

# Portuguese Maritime Authority

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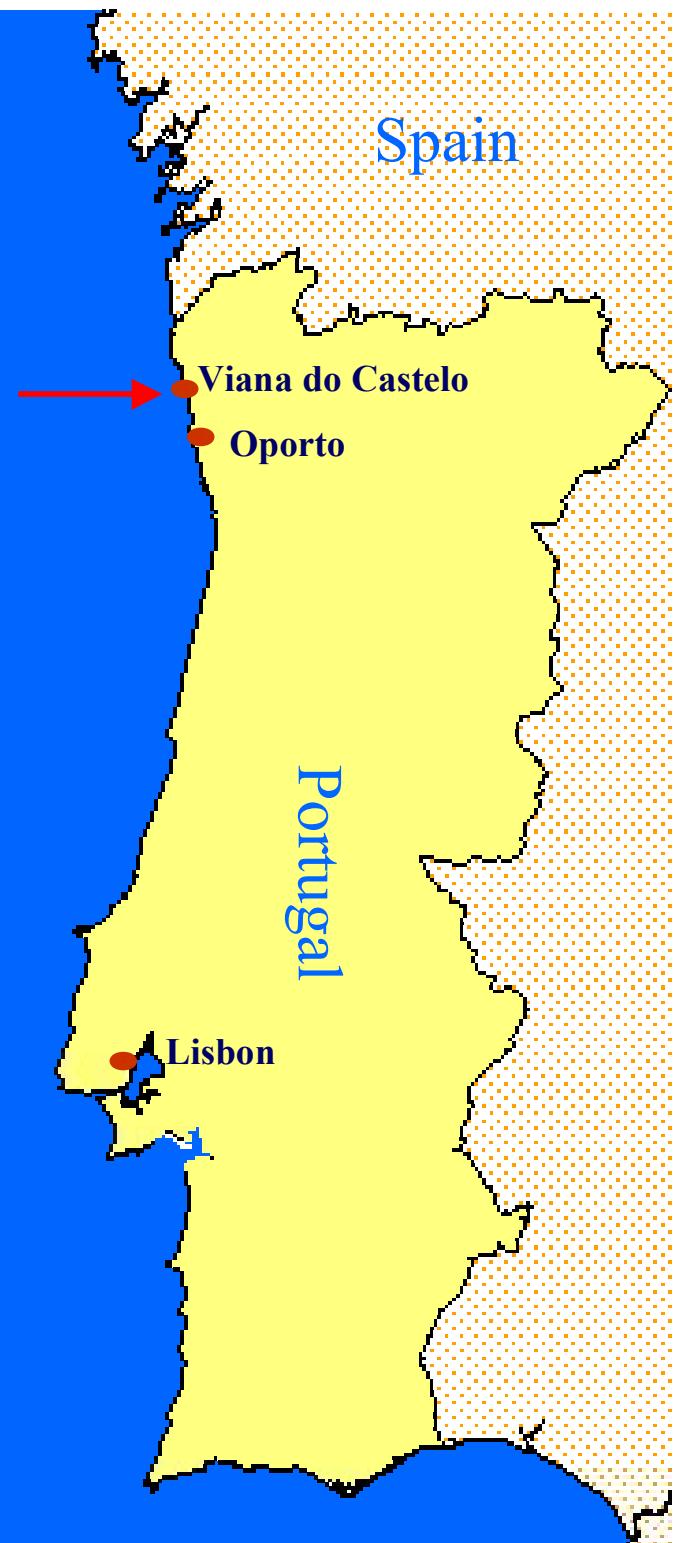
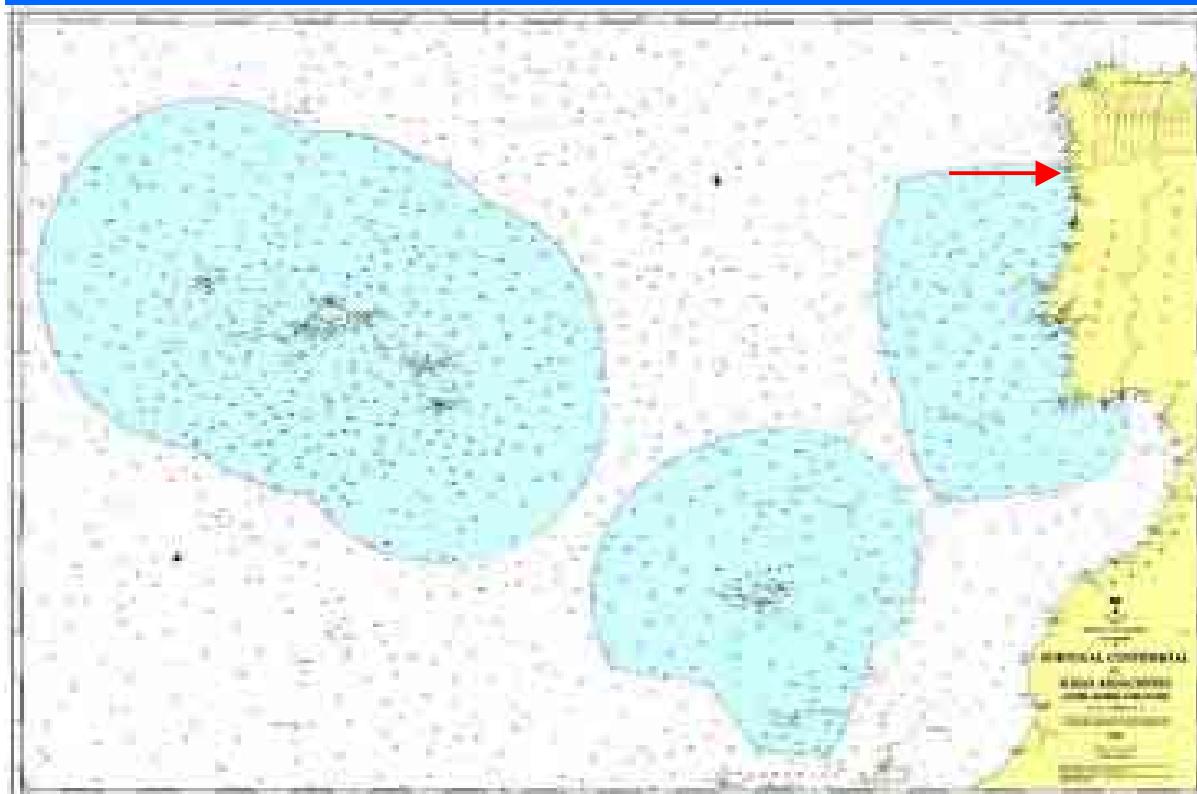
## Directorate-General

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# Dealing with a wreck stranded on a port breakwater: **THE CORAL BULKER**

**Raul H. I. Valente**  
Captain (PO NAVY)

# THE LOCATION OF THE WRECK



# VIANA DO CASTELO HARBOUR MAP

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# CORAL BULKER

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- Registered in Hong Kong
- Chinese Flag
- Length – 169 m
- Breadth – 27,2 m
- Depth – 8 m
- Deadweight – 28.454 MT
- Cargo – 10.300 MT of sawdust, 5.300 MT of woodchips and 3.200 MT of timber
- Pollutants – 610 MT of heavy fuel oil and 100 MT of diesel and lubricants













CORAL GULF





# CORAL BULKER

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During the ceremony (8SET01) a  
Mention of Honour was given to the  
Shipowner and to the Insurance  
Company



THANK YOU

## **INFORMATION DAY OF CEDRE IN PARIS – 6thOCT2003**

### **Dealing with a wreck stranded on a port breakwater: THE CORAL BULKER**

#### [Slide 1](#)

Mr. Chairman,

Ladies and Gentlemen:

#### [Slide 2](#)

The M/V “Coral Bulker” had arrived outside the port of Viana do Castelo in the afternoon of the 24<sup>th</sup> DEC2000 but, because of the bad weather conditions, was not possible to enter in the harbour.

The captain of the ship decided to anchor it at 0.8 miles outside the northern breakwater of the harbour.

However, with the increase of the bad weather conditions and sudden violent storm of wind by the end of 25<sup>th</sup> DEC, the Coral Bulker dragged her anchor, ran aground adjacent to the northern breakwater and was stranded on it. [Slide 3](#)

The stern of the ship was around 15 meters from the breakwater and the bow around 50 meters. [Slide 4](#)

The grounding location was in an exposed area and was open to the wrath of the winter North Atlantic swells.

In addition, the site was in full view of the town and summer influx of tourists. [Slide 5](#)

The SOS from the ship was received by the end of that Christmas day and 3 hours later the captain asked to rescue the crew.

#### [Slide 6](#)

The Maritime Rescue Command Centre Lisbon immediately put in force the plan for the rescue.

Two ships of the Portuguese Navy were sent to the place and a helicopter of the Portuguese Air Force began the rescue of the 22 members of the crew by 3h50m in the morning.

The operation took almost 2 hours in a very dangerous weather conditions and point out the courage and boldness of the helicopter’s crew.

Also in the 26<sup>th</sup>, a meeting took place to coordinate the marine pollution response.

In the meeting were present representatives from the shipowner, Alderran Shipping BVI, the Wallen Shipmanagement Ltd, from the insurance company, the P&I London Steam Ship, from the maritime agent D.A.Knudsen, and from Smit Tak that was contracted by the shipowner to transfer the fuel.

Smit Tak was contracted by the Owners on the conditions of the LOF2000, with invocation of the SCORPIC clause.

They began to perform all operations in close corporation with the agents Knudsen, salvage and towage company Tinita from Portugal and Technosub of Taragona, Spain.

Coral Bulker was registered at Hong Kong, sailed with a Chinese Flag, had 169 meters length, and about 27m breath and 8m depth. [Slide 7](#)

She carried 10.300 metric tons of sawdust, 5.300 metric tons of woodchips and 3.200 metric tons of timber.

She had also about 620 tons of heavy fuel oil and 100 tons of diesel and lubricants.

With the evidence of a marine pollution, the “Capitão do Porto” of Viana do Castelo, the entity with jurisdiction in the affected zone, put in force the 3<sup>rd</sup> grade of our Sea Clean Plan, so the contingency plan for the local area was activated.

The arrangement settled for the protection against the pollution was finished 6 months later, when the removal of the wreck stranded to ashore was completed.

In the meanwhile the Ministry of the Environment asked for a study of environmental impact.

It was the Zoology and Anthropology Department from the Sciences Faculty of the University of Oporto that conducted all the project for the monitoring of the area between Castelo de Neiva and Montedor beaches, about 30km on coastline.

To rationale we can divide the whole operation into 3 different phases:

The first, the removal of the pollutants and the response to pollution which was born from the wreck stranded.

The marine pollution response, took place early 27<sup>th</sup> and was coordinated by the “Capitão do Porto” of Viana do Castelo with the help of the Portuguese Maritime Pollution Response Department (SCPMH).

### [Slide 8](#)

For that purpose, some human and material resources were placed to recover the spills rising near the ship, the rocks and the beaches near by. ([slides 9 and 10](#))

Smit Tak personnel arrived on site by 27<sup>th</sup> December, in addition they sub-contracted the services of local contractors for the supply of personnel and equipment which had also arrived on site on the same day.

A local civil engineering company, was contracted to construct an access road to the breakwater, to enable the salvage operations to take place.

Access to the vessel was not gained until 29<sup>th</sup> December, due to the adverse weather conditions and up to 5 meters swell.

Due to the conditions, it was not possible to complete a full survey of the vessel, however, the survey did find that the heavy fuel oil double bottom tanks were damaged, and there was heavy fuel oil within number 4 ballast tank.

Portable salvage equipment arrived on site on 30<sup>th</sup> December.

Following the initial survey, the primary task was to gain access to the engine room, and the fuel tanks, so as to recover as much of the fuel oil, as possible.

Adverse weather continued to hamper access to the vessel throughout 31<sup>st</sup> December and the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> January.

During this period, part of the deck cargo was carried away.

The casualty was working heavily on the rocky seabed. Preparations continued throughout this period for oil removal, including the transfer of pumps and hoses onboard, by portable crane, when conditions allowed.

Salvors were able to gain access to the vessel on 3<sup>rd</sup> January, and continued oil removal preparations. Pumps were placed within the engine room and on the main deck, and hoses run to a tank truck, on the breakwater roadway.

On the 3<sup>rd</sup> JAN, Smit Tak began to transfer the pollutants after the approval, by the Maritime Authority, of their plan. By the 4<sup>th</sup> JAN over 42 tons of mixed oils had been removed from the casualty. During this period the engine room was also skimmed.

The second phase involved the removal of the deck cargo. For that purpose, the shipowner also contracted Smit Tak that elaborated a plan for the removal.

After the approval of the plan, it was carried out by a Portuguese firm named Transfradelos.

In this phase all the cargo spread along the beaches was recovered. [Slide 11](#)

Salvors continued to recover bunkers from the casualty during the deck cargo discharge operation. To assist in liquefying the now solidified heavy fuel oil bunkers, a steam generator was hired.

This was used to supply steam to heating coils inserted into the bunker tanks. Ultimately, it became necessary to inject live steam into some of the tanks.

The bunker removal proved to be a slow operation. In total 226 m3 of fuel and mixed oils were recovered from the vessel.

ITOPF estimated that the initial oil spill was in the region of 200 m3, therefore, approximately 250m3 of bunkers remained unaccounted for.

It was therefore assumed, that the initial oil spill was greater than first estimated. In addition, a percentage of the bunkers had lost into the cargo holes and mixed with the under deck cargo.

For the deck cargo and the ship removal, the ship owner had contracted TITAN Maritime Llc.

The 3<sup>rd</sup> phase began. It was the most amazing phase of all. The ship was cut in two parts and removed ashore. [Slide 12](#)

By that time, I was not in the Maritime Authority and so I could not feel such a technological important experience. [Slide 13](#)

To speak about that subject, we have invited Mr. Alvaro Guidotti from TITAN Maritime, who was the salvage manager. [Slide 14](#)

Finally, eight months after the incident, the configuration of the affected area was completely clean as before. [Slide 15](#)

The most important recovery of the pollutants was carried on during 2 months. A lot of equipment were involved and, in average, more than 30 persons worked daily. From the ship 153 tons of heavy fuel were transferred, and from the beaches about 360 tons of contaminated sand were recovered.

The marine pollution response actions and the removal of the wreck stranded were supported totally by the shipowner and the insurance company. The amount involved was approximately twelve millions and five hundred thousand euros (12.500.000,00)

An accident like what happened with the Coral Bulker caused in the local community a natural impact.

However, the prompt response to recover the pollutants had minimized the impact on the ecosystem, the damages for the fisheries and for other economic activities. Because the accident had happened in the winter, the tourism activities did not suffer too much.

To point out the *terminus* of all the works involved, an official ceremony took place with the presence of the Ministers of Defence, Economy, Environment and also the Admiral Chief of the Portuguese Navy Staff (who is the National Maritime Authority) and other VIP's from the State.

In that ceremony, a mention of honour was given to the Shipowner and to the Insurance Company for their sense of responsibility in assuming and executing all their duties with high professionalism, institutional sense and high efficiency.

Were also present a representative of the agent Knudsen, from the Owner, and the agent Pinto Basto Comercial, from the P&I.

## Slide 16

As a special gesture to all involved, the beach next to the breakwater was renamed “Praia do Coral”, Coral’s beach.

Unfortunately, was notorious that the portuguese media only covered the first part of the incident in the TV breaking news, during some weeks, when the situation seemed to be out of control and they felt misfortune.

On the other hand, in the moment of recognizing the efforts of all parts involved, the media forgot completely to inform the success of such difficult operation.

## Slide 17

Thank You

Your attention, please, to Mr. Guidotti.

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Captain (PO Navy)  
*Direcção Geral da Autoridade Marítima*