

# SHELL TANKERS B.V.

Shell Tankers B.V. in Rotterdam has managed the Dutch ocean going Shell Tanker fleet since 1912.

At present, Shell Tankers B.V. is responsible for 20 vessels with a total cargo capacity of over 1 million tons.

Both the manning of the ships and their operational and technical management are coordinated from the shore office of Shell Tankers B.V. in Rotterdam-Alexanderpolder. All commercial planning, which includes entering into charter agreements and determining the routes, is carried out by Shell International Marine Ltd. in London, which functions as the central organ to coordinate all sea transport of oil and oil products, as well as gas and coal for the Royal/Shell Group.

The total number of ships controlled by the Royal/Shell Group, known as the so-called key fleet, adds up to around fifty vessels variously managed by Shell Tankers B.V. in Rotterdam, Shell Tankers U.K. in Great Britain, Deutsche Shell Tanker Ge-

sellschaft in Germany and Société Maritime Shell in France.

In addition, Shell International Marine Ltd. also charters between fifty to sixty ships from third parties, which means that a total of over a hundred tankers are afloat for the Royal/Shell Group, with a collective cargo capacity of over ten million tons.

In principle, as the ships are not kept to fixed routes, they can be sent throughout the entire world. In practice, this means that the ships managed by Shell Tankers B.V. dock only sporadically at Dutch ports and that their crews are usually relieved somewhere abroad. Because of the international character of Royal/Shell Group maritime operations and the wide range of bareboat and other charter agreements, a number of vessels managed by Shell Tankers B.V. sail under Dutch flag, while others sail under Liberian flag.

The ships are manned by Dutch officers and ships engineers and Indonesian mates and – on a few ships – Indonesian junior

officers. Throughout the history of Shell Tankers B.V. it has become a tradition, to sail with Indonesian crews.

## A small piece of history

Although the 'Royal', or the Royal Company for the Exploitation of Petroleum Wells in the Dutch Indies, founded in 1890, bought its first oil tanker in 1897 and owned six ships by the year 1900, and although the Netherlands Indies Tank Steamboat Company was founded in 1904 for the inter-island traffic in the Dutch Indies, 1912 has been recognised as the official founding year for Shell Tankers B.V. In 1907, the 'Royal' entered into a joint venture with the Shell Transport and Trading Company. This amalgamation was expressed in the share ratio 'Royal': 60 and Shell Transport and Trading: 40. This signified the birth of what has since been known as: Royal/Shell.

Then, in 1912 the N.V. Petroleum Maatschappij 'La Corona' (the crown) was found-





ded for handling the sea transport of oil and oil products, a company which actually became the forerunner of what was later to be called Shell Tankers B.V. Subsequently in 1917, the N.V. Curacaosche Scheepvaart Maatschappij (CSM) was founded in the West.

Despite the crisis which lasted throughout the decade of the thirties, the use of oil products started to gain popularity, as a result of which the fleets of the Royal/Shell Group were gradually expanded. During the second world war, merchant shipping and the tankers of the Royal/Shell Group played an important role. Many seamen lost their lives and the number of vessels lost was huge. The performance of the Shell fleet contributed greatly to the liberation of all occupied territories. Although this is not the place for a detailed list of the exploits of the fleet, however, mention must be made of the brave fight of the La

Corona tanker 'Ondina' and the British-Indian mine sweeper 'Bengal' against two Japanese auxiliary cruise ships in 1942, during which one of the Japanese ships was sunk and the 'Ondina', although hit by a torpedo and on fire, was able to be saved by the surviving crew members. In memory of Captain W. Horsman, who was killed during this sea battle, a number of streets as well as a life boat of the KNZHRM have been named in his honour.

Two La Corona tankers also saw service during the second world war as Merchant Aircraft Carriers (MAC), to which end they were equipped with a flight deck and five Swordfish aircraft to combat submarines. These MAC ships also carried their normal cargo of oil during the convoy journeys!

After the second world war, a period of reconstruction and economic revival be-

polyvalent trained group of Maritime Officers.

The oil crises in 1973 and 1979 forced Shell Tankers B.V. to consider how to realise a more economical responsible management in order to be able to by means of, among other things, further cutbacks in costs and more efficient crewing, continue to operate competitively. Within a period of approximately 15 years both the fleet and the number of employees were strongly reduced in number, until in 1989 the fleet remained stable at around 20 ships with a total of approximately 700 employees.

During the eighties, Shell Tankers B.V. was confronted with mounting tensions in the Arabian Golf. In the face of these risks, however, the seamen of the Shell Tankers ships stayed on the job. This expression of commitment and loyalty – without glamour, without ribbons – is an extension of the tradition, which had been founded earlier by the 'Ondina'.

### The future

With a view to operate on an economical responsible basis, it is necessary to keep the costs, especially of personnel, competitive. To this end, the standard maintained by Shell Tankers B.V. is that of a comparable Western European shipping company, as cost levels in Asia are not feasible for Europe in the short or medium term. Shell Tankers has directed its efforts towards achieving safety and promoting an environmental consciousness in their operations as well as delivering high-quality carrier services. For this purpose, it is vital that Shell Tankers B.V. can continue to have command of the maritime expertise it requires, among others in the form of well-trained Dutch Maritime Officers and Ships' Technicians.

Hence each year, Shell Tankers B.V. has 30 to 35 training openings for students in the Higher Nautical Education, so that the influx of new officers to the merchant fleet and the maritime structure (harbors, pilots, forwarding etc.) of the Netherlands can be retained. Moreover, in technical management aboard, developments such as process automation, computerization and data communications per satellite are being investigated daily and introduced where possible. In this way, Shell Tankers B.V. is confident that with well-trained employees, we will be able to approach and enter the nineties in an economical responsible fashion, thereby embroidering on an old tradition, a tradition on its way to an even more prosperous future.



gan in the Netherlands. Before the war, the Dutch tanker fleet of Royal/Shell consisted of 94 vessels. Wartime losses had reduced this number to 66. During the fifties, the fleet was gradually expanded and modernized. In 1959, Shell Tankers N.V. (later B.V.), in which La Corona, the NIT and the CSM were incorporated, was established as the owner of the Dutch Shell fleet.

During the sixties and seventies, larger and larger ships continued to be built and innovations were introduced in the crewing of the vessels. Shell Tankers was the first Dutch shipping company to introduce the integrated ship's mate, who was able to work both on deck and in the engine room. In 1975, the Project Lange Adem (PLA, 'Perseverance Project') was launched in which ways to achieve a further reduction of ship's personnel were studied, as well as further integration between the various services and ranks. The outcome of this was a new kind of officer, the Semi-Integrated Officer (SIO) who holds both a nautical and engineering diploma.

The nautical schools have kept pace with this project and have restructured the nautical/technical course programs, which in 1989, led to the graduation of the first

