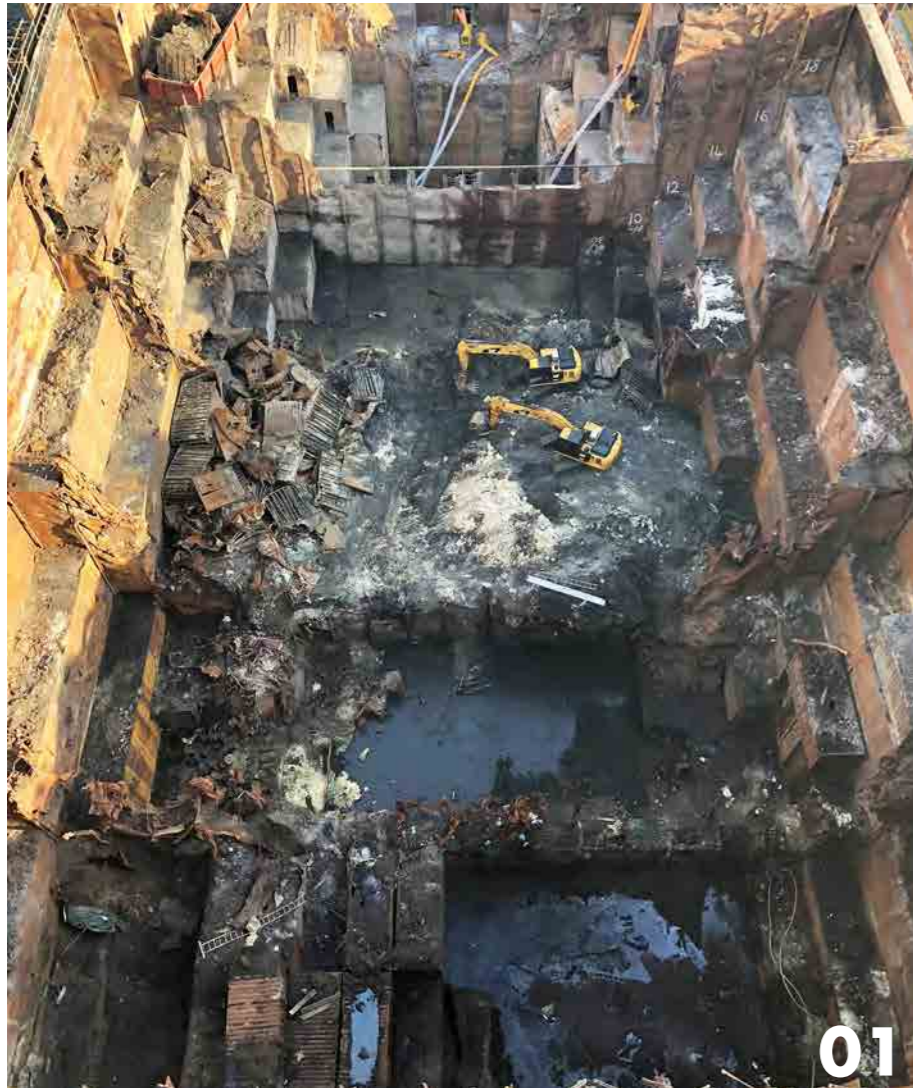


SAFETY TALK



'PEOPLE MATTER MORE THAN PARTS'

'SMIT has been active in salvage for almost 180 years,' says Richard. 'For a long time, we had our own approach to safety: it was all about taking care of one another. Or in other words: people matter more than parts. In our work, you have to ask: I'll take care of you, will you take care of me? The underlying idea is similar to the NINA philosophy, which Boskalis adopted more than a decade ago. In our field, everything comes down to mutual trust, to knowing you can count on one

another whatever happens.' Pieter adds: 'Our colleagues have always been willing to take on high-risk salvage operations together. They always knew their colleagues would warn them whenever there was any possible danger. And that's still true: they know they can rely on each other under any circumstances.'

AT THE DROP OF A HAT

'It may sound like an almost impossible combination: executing salvage operations at the

drop of a hat but still working safely. We usually succeed, simply because we take as many safety precautions as we can before a specific request for help even arrives,' explains Pieter. 'As soon as a salvage call comes in, we discuss the potential hazards with the salvage team. We consider every possible risk. Even in complex, urgent situations, we usually find the time to assess the risks and establish an overall picture of the situation. And on the plane on the way to the salvage location, our teams spend time on preparing as well as possible. They make a provisional salvage plan using information that their colleagues back at the office collect as soon as the call comes in. The team receives the latest information during the flight or on arrival. Then they plan how to go to work. Since the start of the pandemic, we have been operating in line with a strict protocol to protect our colleagues as much as we can. That includes arrangements for immediate, reliable local medical assistance if there are any difficulties.'

UPWARD TREND

'We are growing rapidly,' says Richard. 'There's an upward trend in the number of salvage operations. Our projects are also becoming increasingly complex. Our focus is on globalization and the ongoing professionalization of the work done by our teams in Rotterdam, Cape Town, Houston and Singapore.'

This growth can be seen in the acquisition of Ardent Americas last year and the associated increase in the number of OPA-90 contracts. Including the American Donjon-Smit joint venture, our portfolio now includes more than 1,300 shipowners, with a combined fleet of more than 14,000 vessels. More and more shipowners are signing Global Preparedness contracts to make sure they have immediate, rapid assistance in the event of an emergency. The contract we signed recently with Petrobras in Brazil is one example.

INCREASING SAFETY AWARENESS

'To achieve our growth targets, we need to be able to handle multiple major operations simultaneously,' says Richard. 'We are adapting our capacity accordingly, with specialized salvage equipment and by hiring new colleagues. We expect to recruit around thirty to fifty in the coming years. It's crucial for them to get on board with our safety

Few Boskalis activities are as unpredictable as the work of our Salvage colleagues. 'Our salvage operations sometimes result in hair-raising footage but we always assess the risks carefully. Safety is a top priority,' say managing director Richard Janssen and SHE-Q manager Pieter Kuzee as they explain the role of NINA at Salvage, and why they are taking part in the Safety Leadership program 'The Expedition'.

'IF WE WANT TO CHALLENGE OUR EMPLOYEES TO RAISE THE SAFETY BAR EVERY TIME, WE MANAGERS HAVE TO LEAD THE WAY.'

RICHARD JANSSEN, MANAGING DIRECTOR SALVAGE

philosophy as quickly as possible. Integrating new colleagues is a delicate process: trust has to be earned, and that takes time.' Salvage has taken a range of steps recently to increase safety awareness worldwide. 'The updated diving handbook is one example,' says Richard. 'Diving is a risky business, and we employ about eighty divers around the world. To raise safety and the quality of their work to the same standard, we asked one of our most experienced colleagues to update our guidelines, code of conduct and practical matters such as work preparations and reporting.'

IDENTIFYING THE RISKS QUICKLY

Pieter explains the role of NINA at Salvage: 'One change resulting from NINA is the awareness that our entire organization is responsible for the salvage team's safety. We ask our colleagues in the office, including our commercial and administrative colleagues, not just to collect as much information as possible from the very outset of a salvage operation, directly from the client or otherwise, but also to point out possible hazards that other colleagues may not have considered. In this way, we work together on identifying the risks.'

MILITARY BACKGROUND

'NINA has changed our approach to safety,' Pieter continues. 'We have learned to give feedback in a clear, respectful and constructive way and to talk about safety. In the past, apprentice divers were expected to follow the orders of the salvage masters. The hierarchy sometimes got in the way of reporting unsafe situations. Many of our divers have a military background or they come from jobs where a strict hierarchy is the norm. But the NINA philosophy is all about talking to one another

about unsafe conduct. As elsewhere at Boskalis, we look at colleagues' NINA performance during appraisal and performance reviews. NINA has lowered the threshold for our divers. And rightly so: after all, they are the ones who do the work under water. We discuss subjects like these during the NINA "Do it" courses and the NINA refresher courses that we organize worldwide for all our colleagues, old and new. Our work is all about delivering solutions – sometimes in difficult circumstances – under the motto "getting things done". And that's the way it should be, but not at any cost. Thanks to NINA, we talk about the limitations that come with working safely.'

CULTURAL DIFFERENCES

Last summer, the Salvage management team launched the Safety Leadership program 'The Expedition' (see also Cohesion 2/2021). 'If we want to challenge our employees to raise the safety bar every time, we managers have to lead the way,' says Richard. 'It's a question of practicing what you preach. We have to keep on our toes, and challenge ourselves to look at the safety issues in our division from a new perspective.' Pieter adds: 'We want to raise our approach and safety vision to the same level worldwide, while keeping cultural differences in mind. Our colleagues in Asian countries see group conduct and hierarchical relationships differently: they are less inclined to give feedback to managers than their Western colleagues.'

One of the goals of our Leadership program is to identify and eliminate differences like this. Safety is the responsibility of everyone in our organization. The program helps us to make that message crystal clear for the office staff who support all our projects.'

WAKE-UP CALL

'We need to be able to offer our clients the same quality and standard of safety across the world,' says Richard. 'The WoW and NINA have an important role to play in this.'

One concrete plan for the coming

time is to introduce NINA to the partners and suppliers

we regularly work with around the globe: we want their feedback as well, even when it's hard. For example, one of them recently pointed out that we required a certain way of working that we ourselves didn't comply with. Direct feedback of this kind is a wake-up call that you sometimes need, to improve and keep learning from others.'

> For more information: send an email to r.janssen@smit.com or p.kuzee@smit.com

> See *Yourizon* for more information and a video about the Global Preparedness contracts at Salvage.



01 REMOVING ASH FROM THE MAERSK HONAM
An example of how thoroughly Salvage puts safety into practice. In 2018, the salvors worked to extremely safe procedures when they removed thousands of tons of ash from the burned-out container ship Maersk Honam. They were dressed in astronaut-like pressure suits and cooling vests to eliminate any risk of coming into contact with toxic substances.