

CEC COMMANDER

IMO No: 9169859 GENERAL CARGO 1998 / 6714 GT

COMPANY:

Thorco Shipping AS,
Denmark

YARD INFORMATION:

Zhonghua Shipyard
Shanghai (China) 397
Design: Graig Confidence Class

DEMOLITION:



River Elbe 25/5/2011 © S. Wiedner

2012: Renamed CLIPPER COMMANDER.

2014: Sold to Sinokor Maritime Co Ltd, South Korea. Renamed GRACE PIONEER.

BASIC DATA:

GT: 6714
DWT: 8702
TEU: 650
Reefer: 106
Loa: 100.48
Bmd: 20.41
Draught: 8.20
Engine: 1x oil Wartsila
Power: 7800 kW
Speed: 16.0 kn
Cranes: 2x150t (?)

OWNER & FLAG HISTORY:

GRACE PIONEER since 01/12/2014
CLIPPER COMMANDER since 01/04/2012
CEC COMMANDER since 01/10/2004
Flag Date of record Source
Panama since 01/03/2015
Korea (Republic of) since 01/12/2014
Registered owner Date of record Source
GRACE PIONEER SA during 03/2015
SINOKOR MARITIME CO LTD since 30/12/2014
CLIPPER PROJECTSHIPS LTD since 02/02/2010
Ship manager Date of record Source
FAIR SHIPMANAGEMENT CO LTD since 30/12/2014
SINOKOR MARITIME CO LTD since 30/12/2014
DANIA SHIP MANAGEMENT BULK A/S since 19/11/2003
CLIPPER PROJECT SHIPPING LTD during 09/2003
GRAIG SHIPMANAGEMENT GMBH since 18/11/2002

EX-NAMES:

| | | |
|--------------------|---------|--------------------------------------|
| CLIPPER CARMARTHEN | 1998-99 | Carmarthen Shipping Co Ltd, Bahamas |
| KARINE DELMAS | 1999-99 | Carmarthen Shipping Co Ltd, Bahamas |
| CEC CARMARTHEN | 1999-03 | Carmarthen Shipping Co Ltd, Bahamas |
| CEC CARMARTHEN | 2003-04 | CMI Carmarthen Ltd., Bahamas |
| CEC COMMANDER | 2004-10 | CMI Carmarthen Ltd., Bahamas |
| CEC COMMANDER | 2010-12 | Clipper Projectships Ltd, Bahamas |
| CLIPPER COMMANDER | 2012-14 | Clipper Projectships Ltd, Bahamas |
| GRACE PIONEER | 2014-15 | Sinokor Maritime Co Ltd, South Korea |
| GRACE PIONEER | 2015- | Grace Pioneer SA, Panama |

GENERAL VESSEL INFORMATION:

Fleet list and history
GRAIG AND THE CONFIDENCE CLASS
David Jenkins and Roy Fenton

Origins of the Confidence class

In his Chairman's annual report for 1981, the founder's son Desmond Williams reported that, recognising that the centre of the shipping industry was moving to the Far East, a subsidiary company named Sektau Shipping Ltd. had been registered in Hong Kong. Although this would prove to be little more than a brass plate company, China was indeed where Graig's interest would be focussed from the mid-1990s onwards. In 1995, contact was made with Danish shipping company Clipper Group, established in Copenhagen in 1972. Clipper sought a partner for a project to build four 9,000dwt multi-purpose single-hold cargo vessels, equipped with two 75-tonne cranes mounted on the port side, and capable of carrying 660 containers; the single hold, in which 'tween decks could be fitted, was 65 metres long and 15 metres wide. As deep-sea container vessels had become larger, passing 10,000TEU, the number of ports they could use contracted, so that there was a growing demand for feeder container ships. However, a key feature of the design was to prove its single large hold, making them suitable for the transport of large, indivisible items of project cargoes, especially for the petro-chemical industries. Movable bulkheads and 'tween decks allowed the hold to be subdivided to accommodate individual items, whilst the fitting of two substantial cranes meant that they were self sustaining.

All these vessels were to be built at the Zhonghua Shipyard in Shanghai, China. An agreement was reached between Graig and Clipper whereby a joint company called Danwel (Danish-Welsh) Shipping was established. On 3 November 1995 a contract was signed between Danwel Shipping on one hand and Zhonghua Shipyard and the China Shipbuilding Trading company on the other for the construction of four vessels, of a type to be known as the Confidence class. Graig co-wrote the specification of the vessels with Danish ship designers CarlBro and was also to oversee their construction and provide subsequent technical supervision. An office was opened at the yard under the management of a former Graig master, and this presence would later become formally established as Graig China Ltd., with offices in Shanghai. The commercial management of the Confidence ships was to be provided by Clipper. July 1996 saw a further contract signed for four more identical vessels, with the first launch due to take place in May 1997.

In all, nineteen Confidence vessels were built at Zhonghua shipyard between 1997 and 2002. A potential major problem had to be faced halfway through the construction of the series when SOLAS rules relating to the maximum permitted size of single holds were changed. Fortunately, a dispensation was granted to build up to 20 vessels of the same type, providing that all successive vessels were built exactly to the original specifications. The Confidence class ships proved very successful, with a number chartered to Maersk to serve as feeder container ships. They also proved their value in the transport of complex project cargoes, as well as indivisible items like railway carriages, yachts and sections of aircraft fuselage. Four were taken up by Dutch heavy-lift ship specialists Mammoet (later BigLift); these vessels were fitted with two 150-tonne cranes mounted on opposite sides of the ship.

Financing the ships

In order to finance the construction of the class, single-ship companies were mostly established, which sought capital from a wide range of institutional investors. Initial ownership by single ship companies, some with quirky names like the Bluebottle Shipping Co. Ltd. of Nassau, often disguises the source of the finance. Names originally carried by the 15 basic ships of the class give some indication of the significance of Graig and the Clipper Group in control of their owning companies. The six carrying Welsh place names plus CEC CASTLE (which was openly owned by Graig) and probably CLIPPER CONFIDENCE all indicate the predominance of Graig, with CEC COPENHAGEN and CEC CULEMBOURG suggesting a Danish influence. CEC CALEDONIA was financed by the Bank of Scotland. The significance of the names CLIPPER WESTOE (from a Tyneside settlement), CEC CRUSADER and CEC COURAGE, are lost on the authors. The four heavy lift Ts were probably financed on behalf of Mammoet until their 2004 sale to Spliethoffs of Amsterdam.

In April 2004 an agreement was reached with Clipper to divide up the vessels. Graig retained seven vessels and these were then sold to the Hamburg-based finance house Ownership Emmissionhaus G.m.b.H. in an \$84m sale and charter-back deal. The company's structure allowed Germans to invest directly in shipping with tax-advantages plus zero liability. To make it even more attractive this was linked to a tonnage tax promoted by the German government which was characterised by a flat-rate assessment of a ship's cargo capacity rather than its profitability. At its height it is estimated that some 440,000 German citizens invested

Subsequent history

Sales of the 15 non-heavy lift members of the class to outside companies began in 2007. Between 2008 and 2012 others were transferred to a Clipper subsidiary (or more precisely to a subsidiary of Thorco Shipping A/S) named Clipper Projectships Ltd., Nassau, signalling the end of Graig ownership of ships of the class. Subsequent sales saw ownership quite widely dispersed, with known beneficial owners including those from Greece, Africa, the Middle and Far East, USA, Russia and Turkey.

Confidence class list

Names listed in the headings of each entry were those carried whilst in the ownership and/or management of Graig and its partner the Clipper Group/Clipper Elite Carriers.

6. CLIPPER CARMARTHEN/KARINE DELMAS/CEC CARMARTHEN/ CEC COMMANDER/CLIPPER COMMANDER 1998-2010

IMO 9169859 6,714g 2,893n 8,702d.

100.48 x 20.41 x 11.095 metres.

8-cyl. (460 x 580 mm) 4SCSA oil engine by Wartsila NSD Finland Oy, Turku, Finland; 10,605 BHP, 16 knots.

8.6.1998: Launched by Zhonghua Shipyard, Shanghai, China (Yard No. 397).

28.9.1998: Completed for Carmarthen Shipping Co. Ltd., Nassau, Bahamas (Idwal Williams and Co. Ltd., Cardiff) (Graig Shipmanagement (Germany) G.m.b.H., Hamburg, Germany, managers) as CLIPPER CARMARTHEN.

8.1998: Renamed KARINE DELMAS.

11.1999: Renamed CEC CARMARTHEN.

2003: Transferred to CMI Carmarthen Ltd. (Clipper Project Shipping Ltd., managers), Nassau.

10.2004: Renamed CEC COMMANDER.

2.2010: Transferred to Clipper Projectships Ltd., Nassau (Thorco Shipping A/S., Hellerup, Denmark).

4.2012: Renamed CLIPPER COMMANDER.

12.2014: Sold to Sinokor Maritime Co. Ltd., Seoul, South Korea and renamed GRACE PIONEER.

3.2015: Transferred to Grace Pioneer S.A. (Sinokor Maritime Co. Ltd.), Seoul, South Korea under the Panama flag.

2.2021: Still in service.



CLIPPER CARMARTHEN as the South Korean **GRACE PIONEER** at Singapore, 9.1.2015.
Ralf Gierke
(WSS Marine News Supplement 03/2021)

Last update: 14/4/2021