

Ships in Focus

MV. An Tai

By Geoff Walker



(Unknown copyright)

The MV An Tai at the wharf where she sank at Port Klang, Malaysia.

In November 1997 I was master of a container ship which had just arrived at Port Klang as one of our regular scheduled ports of call. As we steamed into the port, towards our allotted berth at the container terminals, I recall noting a rather tired looking SD 14 type vessel alongside at one of the bulk cargo berths, as we passed by. I really didn't give it a second thought. However, upon our departure two days later, I was amazed to see the same ship in the same position but sitting on the seabed with her bridge awash. It would appear while at her berth at Wharf 14, Port Klang, discharging a cargo of fertilizers from Xingang, China, the vessel listed due to the ingress of seawater due to cracking of her hull. She sank the next day alongside the wharf, where she remained in situ for some time until about February 2001, when the vessel was cut in two, the stern section refloated, and wreckage removed.

The ship seems to have had numerous owners during her years of service. An SD-14 type cargo vessel originally built in 1972 as "**London Grenadier**", 9210 GRT for "London & Overseas Freighters Ltd.", of London, by Austin and Pickersgill Ltd., Sunderland. She was fitted with a 5-cylinder Sulzer Diesel Engine of 7500 BHP which gave her a service speed of 14.5 knots.

It would appear she had a checkered career being sold in 1978 to "Clyde Maritime Ltd.", of Limassol, Cyprus, placed under Swiss management, and renamed "**First Jay**". In 1982, management was taken over by Saudi Arabian interests. In 1986, the vessel was again sold to "Maunland Navigation Inc.", of Manila, Philippines, with "Vroon B.V." reported as the managers, and the ship renamed "**Simara Express**". Technical management of the vessel was supposedly transferred to Greeks in 1988.

On September 30, 1993, while on a passage from South Africa to Chile & Peru, the vessel encountered bad weather. A part of the cargo shifted, and a container exploded causing a fire. The vessel was examined, and the damaged cargo was removed at Montevideo, Uruguay, with the ship then being allowed to continue its voyage.

At Callao, Peru, once all cargo had been removed, following a complete inspection, the vessel was declared a constructive total loss due to the estimated repair cost being higher than her value. In 1994 the vessel was reportedly sold to Greek interests who then sold her to Chinese buyers for demolition, who then renamed her "**Tian Yuan Xing**", and placed under the registry of St. Vincent & Grenadines, presumably for the delivery voyage to breakers. However, she did not go for demolition as planned, but instead was transferred to "An Da Shipping Inc.", of Belize, who becoming her new owners, the ship was then renamed "**An Shun**", in 1996, and then "**An Tai**", later the same year, with final ownership passing to "An Tai Navigation Enterprises Ltd.", of Belize.

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Bibliography: In researching this article the author drew on the following as references: Shipspotting.com, Miramar, Sunderland Built Ships.

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