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(TradeWinds)

Ranger debuts in tankers

PIRAEUS: Ranger Marine of Greece has made its first move into the tanker market with the purchase of the 1980-built Protank Orinoco from the US-based Heidmar group.

The 68,000-dwt vessel was first reported to have been sold in July, and Heidmar confirmed in August that the ship had been sold to Greek interests for USD 13.5m, but only now has the buyer's identity emerged.

Spyridon Ranis of Ranger confirms the purchase, telling TradeWinds that the company hopes to acquire more tankers in addition to its existing fleet of six bulk carriers.

"This is our vision," says Ranis, adding that Ranger had already added two experienced tanker men to its personnel.

The company purchased the Protank Orinoco with a three-year time charter back to Heidmar at rates beginning at USD 14,500 and escalating to USD 15,500 per day. Ranis says he is happy with the rate, calling it "healthy." "Certainly, for our first tanker, it was imperative to have a time charter," he said.

Up to the current purchase, Ranger has been operating two mid-1970s Panamax bulkers and four Handysize units.

Besides his business involvements, Ranis is also committed to a newly-established training school for requirements related to the International Safety Management (ISM) Code and Standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping for Seafarers (STCW).

By Gillian Whittaker