

Press release
24 June 2020

Ferguson Marine launches Air Cushion Barge

Ferguson Marine (Port Glasgow) Ltd and CMI Offshore Ltd are pleased to announce the successful launch of the Air Cushion Barge (ACB) from the Ferguson shipyard at Port Glasgow.

The 55m x 24m barge, which will be completed and outfitted in the Caspian Sea, includes an extensive suite of lift fans, air propulsion, marine propulsion modules, and specialist rubber skirting. On its commissioning the unit will be the first self-propelled ACB built and will be capable of carrying up to a 150t payload over tundra, swamps, ice and water and will be used to provide support to the oil industry in the shallow waters of the Caspian Sea.

Tim Hair, Turnaround Director at Ferguson Marine, said: "The launch of the barge represents a key milestone in the recovery of Ferguson Marine. The shipyard has just resumed outdoor working following the COVID lockdown and the launch signals that we are able to operate effectively with social distancing controls in place. In addition, this project was at a critical stage when FMEL entered administration and achieving a positive outcome has only been possible due to the combined efforts of people in both businesses. I wish CMI every success in the next stage of their project."

Richard Keisner, CEO of CMI Offshore, said: "The construction of the core steel barge was originally awarded to FMEL in 2018 but was behind schedule and already delayed before FMEL was placed in Administration. We are thankful for the constructive approach of the Scottish Government in the nationalisation of the shipyard and to the new management in enabling us to take delivery of a completed watertight barge despite the various challenges that have arisen.

The design of a weight-sensitive craft such as the ACB requires the structure to be built of steel which is thinner than is generally found in shipbuilding practice and the challenge has been to optimise the weight whilst not compromising the applicable rules and regulations. Our thanks go to the shipyard workforce in overcoming the challenges presented with this particular structure. We look forward to the completion and delivery of the vessel in the Caspian before the end of this year."

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