

A full-page photograph of Captain Bill Lambden, a middle-aged man with light brown hair, wearing a white short-sleeved button-down shirt with gold and black striped epaulettes. He is standing on the deck of a ship, with the ocean and a cloudy sky in the background. The ship's railing and some equipment are visible behind him.

40

YEARS AT SEA

Captain Bill Lambden

Reflects on Four Decades Sailing with BW / Hafnia

On 26 August, Captain Bill Lambden was presented with Hafnia's Long Service Award in Singapore by **Ralph Juhl, EVP, Technical**, in recognition of an extraordinary 40-year career that has spanned three company names, dozens of vessels, and countless voyages across the world's oceans. To mark the occasion, we caught up with Captain Lambden to hear his reflections on a career that began, almost by accident, on the docks of Hong Kong.

1983	Made redundant by BP Tankers after four years as deck cadet and one trip as Third Officer.
1986	Joins Worldwide Shipping on Pedder Street, Hong Kong. First vessel: MV Star Magnate.
2000	First command, VLCC MT Sylt - met by a typhoon before arrival in China.
2008	Takes VLCC BW Edelweiss out of the shipyard.

01

Congratulations on reaching 40 years with the Company. How does it feel to have recently passed this milestone?

"To be honest, I can't say I ever worked towards this target of 40 years - it has all rolled along quite naturally, as my chosen profession after leaving school. But now that I've reached the 40-year mark with the Company, I must admit to feeling a real sense of achievement."



ONBOARD

Captain Lambden in uniform.

02

What do you remember most from your first years onboard?

Captain Lambden's path to the Company was anything but straightforward. "I spent about four years with BP Tankers as a deck cadet, and one trip as Third Officer, before being made redundant during their first-ever wave of redundancies in 1983.

I then joined Jardine Ship Management in Hong Kong, and after a pleasant couple of years on bulk carriers, I was made redundant again - good jobs in the shipping industry were quite difficult to find in the early 1980s!

"Being in Hong Kong at the time, I decided my best chance of finding work was to start knocking on doors. After about six refusals, I came to Worldwide Shipping on Pedder Street, who offered me a job in their bulk fleet on pay and conditions that were quite laughable. But in desperation, and wishing to continue my life as a seafarer, I joined in August 1986.

"Flying from Hong Kong to Vancouver across the date line led to a mix-up between the Company and its agents, and I found myself standing in Vancouver airport with no one to meet me I did start to wonder if I'd made the right decision! But after boarding my first vessel, MV Star Magnate, as Third Officer, I found it quite easy to fit into the ways of another shipping company."

03

Shipping has changed a lot over the years. What are some of the biggest differences between when you started and today?

"The main difference between the early days and now is the much higher level of safety, introduced when the ISM Code came into force.

This touched every part of the profession - not just navigation, with the shift to electronic charts and more advanced equipment, but also day-to-day life onboard, with toolbox talks, safety meetings and the like becoming routine. It has also brought a huge increase in paperwork and checklists, much of which didn't exist at the time, but is now required to meet various legal obligations.

"During my time with the Company, it has evolved through the names Worldwide Shipping, to BW Shipping, to Hafnia, and I've tried to adjust to the different requirements and standards laid down at each stage - although change isn't always easy to accept."



04

Is there a particular vessel, voyage, or experience from your career that you still remember especially well?

“So many memories - some good, and some not so good! I enjoyed taking the VLCC BW Edelweiss out of the shipyard in 2008, with a great team both onboard and in the office and spending a few trips on her during those first couple of years. She was the last, and arguably the best, of that generation of VLCC newbuildings.

“From a heavy-weather point of view - and not necessarily happy memories - there were voyages like those on VLCC MT Soro, crossing the North Atlantic in the depths of winter in 2002, or even my first trip as Master, on VLCC MT Sylt in 2000, when a nasty typhoon caused all kinds of problems before arrival in China. Lonely times for a ship’s captain.”



05

What has kept you motivated throughout such a long career at sea?

“I came from quite a working-class background, with thought processes that are probably quite dated by today’s standards. I set out to reach the position of Master, and after achieving that, I realized it was just the beginning - there have been so many experiences since, and so many problems still to be resolved.”



MANILA

Officers' Conference 2023.

06

What advice would you give to young seafarers starting their careers today?

“

Apply yourself to the best of your abilities - and then a little bit more!

Seafaring is not for everyone, so if it's not for you, move on to one of the many other paths available.”

CAPTAIN BILL LAMBDEN

Hafnia congratulates Captain Bill Lambden on 40 remarkable years of service, and thanks him for his dedication and contribution across Worldwide Shipping, BW Shipping and Hafnia.