

Ro-ro shipping activity on a roll

Fueled by capacity shortages, ro-ro newbuilding activity is brisk. New orders include one placed by the privately-owned Finnish Rettig group for two (plus two) "RoFlex" multi-purpose, ro-ros with Flensburger Schiffbau Gesellschaft in Germany, worth €100M.

Slated for delivery in the second and third quarters of 2011, the Super IA ice class ships will be powered by 12,000 kW engines and have a service speed of 19 knots. They are 195.4m long and will have 2900 lane-metres. Rettig is also expanding by acquisition and last year acquired another privately-owned Finnish shipping company, Engship, based in Turku. All the ships are managed by Rettig's Bore arm.

Polish operator Unity Line has ordered two 3000 lane-metre ro-



Rettig's latest ro-ros will have 2900 lane-metres for freight

ros for its new Swinoujscie-Trelleborg service from the SSN Szczecin yard, for delivery in 2010-11. Unity opened this new route in February this year. Its established Swinoujscie-Ystad service carried 142,000 trailers last year, 13% more than in 2005.

Britanny Ferries has experienced strong freight growth and carried 250,000 HGVs last year between Cherbourg and Port-

smouth/Poole. The company has ordered a new freight-only ro-ro from Aker Finnyards with a capacity for 120 accompanied trailers and sufficient cabin space for their drivers, and will also be introducing another ro-pax into the service next year. It also intends to start a weekly service between GB and Spain (Portsmouth or Poole and Gijón or Santander).

Grimaldi Holding SpA has taken delivery of CORAGGIO, the first of a series of four (plus four options) stern ramp, ro-pax ferries from the Nuovi Cantieri Apuania shipyard in Marina di Carrara. The second ship, AUDACIA, will be de-

livered this October, with TENACIA due next spring. In total the order is worth around €450M and the first three ships have already been chartered to Grandi Navi Veloci (GNV) run by Grimaldi Genova, as part of its expanding Motorways of the Sea programme.

Although described as cruise ferries, the first three ships have more capacity for freight than previous Grimaldi ships of this type, even though they can each cater for up to 500 passengers. The 25,000 dwt ships have a loa of 200m, a beam of 27m and a service speed of 25 knots.

They have seven decks, of which four have their own access and the others are accessed by movable ramps. They have 3000 lane-metres for freight or cars and slots for up to 30 cars with campers/caravans.

Grimaldi has obtained "Green Passport" status for CORAGGIO, a voluntary code aimed at reducing pollution and wastage. The vessel is deployed in GNV's Genova-Malta-Tunisia service, which is



CORAGGIO is the first of a new series of four (plus four) ro-paxes for Grimaldi

important for shipments of textiles, agri-food products, pharmaceuticals. Frequency varies between weekly and three times/week according to the season.

Aldo Grimaldi has already confirmed that the option for four more ships will be exercised, but the fourth ship in the initial order and the four option ships will be somewhat bigger than the first three ships and will be able to cater for up to 900 passengers.

GNV is one of Italy's leading ship operators and is focused on national and intra-Mediterranean cabotage services. Last year it accounted for shipments of 435,000 cars, 2.3M lane-metres of trailers and other rolling freight and 1.3M

passengers. Shareholders include Investitori Associati, De Agostini and Charme, through the Private Equity Permira fund.

Turkish deal

To increase load factors in the Western Mediterranean, GNV has made agreements with the Turkish UN Ro-Ro group, regarding on-shipment of Turkish trailers from Livorno and Civitavecchia. UN Ro-Ro (ex-UND Ro-Ro) is now shipping some 240,000 trailers/year for various European destinations into Trieste and has transit agreements with the Italian government that allows its drivers to pick up trailers there bound for the Iberian peninsula

There is still no firm information on why Grimaldi's deepsea con-ro ship REPUBLICA DI GENOVA heeled and capsized in Antwerp whilst loading cars and tractors through the stern ramp for Luanda (last month's WorldCargo News, p1). According to cargolaw.com the cause of the capsizing is known but has not been released. The ship had finished loading top deck containers and all possible corrections to the listing were carried out according to standard procedures, but for some reason they did not work and it has been speculated that there was a malfunction in the self-heeling system. It has also been stated that the vessel was still bunkering



Access deals abound

Cargotec's MacGregor business unit has received significant ro-ro access equipment orders worth around €19M from different ship yards in connection with various newbuildings. Japan's Kyokuyo Shipyard Corporation has ordered equipment for four PCTCs being built for Norwegian owner Gram, comprising a stern ramp, a quarter ramp, two ramp covers, three internal ramps and 10 hoistable car deck panels.

All the internal equipment will be operated fully by electric drive as an environment-friendly solution for operations that also avoids problems of oil leakage and damage to cargo. The vessels will be delivered in 2009 and onwards.

MacGregor will deliver ro-ro equipment for the world's two largest ropax ferries, being built by Aker Yards in Germany. The order from Aker Yards includes design, fabrication and installation of 800t of ro-ro equipment.

As previously reported (WorldCargo News, December 2006, p18), Aker won the order, worth €440M, from Stena Line for two 62,000 gt ropax ferries, with an option for two more, each with an unprecedented 5500 lane-metres for trailers (up to 400) and 700m of car lanes, as well as capacity for 1200 passengers

The ships are due for delivery in 2010 and will be built at two yards - Warnemünde (forebodies and deck houses) and Wismar (aft parts). They have an loa of 240m,

beam of 32m and accommodation for 1200 passengers in 540 cabins. Service speed is 22 knots.

Finally, in collaboration with steel equipment manufacturer Radez, MacGregor will provide the access equipment for two (plus one option) 2.4m long, symmetrical, double-ended ferries being built by Brodogradiliste Kraljevica in Croatia for British ferry operator Wightlink. These will carry up to 360 passengers and 65 cars at 10-12 knots across the Solent between the Isle of Wight and the English south coast, as replacements for the existing ships.

TTS on the job

In 2007-8 the Gdynia Shipyard is due to deliver two 2100 CEU PCTCs to Ray Shipping with access equipment from TTS Ships Equipment AB comprising quarter and stern ramps, internal ramps and covers, liftable car decks, and doors. TTS will deliver the design and parts, and supervise the installation. Six more ships are due for delivery to Ray Shipping in 2008-9, for which TTS will supply quarter and side ramps, internal ramps and covers, liftable car decks, doors and hatch covers.

The orders, totalling 14,000 gt of ro-ro access equipment, brought the number of newbuildings for which TTS is supplying equipment to Gdynia Shipyard to more than 30 and to around 40 the new ships it has equipped for Ray Shipping. □

The 62,000 gt ro-paxes will be the biggest in the world, with 5500 lane-metres for freight and 700m of car lanes





The new ramp at the Mercatordok multimodal facility was designed by Antwerp-based Catracom

or the Maghreb and drive them to the Italian west coast.

Intensive stuff

The intensity of European ro-ro operations is exemplified by DFDS Tor Line's Eurobridge service, which provides six sailings/week in each direction between Gent and Gothenburg as well as a weekly service between Brevik and Gent (for Oslo Fjord cargoes).

The service is now operated by three of the newly-built, 22.5

knot Flower-class ships and DFDS Tor Line has achieved its target of 95% schedule reliability. The ships have 3830 lane-metres and capacity on the route exceeds 125,000 trailers/year. The reliability and frequency of Eurobridge has won it a new cargo - steel coils from Arcelor, used for car body panels by Volvo and Saab in Sweden.

Previously this cargo was moved overland, but it is now shipped on ro-ro cassettes that are loaded at the Mercatordok Multimodal Terminal in Gent. To ensure full weather protection for this sensitive cargo, the cassettes are loaded in the shed adjacent to the terminal and then transferred into the ship using TTS Liftec translifters. In Gothenburg the coils are transloaded from cassettes to road trailers by DFDS Tor Line itself in the former shipbuilding hall adjacent to the Arendal terminal.

New quay ramp

The main cargo accessment arrangements of the Flower-class vessels comprise fixed ramps from the main deck to the lower hold and upper deck, a fixed ramp from the upper deck to the weather deck, a hoistable ramp from the main deck to the upper deck and two hoistable car decks (occupying 3800 m²) serving two levels.

However, in addition, the Eurobridge ships, MAGNOLIA, PETUNIA and PRIMULA (the first three of the six-ship Flower-class series), are also provided with side port access to the car decks, in anticipation of loading cars to provide a faster overall turnaround.

Volvo Logistics, which operates the Mercator MultiModal Terminal, has now taken advantage of the ships' extra loading flexibility by installing a steel structure ramp on the quay. Outbound sailings from Gent regularly take 300-400 new cars for the Scandinavian market and these no longer have to be loaded through the stern ramp along with trailers, containers and other cargoes on rolltrailers or cassettes, thus saving time and improving safety and reducing the risk of damage.

The quayside ramp, located in the centre of the terminal for maximum flexibility, was designed and installed, in a joint project from Volvo Logistics and DFDS Tor Line, by Antwerp-based engineering company Catracom, which is now part of Kalmar.

The ramp, which is fixed to the ground with bolted anchors, has

a maximum 8 deg slope and serves the lower car deck. In terms of capacity and turning radius it is suitable for cars up to Volvo XC90 size. To prevent slippage, the driving surface has a heavy duty grating and tear plate and a stairway is provided for the car crew.

It is folded and positioned electro-hydraulically either automatically or manually equipped and is also with automatic height adjustment, based on sensors, to compensate for changes in ship's draught and movements during (un)loading operations.

Volvo Logistics is a key customer for DFDS Tor Line in both the Eurobridge and Anglobridge (Gothenburg-Immingham/Tilbury services). At the start of this year the cooperation between the two companies was renewed for two more years, with an option to extend it to the end of 2011.

Kiel haul

TTS Port equipment AB has carried out repairs to the ro-ro ramp at the Port of Kiel, which serves Stena Line Scandinavia, with zero downtime to normal operations. The ramp was designed for the ro-paxes SCANDINAVIA and GERMANICA that operate between Gothenburg and Kiel.

A protruding ramp knuckle presented an obstacle to trailers and they were being scraped underneath as they passed over it. Flow of traffic over the ramp was impeded, causing delay.

TTS recommended changing the transition angles for the trailers by lowering the ramp and making other alterations to the ramp's geometry to improve traffic flow. The modifications have halved unloading time. TTS also installed a new support structure for the passenger gangway on the vessels' shell, to improve safety.

More trestles

TTS also recently signed a contract with Gothenburg-based TranLumi Line for 150 trailer trestles. The IPSI clip on trailer (COT) type trestle will serve the route from Ajos/Oulo in northern Finland to Travemünde in Germany.

Existing customers for this type of trestle include Transfennica

in Finland and Colorline in Norway. The COT trestles have also been deployed in the terminal handling system for Foodtankers in Karlshamm, Sweden.

TTS had already supplied the cargo access equipment for Transatlantic's three dedicated con-ro-ro TRANSPAPER, TRANSPULP and TRANSTIMBER that Transatlantic's affiliate Translumi operates under long-term charter to StoraEnso for the shipper's NETSS 2 (northern Finland) SECU programme.

The programme was recently completed with the delivery of the third ship (TRANSTIMBER) and the conversion of exports to Germany to SECUs over Lübeck. The vessels are discharged at Lübeck's Nordlandkai terminal.

The triangular service calls Kemi/Oulu, Gothenburg and Lübeck. 60% of the capacity is used for StoraEnso base cargo on the inbound leg to Germany and the remaining 40% for third party trucks, trailers and containers.

Lübecker Hafen Gesellschaft (LHG) has installed a cross-dock facility at Nordlandkai to transload the paper and board products directly from SECUs to rail cars, while product for temporary storage in the port is transferred to another warehouse. LHG has invested more than €5M to handle the SECU business, including LTH90 translifters from TTS-Liftec and four heavy duty MT45 ro-ro tractors from Mafi.

More know-how

Finally, in an important development, TTS Port Equipment AB has signed a contract with Scotland-based engineering and construction specialist, Marine Development Ltd (MDL) in an agreement to take over the total of its know-how and expertise. As part of the agreement, John Rose, the former owner of MDL, will join TTS on a consultancy basis.

MDL originally patented the semi-submersible linkspan and has a long and proven record of providing flexible, safe and economic means for the transfer of ro-ro cargoes. To date, some 60 linkspans and passenger gangways have been designed and supplied. □

Russians step up the pace on cars

A special commission headed by Russia's minister for economic development German Gref has authorised a support package of R2.14B (US\$78M) towards the construction of the planned Yug-2 multi-purpose cargo terminal in the Port of Ust-Luga.

As previously reported, the terminal, with a slated capacity for 4.5 mtpa, is one of several to be developed by Ust-Luga Company (KUL) and total construction cost is estimated at R8.4B (US\$300M), mostly to be financed by own resources and commercial loans, according to KUL's spokeswoman Tatyana Pauk. Last year KUL issued debentures valued at R600M, underwritten by the Saint Petersburg regional government.

The Yug-2 project covers more than 100 hectares not counting road and rail approaches and is due to be completed in the next three years. KUL's deputy director general Aleksandr Goloviznin has previously indicated that imports of new cars and containerised parts for Russia's growing car assembly plant business are key targets.

First car carrier

The first car carrier is expected to call in November or Decem-

ber this year, when phase one of the project occupying 25 hectares of land and having a capacity for 60,000 cars/year comes on stream. Capacity is forecast to reach 360,000 cars/year by 2010. KUL has signed a co-operation agreement with RailTransAuto (RTA), a new joint venture of Russian Railways (RZD) and TransGroup AS (TGAS), Russia's third largest rail forwarder (see below).

Sixth car terminal

KUL is the sixth company in Baltic Russia to declare plans to develop ro-ro facilities aimed largely at imports of new and used cars, after Oslo Marine Group (OMG) in Saint Petersburg, Arktur Travel, RosEuroTrans, Russian Transport Lines (see *WorldCargo News*, December 2006, pp23-24) and TGAS, which is co-developing a terminal at Chernyakhovsk, Kaliningrad region. Designed to handle 100,000 automobiles/year, the terminal handled 2500 cars late last year when it was commissioned and is set to handle 20,000 this year.

Handling and storage rates for new cars over Russian ports are attractive at US\$20/CEU and US\$10/CEU respectively. Around 340,000 new cars/year, or 75% of