to the Halifax Casino.

■ The U.K.'s Royal Navy's new aircraft carrier is conducting trials with the F-35 off the U.S. coast, recently spending a week in New York. Hopefully we will get a port visit.

Atlantic Towing gets contract out west

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Recently, fisherman in south-west Nova Scotia expressed concern that two newly built coast guard life boats were heading to the West Coast, when the lifeboats serving their communities were old and in need of replacement as well.

The CCGS McIntyre Bay and CCGS Pachena Bay were delivered to the coast guard in Halifax by their builder in Quebec, and this week they sailed for Saint John, N.B. Once in Saint John, they will be loaded aboard the Atlantic Raven, which will be taking the two lifeboats west.

The Atlantic Raven will be joining the Atlantic Eagle, which arrived in British Columbia this week, to serve as emergency towing vessels. A three-year contract, with seven one-year options, was awarded in August to Irving-owned Atlantic Towing as part of the federal government's Oceans Protection Plan. The ships will be crewed and operated by Atlantic Towing but will operate under the direction of the coast guard.

While the contract is a win for an East Coast company in a new, non-traditional market, questions are being raised on the West Coast.

Martin Luduc, a resident of British Columbia and marine engineer with considerable experience working with tugs, said he feels the tugs Atlantic Eagle and Raven are unsuitable for the B.C. coast. Luduc describes the area as an "inlet laden coast, filled with tight passages and tricky shoals posed serious challenges to local



The Atlantic Willow tug passes through Halifax Harbour in May. A three-year contract was awarded in August to Irving-owned Atlantic Towing as part of the federal government's Oceans Protection Plan. **RYAN TAPLIN • THE CHRONICLE HERALD**

mariners as it is ... these old vessels are not a right fit on the B.C. coast."

He suggested a tug, not designed for the offshore oil industry, would be more suitable because it would have been built for maneuvering ships in confined waters, as well as towing. It would also be very comparable to what the Americans have available in Seattle, Wash.

The area to be served by the emergency towing vessels includes the waters off Bella Bella, Wash. — the traditional waters of the Heiltsuk Nation. The government's delayed response to the sinking of the Nathan E. Stewart in those waters led the Heiltsuk Nation to propose the creation of an Indigenous marine response centre.

The band also submitted a bid

for the emergency towing vessel in partnership with Halifax-based Horizon Marine, forming Heiltsuk Horizon Maritime Services Ltd.

Harvey Humchitt, Hereditary Chief Heiltsuk Nation, was quoted in a release: "Through this unique partnership, we've aligned our Heiltsuk values with the core values of Horizon Maritime to demonstrate how First Nations and industry can embark together on a bold step toward reconciliation."

Despite not being awarded the contract, the joint venture is still in place.

Joseph Spears, an expert in maritime policy and law, told me that the government's request for proposal requirements appeared to be written to favour Atlantic Towing. The RFP required tugs

under the Canadian flag of at least 120-tonne bollard pull and not older than 20 years at the time bidding closed.

Atlantic Eagle and Raven were both built in 1999, and were recently replaced on the Hibernia offshore contract by newer, more powerful vessels. Any other bidder likely would have had to import foreign vessels, given that any, otherwise suitable, available vessel would be older or not as powerful.

Others I spoke too were less generous, suggesting the close relationship between the Irving family, and Dominic Leblanc, New Brunswick M.P. and then minister responsible for the coast guard, led to the federal government finding work for Irving's older tugs. Leblanc was minister

responsible during the entire procurement process, though was shuffled to another portfolio four weeks before the contract was awarded.

Spears also said that what Canada really needs "is an operational policy ... In the U.S., tankers have a contract with towing firms for rescue. In Canada, there has been no development of a casualty management policy to my knowledge" Canadian policy has traditionally been to monitor incidents and to provide regulatory oversight to vessel owners and their contractors.

With the government now providing standby tugs, this means the coast guard will be taking an active role in incident response, something they have been hesitant to do in the past.

Bunkering service to move to Saint John

PETER ZIOBROWSKI

A major shakeup has just quietly happened in the marine fuelling sector.

Though nothing has been publicly announced, industry sources have told me the tanker Algoma Dartmouth has completed its charter with Sterling Fuels, and will be sailing to Saint John N.B. to take up bunkering service there under charter to Irving Oil.

Providing fuel to a ship is a process known as bunkering. A

small bunker tanker will pull up alongside a larger ship at anchor, and transfer fuel. Since 2009, the Algoma Dartmouth has been providing bunkering service in Halifax. Currently the service is only available in Halifax and Montreal in Eastern Canada.

The loss of bunkering service in Halifax is a blow to the port. The availability of the service helps market the Port of Halifax as being a full-service provider and the port authority is able to charge fees whenever a ship enters port

and anchors for fuel. The traffic also generates business for harbour pilots, tug operators, and other suppliers in Halifax.

The majority of the bunkering traffic in Halifax consists of cruise ships, tankers, and bulk carriers heading to or sailing from ports on the east coast.

Bunkering service in Halifax was traditionally provided by Imperial Oil. It acquired the Algoma Dartmouth to replace the single-hulled tanker NT Dartmouth — originally Imperial Dart-

mouth — which had been serving Halifax since 1970.

In 2014, with the shutdown of the refinery, Imperial announced it would be getting out of the bunkering business and would no longer be stocking the product in Halifax.

Sterling Fuels, part of the McAsphalt Industries and the Miller Group of companies, took over the service. It imported product to its facility in Eastern Passage and, chartered the Algoma Dartmouth tanker for

deliveries.

A request to Sterling for details about their future plans has so far gone unanswered, though a ship was spotted at the ocean terminals fuelling from tank trucks earlier this week.

Sterling Fuels provides bunkering services in the Great Lakes, and McAsphalt and Miller complete several paving contracts in Halifax each year. Miller Group also holds a garbage collection contract in the Halifax Regional Municipality.

Coverage today different from war time

SHIPPING NEWS



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Peter Ziobrowski has been reporting on the comings and goings in Halifax Harbour online since 2008.

For the past 10 years, I have been observing and recording the movements of ships in Halifax Harbour. I am certainly not the first person to do so, and I will likely not be the last. Halifax boasts a fairly significant harbour as well as a train and plane watching community, sharing images in Facebook groups. The post-9-11 era has resulted in more chain link fences and security, but it's not lost on me what I currently do relatively freely was strictly prohibited during the war.

Halifax, being home to the major Canadian naval establishment and the main convoy formation point, was of strategic importance during the Second World War. Ships loaded with supplies for the war in Europe travelled in convoys as a defensive tactic for protection from German U-boats. The comings and goings of ships form various ports were vital intelligence for both sides. So secret was Halifax as a destination, it was officially referred to in reports as simply "an east coast port." Photography was strictly prohibited.

People did manage to take photos, however, and because of friendships with the local censors, had their prints returned to them. Today these albums, often buried in boxes in people's basements, offer one of the best glimpses of the war in Halifax from non-official sources. 100 years later, I



The Halterm Container Terminal near Point Pleasant Park in Halifax.

remember that I enjoy the freedom to watch and report on the comings and goings in Halifax Harbour because of the sacrifices of those who fought.

■ Tuesday brought the arrival of PCU Wichita, the U.S. Navy's newest littoral combat ship. The ship was built in Marinette, Wisconsin by Lockheed Martin, and was delivered to the U.S. Navy on August 22, with USS Sioux City, which stopped in Halifax last week. As the ship has not yet commissioned into the navy, it carries the PCU designation for Pre-Commissioning Unit, as opposed to the more recognized USS designation.

■ Also arriving on Tuesday was

the French Marine Nationale vessel BSAH Rhone. The Rhone is a support ship for the French Navy, and is intended for logistics support, search and rescue, environmental response, and towing, basically the same functions offshore supply vessels perform for the offshore industry but for the French Navy. The ship went into service in April 2018, and on this trip, sailed from Brest, France, to the Pacific ocean via the North East Passage, stopping at CFB Esquimalt on Sept 27. Proceeding down the coast, the Rhone transited the Panama Canal, last stopping in Antigua.

■ The Algoma Dartmouth sailed for its new home of Saint John on Thursday last week. The

Halifax Port Authority confirmed that Sterling will still offer bunkering service in Halifax, but by truck. Wilson's Fuels also offers bunkering from a connection on Pier 9.

■ Over the last two weeks Ottawa has handed out millions of dollars to Canadian ports for improvements. The feds gave the Port of Prince Rupert \$22 million for road and rail improvements. A further funding announcement is scheduled for the Port of Hamilton.

■ The former CCGS Matthew has been sold to an as yet unknown buyer for \$279,000. The Canadian Coast Guard hydrographic survey ship was built in 1990 and was laid up at the end of

2011. It was finally decided in 2015 to retire the ship from service and it was renamed for disposal. It has been unsuccessfully offered for sale at least five previous times, with an initial asking price of \$1.9 million in 2016. The ship has been tied up at Bedford Institute of Oceanography since 2011.

■ The Norwegian frigate KDM Helge Ingstad was stuck in the early morning hours of Thursday by the tanker SOLA TS. The frigate was returning from NATO exercise Trident Juncture, which featured several Canadian naval vessels. The frigate was successfully abandoned, with only minor injuries, but sank over the weekend. The tanker suffered minor damage.

N.L. oil spill impossible to clean up

THE CANADIAN PRESS

ST. JOHN'S — It's now impossible to clean up Newfoundland's largest-ever oil spill that leaked into the ocean last week, according to the regulatory board that oversees the province's offshore activities.

The 250,000-litre spill happened on Friday morning while Husky Energy's SeaRose platform was preparing to restart production during a fierce storm that was, at the time, the most intense in the world.

Scott Tessier, chief executive of the Canada-Newfoundland and Labrador Offshore Petroleum Board, said no oil sheens were spotted on the water on Monday or Tuesday, meaning the oil has likely broken down to the point that it cannot be cleaned up.

The board is now focused on wildlife monitoring and its investigation into the incident, south-east of St. John's.

Container business ever adjusting

SHIPPING NEWS



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Maersk is quietly winding down its MMX or Montreal Mediterranean Express service. Maersk Line has made no formal announcement of the service ending; however no ships are scheduled after December. The MMX Service began in July of this year, calling in Halifax for the first time on Aug. 2, with a rotation of four vessels.

The introduction of the service was somewhat surprising, given there are two other services, which covered an almost identical route. The Montreal Mediterranean Express directly competed with ZIM's ZCI service and the Alliances AL6. The Alliance previously dropped Halifax from its AL6 service, and began marketing ZIM's ZCI Service as AL7. With ZIM joining the 2M alliance with Maersk and MSC, it seems likely that the MMX traffic will also be picked up by ZIM's service.

On the other side of the Atlantic, several shipping lines are changing their port of call in the U.K. Felixstow has been losing calls to London Gateway due to delays caused by congestion. The port implemented new terminal operating system software in June to track container movements. The software was developed in house, and had numerous issues, which resulted in containers being stacked incorrectly. The software-caused congestion has since been compounded by weather, volume and a shortage of truck drivers to move the containers out of the port.

Lines that have not switched terminals are skipping the U.K.



The Ceres terminal is seen in Fairview Cove in Halifax. **FILE**

entirely, or servicing it with a smaller feeder service in order to keep the mainline ships on schedule. The Alliance's AL1 service, which calls in Halifax is now serviced by London Gateway in the U.K.

London Gateway opened as part of the Port of London, in November 2013. It features 12 gantry cranes and three berths. The Gateway is a good example of how shippers are willing to relocate port calls to avoid congestion, and can serve as a good model for Halifax, if American east coast ports become problematic.

■ Horizon Maritime of Dart-

mouth registered the multifunction offshore support vessel Horizon Enabler on Nov. 21. The former Tidewater Enabler was built by STX Offshore of Norway in 2010, and had been on charter to Horizon Maritime since August. The ship was recently involved with the removal of oil from the sunken Manolis L for the Canadian Coast Guard. The ship joins Horizon Star as the second ship owned by Horizon, though the company operate several other Tidewater vessels on charter.

The Dartmouth-based Horizon Maritime announced in early October its plan to merge with Nordic American Offshore. That arrangement would have seen the

Horizon Maritime name continue, with a 52 per cent ownership of the new company going to existing Horizon Maritime shareholders. A deadline of Oct. 31 was listed for the completion of all due diligence, which was then extended. Nordic American Offshore announced on Nov. 15 the merger was being shelved.

■ The CCGS Corporal McLaren MMV was successfully refloated Monday night at the CME Shipyard in Sambro, and was towed to the government wharf. Once the marine railway at the shipyard is repaired, the CCGS Corporal McLaren MMV will be hauled back out to complete the original work, plus the required

repairs. Jo-Anne McLaren was thrilled to hear that the ship that bears her sons name is floating again, and is anxiously awaiting its repair and return to service.

■ The products tanker Tasing Swan is tied up at Pier 9 awaiting a coasting trade licence. Petro-Nav applied to use the tanker to shuttle refined product from the refinery in Levis, Que. to ports around the great lakes before the seaway shuts down at the end of December. Petro-Nav cited delays in its tankers returning from arctic work as the reason the coasting trade license is required. The company currently has at least five tankers working on coasting trade licenses in Canadian waters.

Design flaws and the CSC

SHIPPING NEWS



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The competition for the design for the Canadian Surface Combatant (CSC) just took an interesting turn, and one bidder may have had its hopes literally sink.

The Spanish firm Navantia offered the CSC program its F105 frigate design, which is currently in use by Spain, Australia and Norway. On Nov. 8, however, one of the Norwegian variants, the KNM Helge Ingstad, sank in a fjord after colliding with the Sola TS, a laden crude oil tanker, which had just departed the Sture Oil Terminal.

The preferred design for the CSC was announced Oct. 19. The federal government and Irving will proceed with negotiations to procure 15 of the BAE/Lockheed Martin's British Type 26 Frigate design.

Given the value of the contract, it wasn't a huge surprise when Alion, which bid the Dutch De Zeven Provinciën Frigate, asked for a judicial review believing the Type 26 was not compliant with the tender's mandatory criteria.

However, just because Alion was the bidder that questioned the decision, doesn't mean it was the second-place design. Certainly, the Spanish F105 design has been more commercially successful, with it in current use by three countries. And this presents a problem.

The Accident Investigation Board Norway (AIBN) released a preliminary report into the KNM Helge Ingstad incident. In it, the board suggested poor seamanship was the likely cause of the collision. The report also stated that after the collision, engine and rudder control was lost, which is



The KNM Helge Ingstad has never been to Halifax, however other ships of the class have. Attached is a photo of lead ship of the class KNM Fridtjof Nansen, from her first visit to Halifax in Sept 2010.

what caused the ship to ground close to shore.

Most relevant to the CSC procurement, however, is the separate warning from the AIBN that the ship may have a design flaw that allows additional compartments to flood, even though they are "sealed."

The collision flooded three compartments, however, it appears an additional three compartments flooded due to water flows through stuffing boxes and the hollow propeller shafts.

This should raise serious questions about the survivability of the design. The U.S. Navy suffered two collisions with commercial vessels. In separate incidents during the summer of 2017, the

USS Fitzgerald and USS John S. McCain were both struck by commercial vessels killing a total of 17 sailors. Both ships stayed afloat and were repaired — the USS John S. McCain emerging from a 15-month drydocking in Japan last week.

Canadian warships have also suffered collisions at sea. HMCS Protector sliced open HMCS Algonquin's hanger, HMCS Athabaskan was holed in a collision with a tug, and HMCS Preserver collided with the Nova Dock in Halifax Harbour.

While damage in each of those cases was above the waterline, warship survivability is critical not just for warfighting, but for general safety.

Choosing the proper design matters. As the Norwegians just found out, the safety of the ship and crew depends on it.

Here are some more happenings in Halifax Harbour:

- The Vuoksi Maersk is due to make its first call to Halifax on Dec. 8. The ship will be running on Maersk's weekly CAE service via Montreal. Presumably in a bid to reduce delays, the ship is ice classed, which should allow it to travel the icy waters of the St. Lawrence River bound for Montréal with greater ease. Currently, it is the only ice-class ship scheduled on the route.

- Maersk will be continuing the Montreal Mediterranean Express Service, but will be dropping the

Halifax call, rather than suspending the service as I suggested last week.

- Horizon Maritime's new ship Horizon Enabler arrived at Pier 9 on Tuesday.

- The car carrier Onyx Arrow, tied up at Pier 9 on the weekend after discharging cars at Autoport. I have been told the ship has an issue with the CO2 fire suppression system.

- The icebreaker Polar Prince, based in Lunenburg, returned to Halifax after surveying a route for a sub-sea fiber optic cable in the Hudson Bay. The ship sailed for the North on July 4. Leeway Odyssey also did some survey work for that project and returned to Halifax last week.

CN bid for Halterm makes perfect sense

SHIPPING NEWS



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Word came last week that CN has made an offer to buy Halterm, the Port of Halifax south-end container terminal.

While the report was seemingly out of the blue, there have been rumours in the past that Halterm and the Ceres-operated Fairview Cove terminal were for sale.

The rationale for the CN acquisition is based on replicating the railway's success in Prince Rupert, B.C. As is the case there, Halifax's location, combined with CN's extensive rail network, would allow it to offer faster service to destinations in the United States versus direct shipping through more congested American ports.

Halifax is well positioned to mirror Prince Rupert's success. The Fairview terminal there was built in 2007 with a single birth, four cranes and a capacity of 500,000 20-foot equivalent units per year. By 2015, it was handling 750,000 TEU. This closely matches the current state of Halterm, which has a single birth and four cranes, and handled 559,242 TEU last year.

In 2015, a second birth and four additional cranes were added in Prince Rupert, and capacity increased to 1.35 million TEU.

The Port of Halifax recently began construction of a pier expansion to add a second birth. With additional cranes, the Halterm facility will match what CN already owns on the West Coast.

There has been some talk of how CN would handle a second train. However, CN has previously operated two trains daily from the Rockingham yard along the Bedford Highway. They were consolidated into a single long train with the economic downturn in 2008. I have been told that some operational changes would be required to accommodate the second train at the proposed lengths.

If CN were to double the terminal tracks at Halterm, from four to eight, that would allow for an entire train to be made up there. In addition to installing the rail, a change in equipment at



Canadian National Railway is bidding to acquire a stake in Halterm, the largest container terminal in Eastern Canada.

Halterm would be required. Presumably, one train would then be made up in Rockingham with containers bound for Fairview Cove and CN's north-end intermodal facility. If this were to happen, then the impact on the proposed commuter rail project would be minimal.

CN said it was potentially also

interested in a port in Quebec or another in Nova Scotia if this purchase fell through. The proposed terminals in Sydney and Melford are not currently served by CN. The fact that what CN is proposing for Halifax is the same business model that proponents of the Melford terminal are using is a significant sign that they lack a

rail partner able to provide speedy service. CN already has infrastructure in Halifax.

As for the possibilities in Quebec, CN already does substantial business in Montreal and would not get the additional container volumes at a port incapable of handling ultra-class ships. Quebec City is building a terminal, which could handle ultra-class ships. However, it's several days sailing time off the East Coast and the port lacks an existing customer base.

If CN was also to acquire the Fairview terminal, additional optimization could be had in terms of ship calls and keeping piers from overcrowding. Smaller ships could call at Fairview, keeping the unrestricted piers free for larger ships.

■ The AL6 Service ended its call to Halifax with the visit of the Bilbao Bridge on Dec. 10. In its place, the Alliance will be marketing the existing ZIM Mediterranean service as AL7.

■ The bulk carrier Horizon

spent a few days tied up at Pier 9 in Halifax to take on fuel. The ship was detained for five days in Port-Alfred, Que., and was released to sail to an American shipyard for repairs. An inspection found the lifeboats were not operable, openings that were not watertight, issues with navigation equipment not being readable and problems with visibility from the bridge — in all, 22 deficiencies were noted, and nine were grounds for detaining the vessel.

■ The U.S. Coast Guard Ship Abbie Burgess made a brief stop at the Centre for Ocean Ventures and Entrepreneurship in Dartmouth before heading into the Great Lakes for the winter. The ship can perform icebreaking duties.

■ The federal government announced last week the purchase of eight additional Bay class search and rescue lifeboats for the coast guard. Fishermen in southwest Nova Scotia will hopefully have one of these boats stationed in their region.



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SEARCH AND RESCUE

Improvements to services will save lives

SHIPPING NEWS

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Peter Ziobrowski has been reporting on the comings and goings in Halifax Harbour online since 2008.

Monday night, as I was sitting warm and dry at home writing this, four British sailors were in trouble 240 nautical miles off Halifax.

Their 14-metre boat was fighting 75-kph winds and six-metre seas. The sailors were picked up by an Air Force search and rescue helicopter, and were flown to Halifax. Two navy ships and the CCGS Cape Roger also attended.

At the end of November, the Senate released a report: When Every Minute Counts: Maritime Search and Rescue. It was authored by the Senate's Standing Committee on Fisheries and Oceans, which examined the country's search and rescue operations and made recommendations for improvement.

The report's most significant recommendation is for the coast guard to become its own agency. Primary responsibility for maritime search and rescue in Canada lies with the coast guard, which the committee found that as a branch of the federal Department of Fisheries and Oceans is often starved for funds and resources. By granting it independent agency status, the coast guard would be able to complete its own long-term planning.

Certainly, local fishermen would agree more independence would be a good thing for the coast guard. Fishermen in south west Nova Scotia held protests to try and have two of the coast guard's new Bay-class lifeboats stationed in Nova Scotia for the fall fishing season, rather than being sent to British Columbia — commercial fishing operations are high users of Maritime SAR services.

The report also suggested that



A Canadian Armed Forces CH-149 Cormorant helicopter from 413 Transport and Rescue Squadron from 14 Wing Greenwood and Her Majesty's Canadian Ship Glace Bay move into position to rescue crew members of the sailboat Makena. The sailboat is in trouble 240 nautical miles southeast of Halifax. **DND/CAF ■ AVIATOR BRADEN TRUDEAU**

Transport Canada make vessel stability information more user friendly, require emergency beacons on all fishing vessels and transferring responsibility for search and rescue prevention activities, including boating safety, to the coast guard.

The report highlighted significant shortfalls in the north. The grounding of the Akademik Ioffe this past summer displayed the problems with rescue in the north, as dispatched aircraft had more than 12-hours flying time to reach the scene.

Two other northern rescues this summer were performed by coast guard helicopters operating from nearby coast guard ships, which happened to be in the area.

The Senate reports suggests investigating the use of commercial contract search and rescue

services. Given the relatively short summer season, helicopter SAR services could be provided on a contract basis.

Cougar Helicopters, which flies out of Halifax and St. John's, N.L., can provide contract all weather rescue services using S-92 Helicopters — the civilian version of the Air Force's new Cyclone Helicopters. Cougar Helicopters offers this service commercially now, and regularly practices off Halifax. Such a contract would enhance SAR services, and not remove resources from other areas.

The report made additional recommendations on working more closely with volunteer and local indigenous organizations, and support those groups with funds. SAR services are often the difference between life and death. It is important that services levels

meet the needs of Canadians and coverage is available from coast to coast.

■ The Atlantic Raven, the second emergency towing vessel provided by Atlantic Towing, arrived in B.C., and was promptly put to work. The bulk carrier Tokyo Bulker reportedly had power issues. The problems were resolved by the ship's crew, while the Atlantic Raven was on standby.

■ The CCGS Captain Molly Kool, one of three icebreakers to be converted by Davie Shipyard, went into Coast Guard service last week, and was sent to Corner Brook. Work is underway on the other two ships, so that they will be ready for the summer season in the north.

■ The Drill Rig West Aquarius has finished its drilling program

for BP off Nova Scotia, and sailed for Bay Bulls, N.L. The rig will next be deployed off Newfoundland for Exxon Mobil.

■ Nordic American Offshore was acquired by the Italian Scorpio group on Dec 10. NAO was in talks to merge with Halifax-based Horizon Maritime, however the due diligence period was extended and the deal finally collapsed Nov 27.

■ Hansa Heavy Lift, also known as HHL, declared bankruptcy in Germany. The company grew out of the remains of Beluga Shipping, which went bankrupt in 2011. Presumably in a bid to stay afloat, HHL had been selling assets, and at the time it declared bankruptcy it was down to five ships. HHL often chartered ships with Quebec-based Groupe Desgagnés.

PORT AUTHORITY



McNally Construction Inc. has built several piers in Halifax, including an extension to Pier 42. **PETER ZIOBROWSKI**

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The expansion of Pier 41 / 42 at Halterm is legitimately underway.

Though the Port Authority announced in October that work had begun, it didn't actually get going until this month. The first tasks were closing the harbour lookoff near Point Pleasant Park and the removal of the walkway from the side of the pier.

McNally Construction Inc. won the bid for the dredging and has been assembling the required equipment at Pier 9. This phase of

the work will likely get underway after the holidays.

The tender for construction of the actual expansion closed this month. That contract has yet to be awarded, but it seems likely it will go to McNally, the lowest bidder. McNally has built several piers in Halifax, including the recent expansion of Pier 9, the new jetty at the navy dockyard and a previous extension to Pier 42.

McNally is based in Hamilton, Ont., and was acquired by Weeks Marine of New Jersey in 2011. McNally maintains an Atlantic Canada office in Dartmouth.

The other bidder was Waterworks Construction Ltd. of Dartmouth. An experienced construction firm, it has constructed the pontoons for the ferry terminals and most of the Halifax boardwalk.

The port has been calling this a temporary expansion. Lane Farguson, spokesman for the Port Authority, told me the new expansion will be constructed of hollow caissons.

The caissons will be floated, then filled with aggregate to set them into place. The gravel can then be removed, allowing the caissons to be reused. Presumably, they will be used for the port's proposed larger expansion, which will see the finger piers at the ocean terminals filled in.

Combined with the interest of CN in acquiring the terminal, this means the port is well-positioned going into 2019.

To update some other stories:

- The Canadian Coast Guard vessel Corporal McLaren, which was damaged at the CME shipyard in Sambro Head, has

been hauled out of the water for the completion of work. The ship was partially submerged when the cradle it was sitting in was tampered with and allowed to roll into the water. There has been no word on the status of the police investigation, nor what damage was sustained in the incident.

- The Akademik Ioffe still sits at the shipyard in Les Mechins, Que. The ship ran aground in the Arctic on Aug. 27 and made it to the shipyard under its own power at the end of September. The ship typically cruises the Antarctic this time of year, so several trips have likely been cancelled. The ship is scheduled for an Antarctic cruise, departing from the Falkland Islands on Jan. 22. The 12-day voyage has cabins available starting at US\$12,095.

- Last week, four men were

rescued from a sailboat about 240 nautical miles southeast of Halifax. The U.K.-registered vessel was bound for Toronto after being purchased from the Dutch owner. The Brits aboard were hired to deliver the boat.

The crew apparently lacked survival suits. If the plan was to make Toronto this year, they also would have faced an icy St. Lawrence River and the closure of locks at the end of December between Montreal and Lake Ontario.

- Quebec's Davie shipyard is offering the federal government a second supply ship at a discount. The Obelix, a sister ship to the Asterix, is being offered for \$500 million. The Asterix cost the feds \$659 million. Davie is able to offer the discount since the engineering work was done for the first ship and can be reused.

The supply ships have become politically contentious. However, it should be noted that the two Davie conversions could be had for less than the price of one of the new supply ships under construction at Seaspan in Vancouver.