

ON THE WATERFRONT: Port and starboard have their origins explained

By David G. Sellars

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AT THE BEGINNING of the week, the 360-foot petroleum products tank barge DBL 55 moored to the Port of Port Angeles' Terminal 3.

I understand the barge will be alongside the terminal for about 3 weeks to allow crews from Vigor Industrial to perform a laundry list of general maintenance items.

DBL 55 has a storied past.

In the early morning hours of Oct. 13, 2016, the articulated tug and barge (ATB) Nathan E. Stewart-DBL 55 ran aground on Edge Reef off Athlone Island in the Seaforth Channel near Bella Bella, B.C.

At the time of the accident, the Nathan E. Stewart was en route to the Port of Vancouver with the empty DBL 55.

No injuries were reported. However, approximately 29,000 gallons of fuel and lube oil were released from the tug.

Damage to the vessel and barge was estimated at \$12 million.

Platypus Marine, the shipyard, yacht repair facility and boat manufacturer on Marine Drive in Port Angeles, hauled Crysan out of the water this week.

She is a commercial fishing vessel that hails from Neah Bay that will be getting a new coat of bottom paint.

Which side?

Thanks and a tip of the bosun's cap to Ken Cliff of Big Bear Lake, Calif., who wrote and asked the origin of the terms port and starboard.

Port and starboard are shipboard terms for the left and right side of maritime vessels when facing forward. Confusing those two could cause a ship wreck.

In Old England, the starboard was the steering paddle or rudder, and ships were always steered from the right side on the aft end of the vessel. Larboard referred to the left side, the side on which the ship was loaded.

So how did larboard become port?

Shouted over the noise of the wind and the waves, larboard and starboard sounded too much alike.

The word port means the opening in the "left" side of the ship from which cargo was unloaded.

Sailors eventually started using the term to refer to that side of the ship.

Use of the term "port" was officially adopted by the U.S. Navy by General Order on Feb. 18, 1846.

Around the port

The Port of Port Angeles recently put out a request for proposals to multiple manufacturers of temporary fabric buildings.

The Ports' 2019 capital budget earmarks \$150,000 towards the purchase and erection of a 42-foot by 60-foot temporary fabric structure at the ports' boat yard facility.

The building will allow professional service personnel to work under cover while performing maintenance assembly and repairs on vessels in addition to keeping their supplies and equipment protected from the weather.

Monday, Tesoro Petroleum provided bunkers to Sun Vil II, a 623-foot Bulk Cargo ship that is flagged in the Cayman Islands.

David G. Sellars is a Port Angeles resident and former Navy boatswain's mate who enjoys boats and strolling the area's waterfronts and boat yards.

Items and questions involving boating, marina and industrial activities and the North Olympic Peninsula waterfronts are always welcome. News announcements about boating groups, including yacht clubs and squadrons, are welcome as well.

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