

Volume 1: Memory bank Alexander L. Kielland-accident

# Those of us who survived

Editor: Marie Smith-Solbakken

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## SYNOPSIS

This book is part of a collection of five books on memories from the Alexander L. Kielland oil platform disaster in 1980. The book, which is the first volume in the series, includes memories of those who were survivors of the accident. We wish to emphasize that many of those who survived the accident did so thanks to the efforts of others who were part of the accident. Some of those helpers survived and others died.

The memories are from interviews conducted by the listed authors with those who survived the disaster. The interviewees have all read the interview transcripts, have sometimes altered them and made additions, and in a few cases have rewritten them to such an extent that they themselves are listed as authors.

An included list of references is a selection of archival sources as well as published sources related to the memories in this collection. More substantial bibliographies, as well as lists of archival sources, are included in Smith-Solbakken (2016) and in Smith-Solbakken and Weihe (2019). Further specialized publications focus on subjects such as post-traumatic stress disorders (Smith-Solbakken and Weihe, 2018) and grief (Weihe and Smith-Solbakken, 2012), and include additional bibliographies.

## About the Memory Bank

BY MARIE SMITH-SOLBAKKEN

The Alexander L. Kielland accident in 1980 stands as Norway's largest industrial disaster. 123 men lost their lives in the North Sea when the platform capsized. For the families and individuals affected, their lives were abruptly altered from what they had envisioned. This dramatic catastrophe, claiming so many lives, has deeply impacted us as a community and as a nation.

We've chosen to call this a Memory Bank to emphasize that these memories represent values that can grow, be shared, and evolve. The recorded memories are experiential assets invested in the community. We hope more people will deposit their memories into this memory bank. These memories encompass experiences, reflections, and opinions from those affected by the tragedy. This material is shared because understanding the accident will contribute to greater insight into the tragedy and the challenges individuals faced and continue to face. It also aids in comprehending the community's reactions.

The memory bank will be a resource for the entire society but will hold particular significance for all those affected by the accident and anyone who, in some way, feels connected to them. Norway is a coastal nation. The sea has claimed many lives but has also provided prosperity and livelihoods. These individual memories form a part of our recent past and cultural heritage, offering insight into how the accident intersects with the national narrative of the oil nation and the affluent society.

The memory bank contains interviews and notes from conversations with individuals affected by the Alexander L. Kielland accident.

THE MEMORIES IN THE MEMORY BANK ARE SORTED INTO FIVE BOOKS:

1. Those of us who survived
2. Those of us who rescued, salvaged, and investigated
3. Those of us who lost
4. Those of us who worked and those who were employers
5. Those of us who decided, supported, and were present

Everyone interviewed has approved that the notes from the conversation with them can be used as a part of the memory bank. A few of the included memories are from interviews conducted several years before we commenced our work. There is no restriction on the timeframe of the interviews, who was interviewed, or who created the notes upon which the interview is based.

As the editor, I want to express gratitude to everyone who has shared their memories. Those who were involved has lived with burdens and challenges far beyond what most of us can imagine. Rescue workers had particularly unique challenges. The work was conducted under

extremely difficult conditions, where it was crucial to work as swiftly as possible, often with equipment that had significant weaknesses and sometimes didn't.

#### CONTENT, FORM, PURPOSE, AND USE

In the memory bank, notes from conversations with those affected up until spring 2019 are published in their entirety so that future generations can benefit from the work done and partake in what those affected have communicated to us. The memory bank contains, in a historian's language, primary sources on the accident. This means they are sources from those who were there, as they tell it, and not our interpretations of how the accident was experienced. We've tried to convey this as closely and transparently as possible.

It is in line with our informants' desires that their memories and reflections shared with us and recorded are handed over to the Norwegian Oil Museum, the Regional State Archives in Stavanger, the National Library, and the Labor Movement's archive and made accessible to everyone. The intention is for their voices to be heard in public, for experiences and reflections to be exchanged, for this to become an imprint engaging with future generations, and for their experiences to be part of the national narrative.

This is the eight version. The memory bank allows for the addition of new memories over time and for revising and expanding existing memories. Our experience so far is that the publications we've released and the dissemination of memories have led to continually new people wanting to contribute. We hope this will continue, appreciating both the contributions that have come, new contributions, and supplements to the memories we have. The goal is to maintain this document as a dynamic collection where new affected individuals can add new notes using the same template and under the same conditions as the other interviews.

I want to note that the document has not undergone language editing, as it normally would in a regular publication. Nonetheless, I believe the most important aspect is making the communications available and that the somewhat raw form isn't a disadvantage for new users. Some of the notes are detailed and elaborate, while others are brief and concrete, containing only factual information. This reflects that the memories are recorded from people expressing themselves differently.

We request that those using the memory bank communicate with those who have submitted their memories and inform them about how their memories are being used. I also encourage everyone quoting from the memory bank to contact the individuals being quoted and seek their consent. Those who have deposited their memories in the memory bank should continue to be informed about how their experiences, reflections, and opinions are being used. To the extent that those who have submitted their memories have views on how the memories are being used and quoted, I believe these should be taken into account. This applies to film, artistic performances, scientific, and journalistic works. I know that most who have communicated with us will appreciate such a dialogue. It's about maintaining trust, but most importantly, showing

respect for the origin of the memory and crediting those who have shared their experiences, reflections, and opinions.



## NEVER FORGET!

INTRODUCTION BY KÅRE MAGNE KVÅLE

Work on oil platforms was an enticing job in the beginning of the oil era for many of Norway's working population. There was a sense of adventure and excitement in these jobs, along with good opportunities to earn a decent income. Opportunities for maritime jobs decreased, leading people from various societal strata to seek employment 'in the oil.' Schedules involving intensive work periods on board and time off made it equally attractive for people from inland communities and sparsely populated areas as for those from more industrialized regions.

There were opportunities for everyone, provided you were willing to work and could adapt to these new tasks. Hairdressers became drillers, farmers from Jæren became derrickmen, and fishermen from Karmøy became crane operators. Norway has a long tradition of labor migration. In periods, people would leave en masse for America to work; the sea and fishing provided good earnings, and housemaids earned money in Holland. Now, 'the oil' became the new workplace for many. The Alexander L. Kielland served as accommodation for people from various industrial fields working on the construction of installations for 'the oil.'

Certainly, there were risks associated with these jobs, and we were fully aware of them. It was nothing new, but health and safety (HMS) weren't such a significant focus. People were accustomed to handling risks as best as possible; they were not used to procedures and documentation. People performed their jobs thoroughly and conscientiously and expected those responsible for the tasks to have the same approach. For many, helicopter transport to and from the platforms was a major fear. There were several major accidents during transport between land and platforms that made people afraid. Most considered it safe once they were on the platforms, even though there could be safety challenges, but they were usually manageable in nature.

The Alexander L. Kielland was described as a very stable and safe platform, with excellent sea-handling capabilities. The platform was a Pentagon design, floating on five columns. This made the platform feel very stable, even in the worst weather. I was employed on the Alexander L. Kielland when it was under construction at the Compagnie Francaise d'Entreprises Metalliques (CFEM) shipyard in Dunkirk. Monitoring construction at the workshop is a very complicated task. For my part, I was less involved in overseeing the construction; it was more to familiarize myself with the platform's future operation. Veritas had a very reputable name from approving ships, something we trusted 100%. Veritas oversaw construction and follow-up, as well as later inspections and approval for the use and operation of the platform. The platform was never used for drilling; it went straight from the workshop to be used as accommodation during the construction of pump stations and other installations in the North Sea. The final stop was the Edda platform at Ekofisk. Here occurred what has subsequently been termed the largest industrial accident in Norwegian history.

The Alexander L. Kielland accident is extensively described in the book "The Incident, the Aftermath, the Secrets" (2016). A number of survivors, relatives, and other involved parties share their accounts, alongside investigation reports and other documentation. I don't wish to delve into this further but rather express how, as a survivor, I have experienced the time after the accident and reactions to what has been uncovered through the work conducted by the project at the University of Stavanger, led by Professor Marie Smith-Solbakken. It is also impossible to write a document about survivors of the Alexander L. Kielland without mentioning Kian Reme. He has tirelessly worked for years after the accident to reveal the truth of what happened and tried to keep the case active to eventually achieve justice for the survivors and the bereaved.

For my part, survival and rescue from the Alexander L. Kielland were what I must only describe as a miracle. It has also shown me how fragile a human being is against the forces of nature and the laws of physics. In a matter of minutes, the Kielland platform transformed from a safe and secure place into a platform in total imbalance, causing the deaths of 123 people with only 89 survivors. The Kielland accident could have had even more catastrophic consequences if the accident had not occurred at a time when most on board were awake. The accident completely shifted the focus on safety in the North Sea, leading to several improvements in the safety protocols for workers in Norway.

The time after the accident was difficult for me. Newspapers and media had daily coverage of everything that went wrong on the Alexander L. Kielland. People came forward with various stories about things they had seen that were wrong and could have had significance for the accident. I felt a strong sense of guilt. After all, I had been a crew member on the Kielland for many years. Had we done a poor job for which we could be blamed? These are thoughts that arise in such situations but are unrealistic. In hindsight, with today's systematic health, safety, and environment (HSE) work, potential errors and deficiencies could have been uncovered, making the Alexander L. Kielland safer. The University of Stavanger and other investigators have revealed aspects about the roles of authorities and owners in this accident that have shocked us survivors and the bereaved, showing that Norwegian oil extraction was not a walk in the park but a cynical and tough business.

Survivors and the bereaved are fighting for a new investigation. Those of us who were told after the accident that the Norwegian investigation commission's report was the truth were unaware that other investigations had taken place, reaching different conclusions, and that the outcomes of the settlements made between parties were to be kept secret for 40 years.

We were also unaware that the owners had increased insurance on the Alexander L. Kielland shortly before the accident, reaping significant profits individually. It's challenging to comprehend why survivors were offered 25,000 kr in compensation in exchange for never pursuing any lawsuits regarding the accident later, and why the bereaved were treated as neglectfully as possible. We had placed our trust in the Norwegian Confederation of Trade Unions (LO) and their lawyer, Karl Nandrup Dahl, believing these were very good solutions.

Furthermore, we were unaware that reports submitted by the onboard crew regarding cracks in the structure had been suppressed and that all written material related to this had been sanitized or attempted to be removed.

We were aware that survivors and the bereaved were up against powerful adversaries in the oil companies, owners, influential groups, and political circles. While these entities had different interests, collectively, they shared an interest in quickly closing this matter. It could harm economic interests and Norway's reputation as an oil nation.

Those of us who survived want the catastrophe of the Alexander L. Kielland accident never to be forgotten! It should serve as a reminder to everyone that human safety is more important than profit and short-term gains. We, the survivors, hope that political authorities will open the door to a new investigation and examine what happened with impartial eyes, free from the influence of lobbying or political gain. It is our hope, as survivors, that individuals whose lives were shattered in Norway's pursuit of staggering wealth receive the restitution they deserve, both for their sake and for Norway's reputation as an oil nation.



Survivors arriving Stavanger the 28<sup>th</sup> of March 1980 (Photo: Unknown)

## IN THE PERSONNEL BASKETS

OLAV SKOTHEIM, ENGINEER, PHILLIPS

By Hans-Jørgen Wallin Weihe, Statoil Fornebu, 2. November 2015.

### IMPLEMENTATION AND USE

Corrected after a read-through by us 1/11-2015 – corrections reviewed by hjww 2/11-2015 and sent back to us for a new review the same date.

Consented that notes from the conversation can be made public and included in a memorial collection about the Alexander L. Kielland accident and handed over to the Norwegian Petroleum Museum, the State Archives in Stavanger, The National Library and to the Labour Movement's archives and library so that posterity can take part in this. (Mail 24.01.2019)

Olav Skotheim's interviews and the journalistic descriptions concerning him can be found in several places. See for example Lønning, Per Ståle and Enghaug, Aage «Alexander Kielland KATASTROFE i Nordsjøen» published by Dreyers, page 108-109. See also Næsheim et al. (1981) «Alexander L Kielland»- accident NOU 1981:11.

### CONVERSATION

The conversation starts with an informal chat about his background and the time he grew up. Both Olav and his spouse are born in 1952. He is among the oldest employees in Statoil and has already been offered a severance package due to his age and the organisational changes the company is undergoing. Olav states that he enjoys his job and appreciates the tasks he is given. He tells us that he graduated from NTH as a civil engineer in 1977. In 1978 he began working in the oil industry as a trainee for Phillips Petroleum and from 1979 he continued there as a process engineer. He had held that job on several platforms. During 1979, he stayed on Alexander Kielland on several occasions, e.g., for the start-up of Albuskjell A and F as well as for the start-up of Edda.

He has decided to participate in interviews when he is invited to do so. In a way, this has been a method for him to process everything that happened.

When the accident occurred, Olav Skotheim was on a regular routine trip to Edda. He lived on Eldisk Alpha. The journeys between the platforms were dependent on specific needs. Due to weather conditions Olav slept over at Alexander L. Kielland the day of the accident. He went there in the morning and was supposed to go back in the evening, but the helicopter transportation was cancelled due to fog.

Olav was involved in the final phase of completion and transition to normal operation on Edda, in March 1980. There was a need for a flotel – an additional housing unit- with a footbridge between it and the production platform (Edda).

«At the time, there were no TVs in the rooms, so we went to the cinema in the evenings. We watched movies in a room that was actually a storage room. Kielland was a drilling platform, but it had been converted for residential purposes. Most people were in the cinema room, but some were reading or sleeping. The movie had just started – I think it was a cowboy movie - the scrolling text was rolling when we heard a loud bang. I thought someone had dropped the footbridge onto the deck. Then, there was another bang, and a movement could be felt through the entire platform, it tipped over and listed. The movie apparatus, an 8 or 16 mm, tipped over, and people started to walk out. It got completely dark, and the alarm went off. During what felt like a minute, it got a stable list of what I experienced as 45 degrees – it was probably closer to 30 degrees. We were on the deck below the main deck. I got into the hallway, where I saw water, and found my way up to the main deck. The first thing I saw when I came up from the cinema room was the broken leg with the anchor windlass. This leg had failed under the platform and detached from it.

Because of the angle of list, one part of the deck was down at the waterline while the other was high up. We helped each other out. Most people went over to the lifeboats. My cabin was in a container on deck. I went there to get dressed and to put on a life jacket. When I came back out, there was only one lifeboat left. It hung up in the air, and in such a way that it couldn't come down - so I looked around for other possibilities. I talked to the others, but the only way out was the sea. I swam towards Edda – had to jump into the sea and wanted to avoid being pulled down with the suction from the platform going under. I was lifted by a wave – I swam and swam – thought I was halfway there when I looked up and saw the personnel basket. I grabbed it from the outside and eventually managed to climb inside. Because of the waves, I was sometimes high up in the air and sometimes underwater. I saw many people who didn't manage to grab it and who were taken by winds and weather. The basket was hoisted up - I wasn't wearing a survival suit, but an insulated coverall. Everything was soaking wet. I was hoisted up onto the helipad. There, I was supported by two people. I quickly went down, changed my clothes, and took a warm shower. A noteworthy reflection is that when I jumped into the water it was neither cold nor wet, it was merely an option to get out of there and to safety.

After the rapid shower, I quickly went out to check – I was worried about Kielland. It was a much bigger platform than Edda – I was afraid it might drift into Edda – I was really on the alert. I saw that Kielland had turned upside down, its four legs up in the air. Big relief when it sailed past us.

Then I went down to the dining hall. It had been cleared of chairs and converted into an emergency hospital to receive the rescued. Everything was done according to the emergency routines, and it was ready for the rescued to arrive. There were only the 3 or 4 people who had been rescued in the first throw of the basket, as well as me.

The people in the kitchen were ready in their rescuer role – ready to handle a critical situation. No more people came. At that point, I just observed, no more people came on board. They

had cleared the area and were prepared to receive people, but no more people came.

The platform manager arrived. I knew him well. We looked at each other – didn't say a word but still had some sort of dialogue. There should have been so many, but no more people came.

After about 30- or 45 minutes – difficult to assess the time, we were flown over to the hotel at Ekofisk. We saw Bell helicopters fly just above the sea – and one or two supply boats. Some were picked up by boats, others had a rough meeting with the ships side.

We were transported to the hotel in the usual S-61 helicopters for personnel transportation. They didn't have a rescue lift, so we couldn't pick people up from the sea. That's why I've never questioned the platform managers' decision to send us to the Ekofisk hotel.

I guess the movie started around 6 pm and it didn't take more than 10 minutes from we got out until I reached Edda. I arrived there around 6:30 pm, probably left Edda at around 7:30 pm.

At the Ekofisk hotel, I borrowed clothes of a colleague and boss. I got to call a colleague at the Ekofisk onshore office. We had a landline, but it was only connected to the office – they couldn't connect it further, but he called Randi for me. He had two phones and was talking to Randi in one of them and to me in the other. He tried to hold the phones up against each other so that we could talk to each other, but it didn't work. Bjørn Finnøy was the name of the man I called and who called to inform Randi.

I was among the first people to arrive at Sola. I was contacted by Phillips Petroleum's information manager, Per Eirik Bjørklund and was interviewed by NRK at Sola. I was sent for a routine check at the hospital but had no physical injuries. On my way home in the taxi, I listened to the interview – they played it over and over. When I had to pay, I gave a wet hundred kroner bill. That's when he realized it, and said:

- So, you were there?
- Yes, I replied.

I was tired and relieved – and I thought about the others. I didn't have any close friends on board, but there were many colleagues I'd worked with on Edda.

There were talented people at Phillips – metallurgists – they quickly concluded that the welding of the hydrophones was a cause. A lot of effort was put into finding an explanation.

After the accident, I was followed up by the Rogaland psychiatric department. They made a survey. Randi received the same follow up. The routines they had to make people talk about it made me more open than I otherwise would have been - the openness was an important part of it.

We have two children and now, five grandchildren. The oldest was seven years old, the youngest was three. The three-year old didn't understand much, but the eldest understood the seriousness of the situation. The oldest wanted to comfort her mum – the youngest

thought mum was angry with the older sister and wanted to defend her. We found that a bit amusing.

In retrospect, it has left its marks. It was a serious situation, many didn't return home, but it's important to move on. My daughters and wife were worried every time I left– I continued to work offshore.

I haven't had much contact with my colleagues – some official gatherings, e.g., at the memorial at Kvernervik. I have met some while working on platforms with other survivors. We have greeted each other and chatted, but the contact is mostly scattered.

I worked for Phillips up until 1984, when I started to work in Statoil.

Me and my wife are both born in 1952. We have grown up together. I grew up in Lågendalen in Vestfold. It was a real paradise for kids with proper winters with snow – sunlight and summer. There was a strong sense of safety, everyone had time for the kids. My dad worked as an electricity producer manager, and my mum worked in the pharmacy. When I was 16, we moved to Ulsteinvik in Sunnmøre - a place for shipyard industry. A boat sank outside of Runde. It – Ulstein II - ran aground – many lost their lives – they froze to death in the water. It made a strong impression on me and made me want to wear a lot of clothes when I had to get in the water.

I spoke with a colleague who survived the Estonia-shipwreck. He managed to hang onto the outside of a raft. In situations like that you only have one focus: to do what's needed to survive. Afterwards you can let other things in.

After the accident, I could sometimes wake up in the middle of the night when I'd spoken about it with co-workers or journalists, or when there were unusual movements in the platform. I wouldn't call it nightmares; I slept on after having looked around to check that everything was ok. After the first year, I haven't had any reactions like that. I was lucky that I wasn't injured or that I didn't lose any of my close friends. I exercised a lot – occasionally ran on extra energy – the joy of being alive.

My impression is that Phillips held safety high on the agenda. Based on the prerequisites at the time, Phillips had a high level of safety measurements.

The accident led to major improvements: they introduced a mandatory training program, initially it was three weeks, now I think it's down to one. Stricter design requirements were introduced for floating platforms with requirements for reserve buoyancy capacity. Indirectly, the accident also led to the development of the freefall lifeboat. These things have all contributed to improvements. The Norwegian cooperation model has been positive regarding cooperation between safety representatives, trade unions and employers. We have learnt from accidents both in Norway and internationally. I've worked a lot with safety, and we've come a long way

since Alexander L. Kielland. This industry has become my life – I've been an engineer, manager, platform manager, administrator, and project manager internationally.



## BENGT BERHEIM, SKILLED WORKER, SCHLUMBERGER

January 20, 2019.

### PERSONAL DETAILS

Born:1951

Lives in Sandnes

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### USE AND IMPLEMENTATION

Conversation at Gamla Verket on the 1<sup>st</sup> of February 2016 with Else M. Tungland and Marie Smith-Solbakken. Notes from the conversation were reviewed and corrected by Bengt Berheim on the 20.01.2019. Consent that notes from the conversation can be made public and included in a memorial collection about the Alexander L. Kielland accident and handed over to the Norwegian Petroleum Museum, the State Archives in Stavanger, The National Library and to the Labour Movement's archives and library (Telephone 18.01.2019, Email 20.01.2019)

### BACKGROUND

1974-2006: employee of Schlumberger, worked with wireline, perforation.

Worked on Albuskjell Foxtrot and lived on Alexander L. Kielland in 1980.

Worked with perforation from 1996-2006.

### KIELLAND

I arrived on Kielland the day before. Just sat and waited to get away from there when the accident happened. I worked for Schlumberger. They tossed us to Kielland because they couldn't find "Safe Astoria" in the misty weather. I worked on Albuefox (Albuskjell 2/4 F). Back then, there were more people on the platforms than there were beds for. I was only there (at Kielland) to sleep. The weather was bad, so I stayed.

I was not exactly thrilled to be there. There were some «Moelven barracks» that were welded together and stacked on top of each other. It was some like a proper hovel. People wouldn't have accepted it nowadays. It was primitive. The only perk was free soda. That's what it was like. I've slept in places worse than that. We weren't exactly demanding back then. It became more proper in the North Sea after those things went down at Kielland. Laws and regulations on working hours were put in place, everyone had to go through security training, and so forth.

I spoke with Moseid (Toolpusher, Stavanger Drilling) out there, I knew him from Rossrigg. He had brought with him a drill crew and they were preparing the platform for drilling. They examined the pumps and tested the equipment.

MARCH 27, 1980

There were strong winds and the waves got bigger. Then we heard a boom and a bang. It felt like a wave hit the leg and we could feel some violent shaking. We were 3 people in my room, myself and two guys from Sperry Sun. The guy who opened his eyes widely when the leg was slammed, was on his first stay on a floating rig. The two of them, like me, were waiting to return to Albuskjell to do a job. We worked on Albuskjell.

I started to laugh. I was laughing because I'd experienced waves crashing into the leg on rigs many times before and there was no need to be alarmed by it. But then, it was my time to get scared when the rig jerked and sank down on the side where the leg was gone.

This was the last time I saw any of them.

The cabin door was downwards. I grabbed a chair and squeezed it through the window. I forgot the life jacket and everything in the room. I walked towards Edda, where there was a lifeboat station. The others went higher up. I went to the lifeboat box and grabbed a life jacket. I wondered if I should enter the lifeboat or wait to being picked up. Right after, the "shit" sank.

LIFEBOAT (3 OR 7)

Ok, I thought, I guess I must enter the lifeboat and possibly catch a cold. We got the boat into the water, started the engine and were ready to get out of there, but we were stuck! We were stuck to the trigger hooks – they wouldn't open. In this moment, I offered to pull the trigger handles. I was filled with adrenaline and pulled it so hard that those bumps that we all have in our hands – where the fingers are attached to the hands– turned black with blood blisters.

The boat was dragged around in a total chaos. We were hanging askew and swayed under the rig. The top of the lifeboat (the wheelhouse) was knocked off. The guy in there, who was supposed to steer, disappeared with the wheelhouse. There was screaming, swearing, and begging, some were calling for their mothers. Water started to come in. My only thought was: «I have to get out of here!»

I saw that the driver of the boat was gone – we were hanging there by the wires. We were slammed into the leg and water came into the boat, so this was a place to get away from.

Now, in hindsight, I have realized how lucky I was and that «something» was watching over me. I was thinking clearly. First and foremost, I thought about not hitting my head. Passed out I would get nowhere – then a message came to my brain: "away, now!". A voice told me "This is going to hell, you need to get away, there's no future here".

I climbed out of the hole where the boat driver had been sitting, with my arms around my head. I jumped up through the roof and broke a rib. Like I told you, my body was filled with adrenaline. I got on top of the lifeboat and looked around. I don't think I noticed at the time, but the lifeboat was hanging from the leg when I came out. From Edda, the crane operator had hoisted down the personnel basket, and it was close to the water.

I have a vague memory of inflatable rafts hanging in the air – it was very windy. I looked at the waves and at the basket and when I considered it appropriate, I plunged into the sea. I can still picture the deep wave trough and the wave that came. By the time I came back to the surface, the crane operator had already lowered the basket into the water, and I quickly got hold of it.

#### THE ANGEL FROM EDDA

The basket was floating in the sea right by me. The angel up there had placed it more or less on my head. Someone is watching over me, I thought. The crane operator on Edda had lowered the basket.

Some more people came, I think we were three people in the first throw. We came up with the basket. We got new, dry clothes. I was so happy when I was rescued. I couldn't stop talking. I'd been so scared. When I was inside to put on the new catering clothes, someone ran in and told us that the leg was floating in the water. He said that supply boats had come, that Kielland was twisting and turning and that we had to get out of there. Many people were up there, waiting. We were flown to the Ekofisk hotel. It felt like an overcrowded bus on holiday. Every seat was occupied, and people were standing in the aisle. It was the first time I'd have to stand in a helicopter.

In retrospect, I see quite clearly that it was the actions of the crane operator that saved me. That basket was essential to my rescue. What would I have jumped to if the basket wasn't there? He understood what I was doing right away. When I jumped, the basket was in the air, and when I came back to the surface it was floating around me so I could quickly grab it. Imagine what would have happened if he had just stood by the railing and witnessed the whole thing. He must have run to the crane and put the personnel basket in the hook as soon as he saw Kielland tilt.

And the way he put the basket into the water shows that he was both a skilled crane operator and that he understood the game. He ignored the rules. The wind was blowing well above what is legal for hoisting people up in the basket. So, by doing this, he rescued me and two others who came when they saw that it was an opportunity. I'm not sure if he picked up more people because I was taken inside.

It was when I was in the basket on my way up to Edda that I saw the leg floating in the sea – broken off. Supply vessels arrived and Kielland lay tilted in the sea. It hadn't capsized yet.

While I was inside on Edda, they came yelling that it had overturned.

I will never forget looking out of the helicopter window – on our way away from Edda – the four legs sticking out where there once had been a rig.

HARRY LØVØ, CONSULTANT, HEIMDAL UTBYGGINGSSKAP, SIEMENS

By Ellen Kongsnes, 15.1.2016. Consent 15.01.19.

SURVIVOR - KLÆBU - EMPLOYED BY SIEMENS

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He was 31 years old when the accident happened and is now 67. He is still working. Hired as a consultant in his own company by Heimdal Utbyggingsselskap.

According to the shift schedule, I was supposed to go to shore the day after. And to shore I came, that's for certain.

Løve met Ola Gaustad - his colleague from Siemens, already during vocational school.

They both apprenticed at Siemens and often travelled offshore together. Both were at Alexander Kielland when the accident happened. Both survived and returned home. A total of 15 colleagues from Siemens went out, but only 5 returned home. One of them, the youngest, was never found.

Løvø: I've had enough trouble dealing with myself. I haven't speculated too much about the cause of the accident.

What some people have struggled to understand is that now, afterwards, I can look at the accident as a plus. When you have experienced something like that, an argument with your wife will seem like a trifle, because you know that you're not guaranteed a tomorrow.

As a person, I am fundamentally positive. That saved me. Unlike the guy who stood beside me. He stood beside me in the galley when we heard a thump. What's that, he asked. – Don't worry, lads. It's just a wave crashing into the platform, I told them. Then, suddenly, the platform tilted with a bang. Everything was tossed and turned around us. Then, the lights went off. We got up on deck. We saw lifeboats falling to the sides. We saw co-corkers who had been crushed to death lying by the containers. But I was still optimistic and sure that I would survive. It's about staying focused, I told myself.

We were invited on board a lifeboat, but I didn't want to board it because I thought it wouldn't be possible to lower it down. They wouldn't manage to release it. So, we stayed. I'll stand still, I thought. But I helped the others put on their life jackets which were stored right by the lifeboats. Someone convinced me to put on a life jacket even though I wasn't going in the lifeboat. I put it on. Maybe that's what saved me. Underneath it I had nothing but a t-shirt.

I wanted to stay on board. I didn't think Alexander Kielland would capsize. I didn't want to board a lifeboat that couldn't be released. I wanted to stay on the platform and wait for the rescue helicopter that was coming to rescue us. I was certain we would be rescued. Relax, I told the guy next to me. We walked towards the highest point on the tilting platform. It was here the platform was still held in place by a last chain. The deck started to rock. Then, we saw bags and people fly up in the air. I wonder if we might sink, I said, and then the guy next to me jumped. I was later told that he didn't make it. I decided to stand still. I began thinking about my childhood. I thought

about my grandfather, he had been a seafarer. The platform continued to sink. I thought about my grandfather's stories of how waves build up in the ocean. I decided to wait for a large wave so I could get enough momentum to jump as far away from the platform as possible. Just as I made the bet to throw myself out, Kielland sank. I lost the buoyancy and went under with the platform. Now, I'm doomed, I thought. I saw the light in the end of the tunnel, it was death, and it didn't feel bad. So, I learned that death is nothing to be afraid of. Therefore, I'm not afraid of dying. But then, something else hit me. I saw life in replay. The kids came to my mind, I had promised to drive them on easter holiday the next day.

It has strengthened my belief that one must live in the moment.

I was young and full of drive. My plan was to study engineering after I finished my vocational training. I think this drive saved me.

I went back to sea after three weeks. My mum nearly cried herself to death when I left. But I told her that an accident like that does not happen twice.

I spent five years getting the accident out of my body.

I talked my way out of it. With friends and journalists. Adresseavisen followed me for several year safter.

I also tried out the psychologist that everyone was offered after the accident. But it wasn't for me.

Still, five years after the accident, he could lay in his bed in his house by Selbusjøen in Klæbu, far away from the ocean and listen to the blowing wind and his dreams would bring him right back to the accident.

I quickly went back to sea, but I had to beat myself up a lot before I managed to put the accident behind me. Already on the next stay, we were "weather stuck" again. I couldn't sleep and had to ask to stay in the wheelhouse so I could see the waves and weather. When I was on Henrik Ibsen, the sister platform of Alexander Kielland, the lights suddenly went off and I got really anxious. I had to convince myself that everything will be ok. The platform is not sinking, only Kielland did that.

I have not talked a lot about the accident with the kids. They were young when it happened, five and seven years old.

I returned from the North Sea on the first flight after the accident. I'm at the front of the press photo that shows us walking out of the helicopter wearing blankets.

I was hoisted up from the water in the basket on the Edda platform, which was close by.

As I stood up on deck before the platform sank, I saw another member of the crew swimming into the basket which was out in the water. That stuck in my mind.

After going down with the platform, I had to fight my way back to the surface. When I finally came up and was able to turn around, I saw the platform crashing in my direction. I had to swim all that I could. As I was swimming, I thought “this is the end of me”.

Once again, I went under because of the waves and the suction from the platform. When I came back up, I swam towards the basket on Edda, crawled inside of it and waited there until it lifted me up. I was received by three men on deck. Then came the shivers from the shock, the freezing, and the fear. After a while, I looked around and wondered where everyone else was. The crew said that there weren't many. They had only caught five or six men. The others are in the water, they said.

After the helicopter had landed at Sola, we were transported to the hospital in Stavanger. I did not want to be in the hospital. I wanted to go home.

I got new clothes and a new flight ticket. On the stretch from Fornebu to Trondheim, there was a strong turbulence. The turbulence set my nerves on edge, and I thought; I cannot die now, on a plane on my way home.

But I did come home. My daughter asked: daddy, where is the toiletry bag you got for Christmas?

I talked and I talked. With everyone except the psychologist and not so much with my kids.

We were invited to participate in a study. But the psychologist was very busy and gave us a massive stack of papers to fill in. He himself did not have the time to talk with us. The whole setting felt wrong, it didn't suit me. So, I left.

His childhood home is in Klæbu. Back then he lived one house down from where he lives today. He also spends a lot of time in Snillfjord at Hemnskjel, which he bought five years ago. In addition, he has a vacation house in Åfjord where his new partner, Ingrid grew up.

I function in ten-year cycles. I spent just over ten years in the North Sea after Alexander Kielland. Then, I worked as an engineer at the Siemens office. When their offshore department moved to Bergen, I came with. But it ended up being too much travelling for my liking.

I quit working in the North Sea because of all the flying. The rotation fit well with running a farm on the side. But it also resulted in me being away a lot.

After I stopped working in the North Sea, I lived in Orkdal for ten years, and was occupied with trotting horses.

We had a good time, the girls liked horses and had their own pony, but my wife didn't like it. After Orkdal, we got divorced.

We have always been a musical family. Playing organ and accordion and singing. Me, the girls, and my ex-wife all play instruments and sing.

The sea:

I'm very fond of the sea and I'm not scared, even after the Alexander Kielland accident.

Still, when major accidents happen in the world, the thoughts come back. But it doesn't tear my heart like it did during the first five years.

People say that time heals all wounds. But that's not the way it is. It's always there, but at a distance. You learn to live with it. That's the way it is with other things too. In the time right after it happened, I felt a lot of guilt for being alive. I had guardian angles. It was a fifty-fifty situation.

Widows and co-workers called me for answers, wondering whether I had seen their husbands on board and where they had gone. But I did not have any answers to give. Sorry, I didn't see him, I had to answer.

I attended many funerals. I went to get peace. And I went because it was my duty. But afterwards, it felt good.

Safety.

It's good that the safety offshore has improved. And it is good that the life jackets and survival suits are better.

But the security requirements offshore have also been applied on shore. And it costs you the shirt of your back. It has gone way too far. You cannot require that there should be three people overlooking one person's work on land. Everything in moderation, one must use common sense.

Strict requirements are needed in the oil and gas industry. But on land it feels like too much of a "nanny mentality".

Right after an accident, the safety always gets better. But then it dabs off.

But there is more focus on safety in schools and in regulations as well: there are requirements for scooter license, seat belts and boat driver's licence. I remember back in the day when we would drive the car without seatbelt while smoking cigarettes.

I'm an optimist. That's what saved me, more so than being young and strong.

-Born that way or become like that?

-The midwife told my mother, wow, he's born with a victory hat on his head. Let's keep that on. That boy will make it.

After the Alexander Kielland accident, I received a post card from a distant relative. She wrote that the victory hat had saved me.

## MALVIN HAUGE, INSULATOR, RM ISOLERING

By Marie Smith-Solbakken, 22. January 2016.

### PERSONAL DETAILS

Born 1939, 41 years old.

Insulator in RM Isolering

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### IMPLEMENTATION AND USE

Notes based on a telephone conversation on the 22.01.2016 and 23.01.2016. Notes read out the 2nd of July via phone and some text was then corrected. Received consent that the note can be used as a basis document in the preparation of the presentation of the Alexander L. Kielland accident, including a photo collection, essays and polyphony which is a compilation of different statements from different people (Telephone 02.07.2016).

Consent that notes from the conversation can be made public and included in a memorial collection about the Alexander L. Kielland accident and handed over to the Norwegian Petroleum Museum, the State Archives in Stavanger, The National Library and to the Labour Movement's archives and library (Telephone 18.01.2019, Email 20.01.2019) (telephone 23.01.2019).

### SHORT WHAT HAPPENED

Found myself in the dining hall when Alexander Kielland tilted. I got out through a corridor leading to the B pillar. Went into a lifeboat, which was smashed to pieces. Crawled onto the lifeboat which was lying with the keel in the air. Managed to get hold of the basket and was hoisted aboard Edda approx. 10 minutes after the capsizing.

### BACKGROUND

Worked for an insulation company, was employed as an insulator in RM insulation. Worked on Edda and lived on Kielland. Had spent a couple of years working in the North Sea.

### MARCH 27

It was windy and nasty weather. When there was a certain strength of the wind, they had to detach Kielland from Edda. Kielland could not stay close to Edda when the wind was blowing at a certain strength. Around five or five thirty, I was told to board Kielland. We got on board, and they started to haul it away from Edda. They had to retract the gangway when there was a lot of wind.

We went to the cabin to get changed and then to the cafeteria to eat.

I had just finished my food when I heard a loud bang. I had put the cutlery and plate in place



and was going to my room when it tipped over. I fell on my head through the hallway, luckily in the direction of the ladder. I had to pull the ladder out.

I got myself up. The platform was tilted. I had to crawl over the helipad to get to the other side. I'd lost my shoes, so I was only wearing socks. I walked to the highest point, where there were lifeboats.

There were lots of people there. No one thought the platform would capsize. There was one lifeboat on each side. One was filled with people while the other one was empty.

Someone opened the box with lifebelts, and we put them on.

#### THE LIFEBOAT

In the lifeboat I boarded, we were around 15 or 20 people. Many people were standing there, but a lot of them didn't take the risk of entering the lifeboat. It was on the bad side of the rig. It didn't go all the way down. It got stuck in the front and hit against the leg.

When Kielland overturned, the lifeboat was still attached in the front. We couldn't release the boat because of the tension. When the platform capsized, the bow was ripped off the boat and it was left with the bow in the air.

It was presumably filled with water. I didn't wear a seat belt and was knocked unconscious when it got tossed around. When I came to myself, I was floating around in water, and I could see daylight. I think everyone got out of the boat; the hatches were open. I crawled out and sat on top of the boat, on the keel.

In that moment, the crane operator on Edda lowered the basket. It took a while for me to get hold of it. The crane slowed down, the personnel basket hung in the air, and there was a piece of a rope hanging from under the basket. I grabbed the rope, and when the waves went down, I fell into the sea. The third time I was in, I got hold of the basket and managed to stand on its edge. Then, I was rescued and hoisted up on deck.

There was another person in the basket with me. We were hoisted up on the helipad.

Up there, we were taken good care of. We were guided down to the showers and got the heat back into our bodies. I wasn't doing well. I don't know how much time I spent on Edda. I was transported to the center (the Ekofisk complex) before I was flown ashore in the night or early morning. We didn't say much. I cannot recall what we talked about.

Three or four of my ribs were broken, and I was hospitalized for a day or two. It wasn't as bad as it could have been. I had borrowed some clothes out in the field. The following day, we were taken to town and bought lots of clothes to wear on our journey home.

## MY WORKMATES

One of my friends Magne Sæbø, from back home (Halsnøy), died. He was in the same lifeboat as me, but he didn't make it to the basket. He got onto a raft. And when he jumped in the net to get aboard the supply boat, he missed, and they couldn't find him after that.

Svein Inge Jensen (Karmøy) was also in the lifeboat with me. He was the one who lowered the lifeboat and started the engine. He survived. Kåre Eide anticipated that the lifeboat would get stuck, so he didn't want to board it. He went down the ladder to the pontoon "Kula"<sup>1</sup> stood down there and jumped into the sea when it tipped over. He got into a rescue raft and survived.

## HOME

The people at home were happy when I returned. They received a phone call from the neighbour that I had survived before they started to miss me. We didn't have a phone. The children had heard about the accident, but my wife had not heard of it.

## THE BIGGEST MISTAKE

I continued to work in the North Sea, but not right away. That was my biggest mistake. I was ashore for too long.

I was not asked to go out again. When you have been in an accident, you should be asked to go out again. I eventually went back to sea, and I worked there for many years until I retired.

I worked with insulation for the same company the entire time, for 36 years.

## LIFEBOAT 1

I sat in the crew mess. If I had been a little slower in getting out, I could have gone with Oddvar Engelskjerd (Etne). They went straight out of the door and to the lifeboats over there. Everyone survived.

## THE CRANE OPERATOR

I spoke briefly with the crane operator on board, but I have not spoken to him in recent times.

## THE FUNERALS

I attended the funerals in Haugesund. The one for Paulsen and the memorial service for Sæbø.

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<sup>1</sup> A pontoon is a floating device used to support various structures. Spherical pontoons were located at the end of each leg on the Kielland and in Norwegian referred to as "Kula".

#### MOST VIVID MEMORY

When I walked across the helipad and saw people who just stood there, not doing anything. They just stood there, along the walkway to the lifeboats. They stood there when it tipped and were tossed into the ocean when it overturned. It was high up, I guess 20 or 25 meters.

#### ON HIS MIND

The worst part was that so many lives were lost. You start to wonder why you were rescued and they weren't. That's the kind of thing you can wonder about. I don't think about it every day, but sometimes.

#### WHAT HAPPENED?

They never really figured out what caused it. For a long time, we thought they had pulled it so hard at the windlass when they winched Kielland away from Edda that they tore it to pieces. But we don't know. We did talk about it.

## IN LIFEBOAT 1

GUNNAR GUTTORMSEN, REPRESENTATIVE AND ELECTRICIAN, STELCO

By Marie Smith-Solbakken, February 5, 2016.

### PERSONAL DETAILS

Born 1944

[g-guttor@online.no](mailto:g-guttor@online.no)

55182277

97565038

### BACKGROUND

Worked for Stelco on Alexander Kielland

Has worked as a house electrician, panel electrician, and industrial electrician.

1977-1981: Electrician, supervisor, foreman in Stelco and representative for employees in Stelco.

1982-1986: Electrician PS Contractors at Vallhall, Frigg, etc.

1987-2010 inspector at Bergens Lysverker

2010: Retired

### USE AND IMPLEMENTATION

Phone call on February 5<sup>th</sup>, July 2<sup>nd</sup>, and August 8<sup>th</sup>, 2016. Did not have the opportunity to participate in the joint meeting regarding the voluntary work on Berland's house on the 13<sup>th</sup> of August. Guttormsen was not home before the 18<sup>th</sup> of August.

Consented that notes from the conversation can be made public and included in a memorial collection about the Alexander L. Kielland accident and handed over to the Norwegian Petroleum Museum, the State Archives in Stavanger, The National Library and to the Labour Movement's archives and library so that posterity can take part in this. (Email 24.12.2018).

#### ABOUT KARSTEIN BERLAND AND COMMUNITY EFFORT

We were on that trip together. He was employed as an electrician and asked me for advice because I had experience with house installations. He was building a house. We looked at the architectural drawings of the house and I suggested where the electrical outlets should be located. He died.

We became close to each other in the North Sea. We spent both working hours and leisure time together. We, and the people from Førresfjorden were like a little family. Us Norwegians often sat together and got to know each other well. When we finished the job, it was time to sit down to eat and chat.

We at Stelco decided to take over the electrical stuff when Karstein died. We thought it was the right thing to do. We had been working together, after all.

His father-in-law was so helpful. And the widow, she was amazing too, and she was expecting a little one. I have talked to them afterwards. She impressed me, and so did the parents.

#### ABOUT THE ACCIDENT

Getting over the accident took time. Seven people from Stelco set out, only three of us returned home. Mundheim (Johannes Mundheim, 44 years old from Strandebarne) went back to sea one or two more times and then quit. Stigen (Gerry Stigen, 26 years old, Bergen) never went back to sea again. I was the only one who continued. I went back to sea in the end of May after the accident and continued to work there for another 8 years.

#### THAT EVENING

I sat and ate together with Vaagsbø (Jostein Vaagsbø, 28 years old, Os) and Kråkø (Odd S. Kråkø, 33 years old, Åsane) below deck. We called it "spanjoler-messen" (the Spaniard mess). There were two crew messes at Kielland. We were in the lower crew mess, not far from the cinema.

We had heard blows before, felt the sea breaking below deck and the platform shaking. But this time it started to tilt. There were several strong blows to the platform and then it started to tilt more and more, and we were quickly listed to 45 degrees.

My two friends ran up to the deck. I stayed and wondered what to do. I slid towards the wall because of the tilting.

All loose objects came crashing down. Food, sauce, pots, and plates and even the soft ice-cream machine. It all landed on the floor. It got terribly slippery, and we slid around on the floor. It was almost impossible to walk upwards. Luckily the tables were screwed to the floor. Me and the other people who were still in the crew mess, made our way up along the tables. Then, I saw someone open the emergency exit leading to the lifeboats. I went out. The first thing I saw was a lifeboat that was about to be smashed to pieces. We made our way up to the other lifeboat, which was located higher up and further from the sea.

## LIFEBOAT 1

The first thing I see is that one of the lifeboats has been smashed to pieces. The “Spaniards crew mess” was almost under water by now. We crawled up between some pipes and climbed into the other lifeboat. In the end we were 26 people in that lifeboat.

When we lowered the lifeboat, it got stuck in the davits<sup>2</sup> and it was hanging like a pendulum, slamming against the bracings of the platform.

Due to a previous accident where three people had died because they had released the wire too early, before they had lowered it, there had been installed a lifebuoy around the lifeboat. It was designed so that there had to be less than 75 kg of force before you could release it. This means that it could only be released at the water surface. Because of the massive waves, it was left hanging like a pendulum, hitting against the bracings while we were trying to release it.

Suddenly, the entire wheelhouse crashed against the leg. I was on my way to help when the entire pilothouse was demolished after another slam into the rig. Then we got a clear view of the davit. One of the guys managed to get in the back, he tried to release it and just then there was sufficiently low force for us to get free.

Hammer (Bengt Hammer, 26 years old, Bergen) managed to get us loose. Many of the crew members from the boat, Stavanger Drilling, and a lot of the people from catering were in this lifeboat. I hadn't seen or met many of them. But I already knew Hammer. We worked with insulations. He did a good job at releasing the boat.

I was helping in the back. I saw that the platform was tilted. We went down a wave trough and I couldn't see the platform anymore. I didn't see when it capsized. We had already gotten away from the platform when it did. Everything was chaos.

I have to say that I wasn't scared. I was acting quite coolly. I felt like I was playing a role in a catastrophe movie. That's the feeling I had during the entire event.

The weather didn't calm down. The boat was filling with water. A guy had to pump the water out. We tried to ride along the waves to avoid filling it with more water. What happened then is that we moved away from the platform. We must have gone in a completely different direction than what we thought. A long time passed before someone found us. We didn't have a radio connection or anything like that. Eventually, we were discovered. A British rescue helicopter came down to the boat and handed us a radio.

They wanted us to drive close to the supply boat and jump into a net. We did not want to do it this way. We wanted to be picked up by helicopter. Many of us were seasick and exhausted,

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<sup>2</sup> A davit is a mechanical device used to lower or raise objects, typically boats or lifeboats, from a higher position such as a ship's deck to the water. It consists of a crane-like structure with pivoting arms or a single arm designed for this purpose. Davits are essential for safely launching and retrieving boats or lifeboats from larger vessels.

and we worried we might not be able to jump. We knew that the wind would pick up in the evening and then calm down during the night. The captain had told me this when we spoke earlier that day. It was just as good an option to stay there, in the lifeboat, as it was to try jumping into the net and get on board the supply boat.

#### NOT QUOTABLE BUT GOOD TO KNOW

The people I thought would step up, did not. The people I assumed wouldn't want to get their hands dirty, did. Everyone in this lifeboat made it.

#### REACTIONS

We understood what we had been a part of and wondered whether we were the only survivors.

#### HELICOPTER

The rescue helicopter arrived at 12 am. I was picked up at 1 am and transported to the headquarters at Ekofisk. Some people were in the lifeboat until 5:30 am. They had some problems with the helicopter winch.

#### EKOFISK HEADQUARTER

Transported from there to Sola airport.

#### WHAT HAPPENED TO THE PEOPLE ON THE OTHER SIDE

We didn't experience the same drama, we who were on the other side of Edda when it tilted. We were facing the wind.

Mundheim was in his room doing crossword-puzzles when it happened. When the platform tilted, a cupboard fell in front of the door. He jumped out of the window and got himself into a lifeboat. It capsized, so he had to swim to another lifeboat. The people who pulled him up said it was at the last minute. He held onto them so hard that they had to break his fingers open.

Stigen and I didn't talk much about the accident. The two guys I sat with, Krakø and Vaagsbø both died. They run upstairs. I don't know what Berland did. He died.

Most people ran to the highest point. Many people were in the cinema room. It is natural to move towards the highest point. But loose containers crashed down and wires broke. Many were hit by those.

#### TOWING

They had retracted the gangway to Edda and towe it away just before it capsized. They do it with a winch. They tighten some anchors and loosen others. It puts great strain on the rig.

They spent quite a lot of long time doing it. The gangway was retracted and then they started winching the platform. I don't know whether they were finished when the platform tilted. I have a feeling that they were done when it happened. They do not use a tugboat to do it, they do it themselves using an anchor winch. It was normal process to pull the rig away in bad weather. I have experienced the gangway falling off.

#### WORK TASKS

They were in the process of rigging Alexander Kielland down. The equipment had to be rigged down. The equipment was stored on Edda. Many pipes were already in place, as the platform was going to be used for drilling. We were in the process of preparing it for drilling. Ibsen was taking over as a hotel. We were supposed to bring down some antennas (television antennas) from the top because they were being moved to Ibsen.

#### WORKING AND LIVING CONDITIONS ON ALEXANDER KIELLAND

There were many containers stacked on top of each other. We were used to those kinds of conditions; it wasn't exactly a modern rig. It was not the one we liked the best. Ibsen was taking over; it was more modern. Kielland was a pretty sturdy rig. There were other rigs that were less sturdy. We felt safe.

They wanted us to work for as many hours as possible. Of course, they took their chances. They were always on the edge. Around Christmas, we refused to return to the housing platform from Edda because of a storm.

#### THE CAUSE

We have speculated about the cause. Some said it was a weld. It could just as well be that the hauling became too hard a strain on the platform?

When it was anchored, and all the anchors were in the water, they would tighten some and loosen some to move the platform. When there were lots of waves, and it lay freely, we got exactly the same feeling as when Kielland capsized. Sometimes it was only held in place by the wires. It happened both on Kielland and on Ibsen, and the whole platform would shake. I have played table tennis in a full storm because the platform was tightened against the anchors.

What it can take and what it cannot, is a question. It was too much that day. We know that. Some say it was a weld that broke. If a weld was broken, there must have been some strain on it first.

#### THE LIFEBOATS

The davit that failed, it is questionable whether they had good enough maintenance on the lifeboats. Why didn't the davit release? The lifeboat was left hanging like a pendulum. After Kielland, Safe Astoria was transferred to Edda. I went out in May. I attended the lifeboat



training on Edda. Everyone had to get into the lifeboats and then they were going to be lowered into the water. I was asked to participate. I was supposed to lower the lifeboat. I lowered it down, released the davits, one of the davits released itself, but the other did not. When I was questioned by the police, I told them about this. Yes, I did tell them

Some wire cutters were installed so we could cut it if something like this was to happen. It must be maintained all the time. It must be oiled, that was a wake-up call for me after the accident.

Now there are free-fall lifeboats. They have not been tested in stormy weather. There will probably be some unexpected episodes with the free-fall lifeboats as well.

#### MOST POWERFUL MEMORY

I don't know what to say. We find ways to protect ourselves. I have never been afraid of talking about it. Talking about it is like medicine. In my mind, I have stored the accident in the same place I have stored the fact that I once almost drove off the road.

The strongest impression is all the friends I lost; Berland, Vaagsbø, Kråkæ and the people from Førresfjorden. The comradery in the North Sea is different than it is at home. There, we do our own things in our spare time. In the North Sea, we spend our free time together. We talked about everything, about our families, about what we did and how we were doing. We were close friends. We from Stelco often sat and chatted with the people from Førresfjorden in the evenings. It's strange to think that they are gone.

#### THE FUNERALS

I attended all the funerals I could. I attended the funerals of Berland, Vågsøy and Kråkø

(Joar Dyrsand, who died, had swapped his shift to attend a confirmation).

#### COMMUNITY EFFORT (DUGNAD)

There were several of us who helped the Berland's. We owed them something. He died. We survived. It felt good to help. I wanted to do it. We did all the electrical things on the house. Some laid the pipes, and I ran the wires and installed the fuse box.

#### REPRESENTATIVE OF STELCO MEMBER OF ELECTRICIANS ASSOCIATED IN LO

I visited some of the wives and told them how things had gone down. That was heavy. Mundheim had trouble getting out. Stigen didn't want to go back to sea again either. Out of all of us, I got out of it in the best shape.

#### COMPENSATION

We were compensated for pain and suffering. We went through a hard time. We didn't know

if we should accept it or not. It was a lawyer from LO who negotiated that each survivor should receive NOK 25 000. I met the lawyer from LO at the courthouse. He put us in a terrible situation. We had to disclaim (the right to sue anyone in the future) if we suffered consequential damage. That created a dilemma for us. We didn't know how to deal with this afterwards. Then and there, I was angry with the LO lawyer, and I told him that I was.

He accepted the offer. They had made up their minds, so I felt like it didn't matter what I said.

I eventually accepted the 25 000. It was fine by me because I wasn't injured. At the same time, I was an elected representative and thought about the others. Mundheim called me to ask for advice, I told him not to accept the offer. He negotiated and received more. He was injured. I don't know what Stigen did.

#### STELCO AS AN EMPLOYER

They didn't handle it well. They didn't follow up those who were affected by the accident.

One of the wives was not informed by the company whether her husband had survived, was still missing, or had died. They did not contact her. She called my wife and asked. They were inexperienced. The whole thing was poorly handled. I guess that's what happens in situations like this.

#### OTHER FOLLOW-UP

We were followed up by psychologists over time. But I've told them that I don't want anything to do with them anymore. The reason is that I felt like it didn't lead to anything. They didn't give me anything, they only took from me. They made me uneasy, so I told them that I don't want contact with them anymore.

#### CONTACT WITH OTHERS FROM KIELLAND

I've been anonymous. I haven't participated in the gatherings in Stavanger. I've distanced myself from the whole thing.

#### KIAN REME AND THE KIELLAND FOUNDATION

I have not been in contact with him. I received a letter, but I didn't participate in any of it.

#### MEDIA AND JOURNALISTS

We were received in the hangar by representatives from the company and transported to hotels to get some shelter. But some journalists had heard that we were staying at the KNA hotel. «Vi Menn» were staying in the room next to mine. He knocked on my door and tried to force his way into my room. I told him to piss off and shut the door in his face.

In the morning we were moved down to the firm, Haugesund de Groot, as more survivors came in. We were dressed up and managed to get on the plane without any journalists

spotting us. We were transported home to Flesland in a private jet. When we arrived, NRK Hordaland was there to receive us.

Then came BT and then Morgenavisen. I let them in. I shouldn't have done that. We said some things about the experiences we'd had. Both newspapers published the interview. The entire front page read: dad came home.

I'd gone too many hours without sleep, and they told me that the world had the right to know what had happened. They use whatever trick they can. The spread was way too big. It annoyed me. Everyone was looking at me, like I'd become famous overnight. It didn't feel ok.

Then books about the sequence of events became popular. I have two books: Bernt Eggen, Håkon Gundersen and Per Ståle Lønning, Aage Enghaug.

#### LIFE AFTER THE ACCIDENT

I think about it like I was playing a part in a disaster movie. Maybe that's a way we protect ourselves.

## HARALD HANSEN, PLUMBER AND REPRESENTATIVE, OIS

By Marie Smith-Solbakken, 9. November 2015, Hamresanden 132, 4656 Hamresanden

### PERSONAL DETAILS

Born: 1942

### USE AND IMPLEMENTATION

Interview conducted in Harald Hansen's home. Borrowed the book "Katastrofe i Nordsjøen" and insurance papers from LO and employees/ bereaved. Notes sent for review and correction.

Received consent that the note can be used as a background note in the preparation of the presentation of the Alexander L. Kielland accident, including a photo collection, essays and polyphony which is a compilation of different statements from different people.

Consent given via telephone 3. 07.2016. Consent that notes from the conversation can be made public and included in a memorial collection about the Alexander L. Kielland accident and handed over to the Norwegian Petroleum Museum, the State Archives in Stavanger, The National Library and to the Labour Movement's archives and library so that posterity can take part in this. Telephone 13.02.2019.

### BACKGROUND

1979: Plumber employed by Maritim Service, leased out to Haugesund De Groot, and further hired by Phillips via OIS. Supervisor of pipes and plates for some years. Continued to work offshore until retirement. By the end of 1979, OIS entered the field offshore. There were then 36 companies that joined this group. OIS had large and time-consuming engagements on the Ekofisk field, Statfjord, Vallhall and Frigg.

### MARCH 27, 1980

I was a plumber foreman and worked on Albuskjell Alfa. A lot of drill crew came out, and I unfortunately had to move to Kielland. I was appointed to live at Kielland and had to commute back and forth with only a plastic bag.

That day was windy and there was fog too, so I couldn't get to work. In connection with the hauling from Edda, the tragedy happened – the platform tilted.

### CINEMA

I'd met Abrahamsen earlier in the day. We agreed to go to the cinema that night. We were in the cinema room of the regular crew - the cinema below the helipad - when it happened. The last thing I remember is walking into the cinema room. I don't remember anything else before I saw the sea coming into the crew mess. I must have fallen asleep. I woke up on the floor. I sensed that something had happened. I need to get out of here, I thought. The water came through the crew mess. There wasn't a single person in the cinema room. It was completely empty. I was by myself on the floor.

I knew that there was a door next to the movie screen, leading out to a hallway and a lifeboat. I got up on one side and made my way down. I knew there were three lifeboats there. The three lifeboats which I'd sought out were by themselves on the other side of Edda. When I got out, there was only one lifeboat left, the two others were under water. It wasn't the boat assigned to me, but I entered it anyway. I could hear people screaming from the lifeboat.

#### CUTS THE LIFEBOAT FREE WITH AN AXE

We were 22 people in the lifeboat when we managed to detach from the davit. We had difficulties getting off the hooks. The conversations revolved around how many we were, and how we could escape and get out of there. One person almost lost his fingers. The cockpit was crushed – it was an open hole. I managed to release the last hook when it was on the way up. We used an ax to cut the wire. I pulled the wire and the Finn axed. We managed to free the boat.

All that was left to do was to drive off into the sea in 7-meter-high waves. Not many seconds/minutes after we got away, the platform capsized.

#### IN LIFEBOAT 1

The telegraph operator was there. He tried to get a radio signal. People got seasick. Four people threw up on me. It smelled like vomit and diesel. It smelled disgusting. It was hot inside of the lifeboat. I was wearing a t-shirt and trainers. I wasn't wet and it wasn't cold.

A few hours later a rescuer from a British helicopter arrived. He registered how many people we were and informed the other rescuers.

In the early morning hours four supply boats arrived. We didn't dare to board them. Jumping from the lifeboat onto the supply boat seemed difficult. The waves seemed too high to get aboard. When we were at the lower part of the wave, we saw the propeller of the supply boat high above us. The end of the story was that they hoisted a hiving line over to us, and on that hiving line they sent over a walkie talkie in a canvas bag. That's how we got in contact. Not long after, the "Sea King" came, hoisted us up and took us to the hotel. We were registered there, and they informed our relatives. We were stripped of our clothes and given a coverall. Eventually we were flown to Sola by helicopter.

My wife did not know that I was there, on Kielland. She didn't know about it before she receives a phone call at 7 am informing her that I had been rescued. That was quite a shock for her.

#### ARRIVED THE HOTEL ON THE EKOFISK COMPLEX

I was told by the other guys that someone had been cut in half by the wire, and when the platform capsized, they tried to crawl upwards, but went down with it. A man who jumped into the sea wearing a survival suit was washed aboard the deck of a supply boat.

Those of us who had been there, kept in touch with each other. Many of us worked together afterwards. There were also many who quit – who didn't want to do it anymore.

Mykland (the guy from Vennesla) swam and got hold of a raft. He and two others managed to turn it.

Gunvald Falk: jumped from a great height. He came up. He struggled afterwards. He was a plumber.

#### THE WORST PART

The worst part was going out again, to cut open lockers and remove personal belongings, pack everything up. Then, what had happened really hit me. This was two weeks later. I did that job together with my boss (Tom Rønning) and the materials manager (Lennard Lundholm). We emptied the lockers, packed everything up, and sent it ashore. It was personal belongings. Everyone had their own locker.

The boys had their work clothes and personal belongings in there. It was heavy, it was final, it was the end. When we found personal stuff, we put them in a separate bag and sent them to another base.

#### IDENTIFICATION

Our manager, Tom Rønning lived on Albuskjell. He helped identify the deceased.

#### WHAT HAPPENED

Why did the leg break off? Nobody knows for sure. Kielland was risen. We were never told whether samples were taken. They claim it was a welding error. It's been so many years. From what I've heard, it shouldn't be possible for it to capsize when a leg breaks off.

#### FOLLOW-UP AND PROCESSING

I talked with a psychologist once. I got a phone call; I thought I didn't need follow-up. I haven't had any after-effects. I went back out after fourteen days. I haven't noticed anything, no dreams, nothing.

A crisis team brought us together. It felt good the first time. I recommend talking to the priest, Theis Salvesen. He worked in catering and decided to become a priest after the accident.

I am always aware of the weather and the sounds when I'm on a platform.

I have talked a lot about what happened. I visited the parents who lost their sons. I have talked and talked. Even when people didn't ask, I talked about it. I went around and talked to the deceased's parents. What came out, were the things that needed to come out. It is getting away from me, at the same time it is stuck in my mind.

## GUNNAR FAGERMO, GALLEY BOY, DOLPHIN CATERING

By Else M. Tungland, 18 November 2015, Sola Strand Hotel.

### PERSONAL DETAILS

Born 1960

Tel.: 479 09 563

Kleppe

The youngest to survive.

### USE AND IMPLEMENTATION

Consent that notes from the conversation can be made public and included in a memorial collection about the Alexander L. Kielland accident and handed over to the Norwegian Petroleum Museum, the State Archives in Stavanger, The National Library and to the Labour Movement's archives and library so that posterity can take part in this. (Telephone 23.01.2019).

### BACKGROUND

The youngest survivor

He started to work on a fishing boat when he was 17 years old. He later got a job in catering on Alexander Kielland and went on approx. 10 tours in the North Sea before the accident.

His work at AK consisted of cleaning the cabins and corridors and peeling potatoes in the galley. He worked the night shift.

### WHAT HAPPENED WHEN THE ACCIDENT OCCURRED?

On the day of the accident, he was sleeping because he had worked the night shift. He was supposed to get up soon when he woke up by his bunk tipping.

### I THOUGHT SOMEONE WAS BEHIND ME, LIFTING THE BED.

He quickly realised that something was terribly wrong. The lights went off and the emergency lights were turned on.

There was another cook in his cabin who was sleeping in his underpants. Both quickly got out and onto the deck. They were on the same floor as the lifeboats, so it went well. On deck there were already many people in the lifeboats. It was cold.

I ran back inside to get more clothes. I brought two t-shirts with me. I put one of them on and dropped the other on my way out. I had to run with one foot on the wall and one on the floor because the platform was tilted.

#### HE HAD TO JUMP TO GET DOWN TO THE LIFEBOAT

There was a big cook who didn't dare to jump. Me and another guy jumped back up and managed to get him into the lifeboat. Another guy came tumbling down and I managed to grab his shoulder and pull him into the lifeboat. I find comfort in thinking that I might have saved these two.

#### WHAT HAPPENED IN THE LIFEBOAT?

Inside of the lifeboat we got stuck in one of the cranes.

At first, the boat was slammed into the platform. This made the boat crack from one window all the way over the roof to the other window. Then we crashed again, and the wheelhouse in the back was knocked off. I thought that if there was another blow, it would be the end of us.

Then someone grabbed an axe and chopped until boat went down. We drifted under the platform. We got the engine running and headed out towards the waves. Water came in through the crack at the front. When we were clear of the platform, we let the waves steer our course.

We were 26 people in the boat.

When we opened the side hatchets, the water came rushing in. We couldn't save anyone else.

Someone said that we had to save ourselves.

There was a lot going on in the boat. Some panicked. Some wet their pants.

People were freezing and someone wanted to throw themselves at the engine to get some heat from it. They had to be held back because we were afraid it might choke the engine.

One kept asking if we would arrive in Jørpeland soon.

Another asked if we should say the Lord's Prayer. I remember that someone said: don't make jokes like that right now. There was no Lord's Prayer.

We huddled up together to keep warm.

There was a lot of water in the boat. I found a bellow pump which I used more or less the entire time to pump the water out.



#### THE EMERGENCY FLARES

There were emergency flares on board, but no one dared to launch them. I thought that those who had completed the safety training knew how to do it, but no one dared. I had previously worked on fishing boats where they had emergency flares. I had gotten some of the expired ones to use on New Year's Eve. The flares in the lifeboat were exactly like these, so I knew how to operate them.

I lit an emergency flare, but I quickly dropped it because the wind made the flame go straight to my hand. At that point I thought that it was better to save 26 lives than a hand.

He shows that he still has scars on his hand from the burns.

I launched all the emergency flares we had, but to no avail. No one saw them. By dawn, we didn't have any emergency flares left.

#### RESCUED

Then a British helicopter arrived. They asked whether we had any injured people on board. I showed them my burns and was the second to be picked up.

We were transported to Ekofisk. I was the only person with a body temperature above 37 degrees. After we had been registered, we were flown to Forus by helicopter. After that, I was sent to the hospital where my burns were treated.

All of Gunnar's workmates were rescued. He did not know anyone who died. The cook wearing underpants, who was sleeping in the same cabin also got into the lifeboat. He was Portuguese.

#### ON THE CAUSE OF THE ACCIDENT

He thinks that they overtightened the anchor chains. They had also learned that Kielland was going ashore for an overhaul 2 days later.

#### DID YOU RECEIVE ANY FORM OF COMPENSATION?

He received NOK 25 000 as compensation. They were offered to talk to a lawyer. The lawyer recommended him to accept the offer. The people who did not accept it, was later compensated around NOK 200,000 and 300,000.

A journalist from Stavanger Aftenblad who recently interviewed him in connection with the 35th anniversary, asked if Stavanger Drilling had told the lawyer to advise people to accept the offer of NOK 25 000.

I never got my clothes back. I remember wearing a t-shirt that read:

"It is now or never"

I didn't get new clothes. I caught the train to Egersund, wearing the survival suit I got at Ekofisk. On my feet I was wearing some plastic bags from the hospital. I think the follow-up was poor.

My dad picked me up at the train station. (He lived in his parents' house, in a basement apartment with a separate entrance).

#### THE SECOND SHIPWRECK

After ALK, he quit working in the North Sea. He was unemployed for a while until he got a summer job on a fishing boat. He then worked on a large fishing boat for many years.

In 1991, he bought a shrimp trawler with his savings as well as a loan guaranteed by his father. 2 or 3 years later, he was hit by a Danish fishing boat. The crew was playing cards downstairs, while the boat was riding on autopilot. They didn't see his boat which stood still. The entire rear end of his boat broke off. It sank 7 or 8 minutes later.

Thus, this was his second dramatic shipwreck experience. This time, he had to swim. He was there with one other crew member and thought mostly about how he was doing. They managed to get over to a big styrofoam box which was floating in the sea. They could only see the lights of the fishing boat that had sunk them. Eventually, the crew there checked what had caused the crash they had heard. When they discovered what had happened, they came back and rescued the two who were floating in the sea.

After this, life at sea came to an end for Gunnar. Two shipwrecks were enough. On top of it all, he had a bad lawyer and was left with 160.000 kroners in debt after the wreck. They ended up sharing the blame because they thought he should have moved his boat when he saw the other boat coming.

After this, he lived alone on a farm in Helland for a year:

#### WHAT DID YOU DO THERE?

I drank and chopped wood. My sister was worried about me and got me help. I then started to see a psychiatrist who helped me.

#### RE-EDUCATION AND FAMILY

At the age of 35, he was offered to be reschooled. He went back to school with the 16-year-olds at Sola upper secondary school. He eventually started to work in Braatens as an aircraft mechanic. He now works for Halliburton.

While he was back in school, he lived with a guy who was married to a Brazilian woman. He asked me if I thought she looked nice, and she did. He told me that she had a sister. I exchanged letters with the sister for some time. When he was 37 years old, they got married. They are still married today. They have 2 children aged 18 and 20 (she also had a child from before). I made the youngest myself, he says and smiles proudly.

ARE YOU STILL TORMENTED BY THE MEMORIES OF KIELLAND AND THE OTHER SHIPWRECK?

For a while, I spent a lot of time alone in my cottage, one to three weeks. I brought beer.

I once got drunk on 60% alcohol. After this I would chop wood. I was always by myself. Three to five days at my cottage in Helland.

I sometimes dream that I see myself on the deck of Kielland and I can see the lifeboat out at sea without me in it. I wouldn't call it a nightmare, but it is a recurring dream.

It comes back to me when the weather is bad or if I hear about another shipwreck.

WHAT DO YOU DO THEN?

When it happens, I drink a few beers and try to calm down.

## THEIS SALVESEN, GALLEY BOY, DOLPHIN CATERING

By Marie Smith-Solbakken, 13. November 2015

### PERSONAL DETAILS

[Theis.salvesen@kristiansand.kommune.no](mailto:Theis.salvesen@kristiansand.kommune.no)

99563376

Born 26091955

### IMPLEMENTATION AND USE

Interview conducted at Tveit vicarage. Notes from the conversation sent for review and correction on the 2.12.2015. A few follow-up conversations with Salvesen have been done via phone. Consent that the notes can be used as a background in the preparation of the presentation of the Alexander L. Kielland accident, including a photo collection, essays and polyphony which is a compilation of different statements from various people. (Telephone 14. June 2016)

Agreed that notes from the conversation can be used.

### BACKGROUND

Employed by Dolphin Catering

Fourth trip, which ended up being his last.

Marine priest in Ramsund Parish

Priest Ibestad, southern Troms

Priest Valle, Bykle

Priest in Tveit

Studied theology, just wanted to do something different. Had two trips to Kielland, and two trips to the hotel. Worked as a cleaner, messman.

### MARCH 27, 1980

The weather was lousy. There were some problems with shuttling, and we had closed the big cafeteria, thus many people ended up in the small one. Rather annoying for me who was supposed to keep it clean. The dinner was served around 6 o'clock. T-bone steak, Fårikål, and three other dishes which I cannot recall. On one side there was a small cinema and on the

other side a big one. We showed the movie "The Rose". The last thing 40 people heard was "The Rose". I think about that during funerals and weddings.

There was room for 40 people. 40 people were sitting there, clinking plates, making a lot of noise and around six twenty-five we heard a loud bang. Everything turned quiet. And everyone thought, what a storm, and then they continued to eat. After a few minutes, another bang, and then it got quiet again. Is this a false alarm? Then the platform tilted to the side. Everything fell to the floor. Glasses and plates, pots, all of it fell. I need to get out of here, I thought. I walked through the small cinema and as I entered, the entire film device came towards me, I knocked it over to the other side. This will be costly, I thought. Then I met two other people. They wanted to go inside of the platform: you're crazy, I told them. You have come out with me. I didn't know them. We came out on a balcony, three meters above the lifeboat. I figured that I couldn't jump from this height when it was at this angle. Then more people came, six or seven people.

It was a crazy time. My security training was: Here is your helmet, wear it when on deck. "Lifeboat training upstairs and downstairs". Lifeboat training was always in the cinema. Then there was someone who crossed off all six, like we had been there.

I asked if they could catch me, and they did. We boarded the lifeboat. We were 26 people in there. We pulled the lever, pulled, and pulled, but couldn't release it. And then we could hear bangs and things started to shatter. I think all the other lifeboats were crushed. I was certain that I was going to die. Now, Mari will be a widow before she is married, I thought. We were supposed to get married in August. I said "Jesus, whether I live or die, I belong to you". This has stayed with me throughout my 35 years as a priest. I can still feel the calm and peace I felt in that moment.

Then, we found a fire axe. Someone chopped the wire and we got loose.

Three or four months later, my mum and I were in Stavanger. The lifeboat was behind a fence. A man was there. I asked him if I could enter. I was on it, I said. You did the worst thing you could have done. You cut the wire supposed to remove the splint at the top. Because the wire lay on top of the thwart, the splint dissolved, he said.

We came free and into the sea. Terribly uncomfortable. I was only wearing a t-shirt and pants. People were peeing, shitting, and vomiting. It smelt terribly. After 15 minutes someone grabbed my pants. Salvesen, do you have a light? We spent everything we had of emergency flares within the first hour. I sat in the front with the telegraph operator who'd lost his glasses. I had to be his eyes. It is a bit like that for my father-in-law too. He was a manager at Farsund radio back then. He could connect to every radio station; I could have just said hello father-in-law. I didn't think about it then and there, I just didn't.

We did not talk. An older guy stood up, he had worked in New York as a stevedore for 30 years, he said: let's say the Lord's prayer. The others said no.

Around eleven o'clock in the evening, there were three supply boats surrounding us, and at eleven thirty, the helicopter arrived. I heard the sound above me. There was a small window. Then I saw the rescuer arrive. They managed to bring a lot of the people. Then they left, they had some problems with the winch. I was the last to leave the lifeboat at six thirty in the morning. We were taken to the Ekofisk hotel. That's when we realised how big of a disaster it really was. We listened to the mourning music on the radio. I took off my clothes and changed into an insulated coverall. After a couple of hours, we arrived in Stavanger. Usually we landed at Forus, but this time we landed in Stavanger. There was a plane going to Farsund there. I asked if I could get on it. I was told that I could not. I was to be debriefed.

I went to Paulsen Herre Ekviperer in Stavanger – the most fashionable shop in town. There, I bought new clothes. Then I was told to go to the hotel for debriefing. I got there, said my name, and received a key to my room. I asked them if debriefing was over. I returned the key and walked to the train station.

Did you have money for a ticket?

I must have had some in my pocket? I might have had a hundred kroner bill?

#### IMPORTANCE

A few years ago, I spoke with someone about my experience in the North Sea, I told them that I had been on Kielland. I guess that's an experience you wish you didn't have, he said. I guess everyone wishes it didn't happen. But it did happen, and I was relatively fine, I'm someone who says, «what doesn't kill you makes you stronger». Kielland is an experience that I have kept in my portfolio. The experience and the peace and believe in my faith is something that has stayed with me.

I also received NOK 30 000 as compensation for pain and suffering. I invested it in stocks which grew to 40 000. The best was the one in Aker, I paid 190 for 3 stocks and 3 years later, they were worth 4900 kroner.

#### THE KIELLAND FUND

Kian was more radical than I was, and I wasn't there at the time. I'm more radical now, I have served 20 years for the labour party in the municipal council.

#### CAUSES

Veritas got away with it too easily. They cannot have examined and approved further operation when the conditions were as they were. When I was working on the tanks at Ekofisk, the day before Christmas, the lamps swung like pendulums. We were told that if the platform tilts, we would sink. At Kielland we were safe. Kielland was like a cork upside down. It may have been poor maintenance. Maybe it had to do with the construction.

#### SINKING

I watched it on the news. They scuttled it, this is too soon, I thought. But that's the way they did it. I didn't understand why they were in such a hurry.

#### YOUR LIFE

For me, it was ok. I was getting married in August and taking the official examination of theology in November. I didn't have time to ponder too much about my fate.

#### FOLLOWED UP ON TWO PEOPLE

Kåre Jess: He grew up in Bryne but lived in Flekkefjord. He played classical guitar. I went to his cabin a couple of days a week. Kåre's daughter took her own life three years ago. I received a letter from her. When she took her life, the husband called me. He believed that the healthcare system had failed her by not realizing how serious the situation was. He complained to the county doctor and asked me for a signature. She was clearly suicidal. Her father didn't have a healthy relationship with his wife, and it affected the daughter more and more. She visited me here, and she wrote me letters, and I thought: this is going to hell. (Bereaved Ola Andreas Kjelland, the spouse of Kåre Jess' daughter, is familiar with this description and has approved it).

Arvid Austbø: He was from Lista. He was two years younger than me. I visited his parents' home. I remember that they were watching TV, and his name came up on the scrolling text – his mother said: I guess they have found him. It was odd that they hadn't informed them in advance of the news broadcast.

Thomas and Anna Austbø are still alive.

#### FOLLOW-UP AND PROCESSING

Allers and Hjemmet<sup>3</sup> wrote a piece on the ten-year anniversary of the accident. The first ten people they reached out to hadn't gotten their lives back on track. I was a parish priest and had four children. There were three of us who joined. They chose us because we were the most presentable.

Utøya, I hope that crisis psychology has come much further.

My father-in-law was a war sailor and lived with the anxiety for many years. He experienced a trauma that lasted for a full day and night. I had, and still have, so much to think about, I suffered from anxiety afterwards. I was always on the lookout for emergency exits and looked up to see if there was anything that could fall in my head. Back then it was the wild west, now it is safety first.

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<sup>3</sup> Weekly Magazines

I had a sore throat for the following six months.

#### FOLLOW-UP

My mum, who was my next of kin, received a letter stating that I would struggle to concentrate and start to wet my bed. She told me, Theis – you seem completely normal.

I have been visited by a countless number of doctors and psychiatrists, and I felt that I helped them write a thesis. I always agreed to meet them, but five years ago I said no.

They measured my blood pressure.

The last time it was an IQ-test on the phone. I passed it without problems.

Reversed nonsense! It was me helping them, fuck you!

I never felt like they were interested in me. They were only interested in their research project.

There was a thirty-year commemoration. I thought it was nonsense. We were 89 survivors, probably 60 who were still alive. I wouldn't have recognized them, but we could have talked a little, those of us who were left. I think it was such a shame that they didn't even bother to send an invitation to the 60 survivors.

#### GRIEF

Is the reaction to a loss, and if you experience a loss, it is because you have gained something. It is a strength to gain something and therefore grief is strength.

My brother, who died this summer has given me so much. He stood right next to me and was taken by underwater currents. He and I were close. I was no more than 15 years old when I lost my father in a fire. As a priest, I have experienced sorrow and tears for 35 years, and I have also gone through it myself.

#### WE WERE STUDIED BY TRAUMA RESEARCHERS

I never felt like they were interested in me, only in their research project.

The last time they contacted me, I told them that I did not want to participate anymore. It didn't give me anything, they were only interested in their personal gain.



## BENGT HAMMER'S STORY

This is a story I could have told many years ago. A story of coincidences, improbabilities, luck, and survival.

It started on March 27, 1980. No, it actually started earlier than that. It began when I applied to transfer to Eldfisk B from working at the Ekofisk Center because one of my friends worked there. If he hadn't worked there, I wouldn't be able to write about this incident.

I started working offshore on Albuskjell A in October 1978 and continued on Albuskjell F and after that on the Tank, as we called it. Then it was Eldfisk B.

March 27 started as a completely normal day. I hear someone from catering coming through the hallway, it's about 5 in the morning, he's on his wake-up round. I lie there for a bit and listen to the weather, it's not good. I feel that something is not quite right. I get up and go down to the mess for some breakfast. There's not much talking, but everyone is wondering if there will be any shuttling today since the weather isn't the best. It's announced that the shuttling is postponed until later. So, we just have to wait for the next message. We live on Alexander Kielland, which is next to the Edda platform. This means we have to fly by helicopter from Kielland over to Eldfisk B.

Throughout the day, we hear that there won't be any work today. Some go to their cabins to relax, and I do the same. For lunch, five of us are gathered in the mess. We sit at a table right by an emergency exit.

"Look at that sign, emergency exit, but it's only in English and Spanish." "Look at that sign, it says no smoking, and it's also in English and Spanish." "Isn't it strange that the emergency exit is signed in English and Spanish and not in Norwegian," I say, pointing to the sign by the emergency exit. The others agree. We laugh a bit and think it's strange since it's a Norwegian platform and mostly Norwegians live and work on Kielland, but still, most things are written in other languages. This emergency exit will become very important later in the day.

In the mud room, a cinema has been set up, and since it's a day off, a film is being shown. I'm the one running the film. After the film, we go back to the mess for some coffee and tea. It's nearing 4 o'clock, and we're still in the mess, and since it's a day off, we have an early dinner. "Hi," says one of the crew members to me. "Hi," I say. "Can you help us show a film in our mess?" "Of course, I can, when should I come?" "Come around six," he replies. The cinema, which is also the crew's lounge, is the room next to the mess, a place I've never been before. I've just changed the film reel when there's a loud bang, but no one reacts to it since it's quite common for the platform to make noises when the weather is bad. It's the sea hitting the shafts and under the platform.

Then there's another bang, and Kielland immediately tilts with a strong list. Everyone in the mess slides down to one side, except me, because I'm sitting in a chair that's bolted to the floor. I just tip backward. I realize this is serious and that I need to get out. I'm the only one in the room not on the floor. Fortunately, the door is down and not up. It's impossible to walk. It's too steep, I slide down to the door and am the first to reach it. I open the door, and the first thing I see is the sea through the windows on the opposite wall. At the bottom of the wall are those who were in the mess, struggling to get up by pulling themselves up by the legs of the tables, which are fortunately bolted to the floor.

Why is it so quiet? I don't hear anyone screaming, no one calling for help. Later, I've been told that many were screaming, but I didn't hear it. The only thing I concentrate on is: Now you have to get out to a lifeboat.

How am I going to get to the emergency exit? I know where it is, we joked about it earlier in the day. It's on the wall to my right, but because of the tilt, I realize I can't crawl along the floor. I can't jump either – it's too far. Can I slide diagonally down to the end of one of the tables near the emergency exit? I try – yes, it works. Then it's about getting to the emergency exit. Can I jump and grab it? I know it's the only way out, so I have to make it, otherwise, I'll be at the bottom of the wall with the others. I gather myself and take a long leap and just manage to grab one of the handles on the emergency exit. I get it open, it fortunately swings the right way, otherwise, it would have been hard to open. I'm out on the deck and look around. There's the lifeboat and a box with life jackets. I put on a jacket and slide down to the lifeboat, open the hatches, and climb in. I stand in the hatch and see more people coming. Some get into the boat, others climb further up towards the top of Kielland. I shout: "Go to the lifeboat, go to the lifeboat." Why I shout in English, I don't know, but it just came out that way.

More people come aboard, and eventually, we have to get away. I try to start the engine, but it won't start. Fortunately, one of the crew sees what's happening and helps. The engine starts. We have power.

Who pulls the wire that lowers the boat, I don't know, but the boat hits the water bow first and then the stern. The wire that releases the hooks is pulled. The front hook releases, but the rear one won't. This causes the boat to sometimes float entirely and sometimes only the front part, as the boat hangs from the rear hook. The lifeboat bangs against Kielland. I frantically search for the wire to release the rear hook, but I can't find it. It's simply gone. It bangs again. I have to release that damn hook, how do I get to it? There's a hatch in the roof of the wheelhouse. I have to open it, then I have a chance to climb out and release the hook, but the life jacket is in the way inside the cramped wheelhouse, so I tear it off. I grab the handle to open the hatch and try to swing it to the side, but it won't budge. I try again and again. It's jammed because the boat has been slammed up under Kielland. I try with all my might, no movement. I have to get that damn hatch open. Hell. Is there something I can hit it with?

Suddenly, I'm lying at the bottom of the boat, looking up and seeing right under Kielland. What's happening? A big wave has lifted the lifeboat with tremendous force and smashed the wheelhouse I was in. The entire wheelhouse is gone. Only the front window remains. I get up and lean out of the hole where the wheelhouse was and grab the release handle. I pull it, and the hook releases. I grab the hook and throw it away. We're free from Kielland. I turn around, put the gear in forward, and shout: "Full throttle," while I take the wheel and try to steer. The boat just goes straight ahead, right over a lifeboat that's more or less underwater. It's the lifeboat that hung in front of ours. There's probably no one in it since it was almost underwater when we boarded ours. It's probably been smashed by the sea. Around it, only empty life jackets float.

I can't see anyone in the water.

Why can't I steer the wheel? One of those on board is holding onto the wheel. "Let go of the wheel," I shout at him. He just replies, "Steer away, steer away." I shout again for him to let go of the wheel. Nothing happens, he just repeats, "Steer away, steer away."

I have to think fast, or maybe not at all. A kick in his face helps, he lets go of the wheel. I can steer and head the boat into the sea. I look around to try to orient myself, but all I can see is Edda and Kielland almost directly behind the boat. I just steer into the sea. I'm afraid the boat will capsize in the rough sea. Now it's about keeping the lifeboat afloat. I don't know how damaged it is after all the bangs it took under Kielland.

"Try to take the waves on the port side, it leaks water when you take the waves on the starboard side," someone shouts from the front.

I try as best as I can to take the waves on the port side, but it's not easy in the rough sea. I'm the only one with a good view since the wheelhouse is gone.

"Is Kielland still floating?" someone asks, and I look back and confirm that it is.

"Is it still floating?" "Yes, it's floating." "Is it still floating?" "Yes, it's floating." "Is it still floating?"

"No, now it's gone down." "Now many are drowning," someone says.

He hasn't finished saying it when I see a really big wave coming towards us. It gets bigger and bigger as it approaches the boat. As it hits, I shout into the boat: "Now we're drowning too." The sea crashes over the boat, and I see nothing but water. After what feels like a long time, but probably only lasts a few seconds, the boat surfaces again. It floats. Now I know we will make it. If the boat can handle that wave, it can handle any wave.

One of the people on board grabs the throttle and slows down.

"Why are you doing that?" "We're running out of diesel," he replies. "Nonsense," I say and give it more gas. The same thing happens again. "We have enough fuel for a whole day on board; we'll be rescued long before that," I argue, to no avail.

Because of the low speed, we almost capsize, and I insist that we need steering speed, or we will most likely capsize. It helps, and I get to increase the speed a bit. Now it's just about keeping the boat on course against the sea. It doesn't matter where we steer, I just keep the boat facing the waves so we take most of them on the port side.

"A helicopter," I shout, and there's a cheer in the boat, but it just flies right past. It probably sees that we're floating and not in as much distress as others. I shout this into the boat, and I think most understand.

When the big wave crashed over the boat, I got soaked, and now I start to feel cold. I ask for my life jacket, which has some warmth in it, but they can't find it. One of the others who came on board must have taken it.

After a while, I get colder and colder, and finally, I ask into the boat: "Is there anyone here who can steer the boat?" No one answers. Then I ask one of those sitting closest. "Can you steer?" "Yes," he replies and takes the wheel. I find a spot near the back of the boat and feel even colder, but when I sit still, it's not as cold. It's when I move and other parts of my clothes touch my body that it's cold. I look around and realize that the exhaust runs along the floor where I'm sitting. I put my feet on it. Warmth, wonderful.

I watch the person steering and see that it's not going well. After we almost capsize twice, I push him away from the wheel and take over again. It sounds a bit brutal, but that's how it is.

I stand for a while before asking a colleague, Oddvar, if he can take over. I know he has a boat. He takes over, and I can sit down again.

Now another challenge begins. I get nauseous. I look at the person on my left and see that he's not doing any better. He vomits, and it triggers a strong bout of vomiting in me too. There's some vomiting, but eventually, it passes, and my stomach settles.

"Plane or helicopter," shouts Oddvar. The person next to me lights a flare and holds it out through the hole in the lifeboat. He holds it until it burns his fingers. "Throw that damn flare into the sea," I shout at him, but he holds it until it burns out. It must have hurt terribly.

"Why isn't there an emergency beacon on board?" I ask the person next to me. "There is," he replies, "but we don't want to throw it overboard. The rope might get caught in the propeller." "Nonsense," I argue. "We need to activate it! Then they'll find us right away." But no, it shouldn't go overboard.

"Can I see it?" I ask. "Yes, but only if you promise not to throw it overboard." "Okay." I read the instructions, and it says it doesn't need to be in the water; it's enough to turn the antenna on the transmitter 180 degrees, and it will start sending. We turn the antenna and place the transmitter at the back of the boat so the antenna sticks out of the hole Kielland made. "Helicopter," shouts Oddvar, who is steering. It has only been a short time since the emergency beacon was activated, and now we have a helicopter over us. I estimate we've been in the lifeboat for 2 to 3 hours without the emergency beacon being activated, and then it takes ten minutes for the helicopter to arrive.

I look up at the helicopter hovering right above the lifeboat as a rescuer is lowered down. He tries to land on the lifeboat, but because of the waves, he can't. He chooses to drop into the water. It takes two of our people to get him on board. He comes from an English rescue helicopter and quickly sees that we are relatively okay and decides to lower the line so he can move on. We actually wish him a good trip.

"Steer 175 degrees," we hear from the person on the radio at the front of the boat. "Then we should meet a supply boat." Oddvar steers 175 degrees. We drive and drive, but no supply boat. We decide to turn 180 degrees and drive in the opposite direction, and what does Oddvar see in the distance? Lights from a supply boat. He shouts into the boat that we have a boat straight ahead. Great joy on board. We are found.

The supply boat positions itself to shield us from the weather and waves. They shout from the boat that it can come alongside us so we can jump from the lifeboat into a net hanging on the side of the ship.

"Does anyone want to jump onto the supply boat?" they ask into the boat, but in the sea we have now, no one wants to take the chance and maybe fall into the water. We decline, we are relatively okay on board.

After a while, I estimate it's around midnight or later, another supply boat arrives and positions itself in a V with the other, with us inside the V. This makes our boat even more stable. They ask again if anyone wants to jump onto one of the other boats, but we decline again. So here we lie, and because of the two other boats and the wind starting to die down, it's not so bad on the

lifeboat. Everyone understands that we will be rescued. Now it's just a matter of when we will be picked up by helicopter.

Common problems arise. "I really need to pee," I say to the guy next to me. "Pee in your pants," he says. "No, I can't," I reply and hold it in.

It's calm in the boat, and Oddvar keeps the boat in place between the two others. "Helicopter," Oddvar announces, and a rescuer comes down on deck. He comes into the boat and says he will start hoisting us up one by one. The first person is the one who held the flare. He climbs onto the boat and gets the harness on with the rescuer. I ask if I can go next, but it's someone else. I ask again if it can be me since I'm freezing and the only one on board who is wet. I get to go next. I go with the rescuer onto the boat, get the harness over my head and under my arms. I'm ready. A little jerk, and I'm on my way up. I hold on to the harness as tightly as I can. I'm terrified of slipping out of it, even though the rescuer told me there's no danger of falling out. There's the edge of the helicopter door, the rescuer and the person in the helicopter swing us in. I lie on the floor, and the rescuer removes the harness. I'm shown a seat. What a relief, I'm saved. They pick up three more people before heading to the hotel at the field center.

We land on the helipad and are taken down to the reception, where we are cared for by a nurse and others. We are checked for injuries. None of us are injured. Because I'm wet, I need to get my clothes off. I try to undo the belt on my pants, but I have to give up. I need help.

"Can someone help me get my pants off?" I ask. One of the people there helps me; he actually has to help me with all my clothes. I get a coverall from him that I put on.

We are taken to a lounge where we meet others who have been rescued. It's actually a calm group of guys and men listening to NRK radio. We get some food and drink. Now I realize how thirsty I am.

We sit, talk, and listen to the radio, chatting about how we were rescued. Occasionally, someone from the crew comes in and informs us when we can expect to be transported to land. It's around 3:30 AM, and it's my turn to go to land. We get survival suits and go up to the helicopter.

It's around 5:30 AM. Touchdown. The helicopter lands at Sola Airport and parks in front of the 330 Squadron hangar. As I touch the ground with my feet, I bend down and kiss the asphalt. Now I'm 100% sure I'm saved.

Inside the hangar, we go through another health check. I've got a bad bruise on one finger, but I don't want to show it to them, so I hide my hand.

"Are you injured or anything?" one of the people receiving us asks. "No," I reply. I don't want to be prevented from going home because of a slightly injured finger.

We are taken to a bus that takes us to Stavanger and to a hotel that becomes a reception center. We enter the reception and are swarmed by journalists. They are very persistent. I ask them to respect that we are not feeling well, but to no avail. I need to find someone who can help get them out. Then it happens that all of us who have been through the disaster together throw them out of the entire hotel. Those in the reception manage to close the doors, and fortunately,

the journalists do not get back in.

At the hotel, we get a lounge for ourselves where we can relax. Still in survival suits. Finally, we can take them off.

"Would you like some soup?"

"Yes, please, we would love some."

Here we sit and eat soup, just waiting for something to happen. What, we do not know. No information, nothing.

The receptionist comes in with keys to hotel rooms where we can relax and call home. I get my key and go to the room. Now I can call home, finally. I grab the phone and dial the number. I can't get it to work, I try again and again. It's so easy. First 0, then the rest of the number. Again, I try. Pull yourself together, I have to tell myself. Finally, it rings.

My father answers the phone. I can only say:

"Dad, I'm alive, Dad, I'm alive."

"I know," he says. "I found out last night."

We just cry for a while.

"Is Mom okay?"

"Yes, Mom is fine." I talk a few words with her. More crying.

"I'll come home as soon as I can. I don't know what's happening, but I need some clothes. I only have a jumpsuit. We'll talk."

"You have to come down to the reception," I am told. The head of the Stavanger office has come to pick us up. There are several from my company at the hotel.

We travel into the city to get clothes. Now in survival suits again. Here we walk through the streets of Stavanger. Everyone looks at us. They know what it's about. Just sad faces. Not a smile. No one comes up to us. Just looks as if we were from another world. Curious, but also as if they somehow feel sorry for us but can't show it.

Finally, inside a store that sells men's clothes and shoes. I find myself underwear, a shirt, pants, and a pair of nice shoes. One of those who is with us, a Finn I work with, also needs clothes, but he doesn't want anything. "You can choose whatever you want, you don't have to pay for it."

Then it works out, and he looks like a bank director after being dressed up.

We are at the office, and I ask if one of my colleagues has survived. Some phone calls are made, and it is confirmed that he is saved.

"Bengt, can you come into the office for a bit?" asks the leader. "Sit down."

I feel that something is not right.

"The one you asked about has unfortunately passed away."

The world collapses. My mentor is no longer alive. It's as if nothing matters. It must be wrong. Now I get the whole disaster right in my head. Previously, it was only about surviving, now it's everyday life that matters. Reality, the cruel truth. Many have died, I am alive. Why me and not him?

"Do you need help?" I am asked.

"No, it's okay."

Another and I are driven out to Sola airport. I have to get home. Queue at the counter. It's Friday before Palm Sunday, so many are traveling home for Easter. Finally, my turn. "I need to go to Bergen," I say. "All flights are full," she says behind the counter. I can't say that I come from Alexander Kielland. I just resign and sit right down on the floor.

"Hey, hey," someone shouts, and I look around. There comes one of those who was in the same lifeboat as me. "Do you want to join? We have rented a private plane."

"Of course, I want to join."

We walk out to the plane and are on our way home. What a relief.

At Flesland, we are again met by a journalist. How he found out that we came by private plane is not easy to understand. I am interviewed by NRK, and it comes on the news almost before I am home.

The taxi stops in front of the house, and I am greeted by my mother and father. Life is fantastic. Living is fantastic.

It took 28 days from when I came home until I was back offshore. This time on the Edda platform. The circle was complete. Was it to heal some mental wounds?

About two months after Kielland capsized, my company received a bill from Phillips Petroleum Company for payment for a hotel room and 17 portions of soup. Talk about cheek. One of the richest companies in Norway demanded payment for the hotel we were taken to. A reception center, which I assume they had set up, they couldn't afford to pay for. It's the height of pettiness. Strange that they didn't want payment for the jumpsuit I got. Maybe they forgot it? I still have it. They won't get it, but if they want payment for it, they can just contact me. Maybe I sound a bit bitter? Yes, maybe.

Not a single inquiry from them about how things were. Total silence. It was probably expensive with phone or postage.

There are many questions I have asked myself, and there are many coincidences that make me sit here and write.

Why did we joke about the emergency exit exactly that day? We had seen the same sign every time we ate.

Why was I in the crew's mess that day? I had never been asked before, and I had never been there before either. Why did they ask me exactly that day, exactly the day it happened? If I hadn't been asked that day, I would most likely have been showing a film in the other cinema, which was actually the mud room. Only 2 people survived after what I have been told. Why was it me who steered the boat? Before the accident, I always sat in the driver's seat during lifeboat drills. It was commented on by my colleagues, and I always replied: "This is where I should sit."

One of the tasks was to start the engine and make sure everything was ready to lower the boat. Why did it turn out that way?

Why couldn't I open the hatch in the roof of the lifeboat? If I had opened it, I would most likely have been killed when the wheelhouse was crushed by Kielland.

Coincidences, or was it predetermined?

*(Translated with assistance from Microsoft Copilot)*



## IN LIFEBOAT 5

LEIF WIIG ABRAHAMSEN, SUBSEA ENGINEER, STAVANGER DRILLING

By Marie Smith-Solbakken, 24. November 2015.

### PERSONAL DETAILS

[Leifabr@gmail.com](mailto:Leifabr@gmail.com)

Born 1937

Underwater engineer in Stavanger Drilling

### IMPLEMENTATION AND USE

Several interviews have been conducted with Leif Wiig Abrahamsen in his home in Lillesand on the 24.10.2015 and on the 26.10.2015 by Marie Smith-Solbakken, Øystein Hakestad, Hans-Jørgen Wallin Weihe. Photo taken at Vikkelen, 10.11.2015, Tord F Paulsen.

Contact via messenger, Bohol Filipins 23.2.2016 with Robin Abrahamsen and Leif Wiig Abrahamsen. Consent to use for polyphony, essays and photo book received 23.2.2016. Agreed that notes from the conversation can be made public.

### BACKGROUND

Worked at sea for 15 years.

Started in India Bomayhai on Håkon Magnus in 1975, employed by Viking Ocean Kristiansand.

Worked on Håkon Magnus until Kielland.

Started to work on Kielland on the 27<sup>th</sup> of March 1980.

Escaped from the small cinema, through the crew mess, into the corridor, and out through the radio room to the helipad. Lifeboat 5, supply boat, Ekofisk Complex, Rogaland hospital.

### FIRST, LAST AND SHORT TRIP TO KIELLAND

Arrived on Kielland early in the morning. I was on the drilling deck. Most of the drilling equipment was there. The rig had been converted into a housing rig but had received a drilling mission and I was there to prepare it for drilling. The top of the derrick was removed. The accommodation module (45 tons) stood on the track.

The block was there, I saw with my own eyes how it crashed down and was left hanging by the wires. Not many people have seen the travelling block move upwards in the derrick because the rig is tilting downwards.

I went with Harald Moseid, the second cousin of Julius, the son of Edvard Moseid's brother. He had also been on Håkon Magnus. We had worked together for a long time. He stayed over in my apartment in Oslo, and we had a lot of laughs.

Harald was one of the people who died. I meet with his uncle from time to time.

The weather was bad, we were struck by it at the time, but it probably would have happened at some point anyway.

#### 27<sup>TH</sup> OF MARCH

When I got there, I met people I had worked with previously. I met Harald Moseid and Fredrik Haslund – they both died. It really is a long time ago. I rigged up as usual, put my bag in a cabin, it's still there I would think? We finished the first day of the job, it was not a full working day. I sat and watched a movie, met some people from Lillesand from the shipyard. There were many people from the shipyard there because they were rebuilding it for drilling.

As we sat there, I heard a thump or two and then a bang. Seconds later, it got a strong list. Then I had to find my way out. I held onto the edge of the cafeteria counter so I wouldn't fall. Then came the hot water. I got it all over my hands and lost the skin on both hands. It took a few days before I realized what had happened. I walked over to the radio station, where there was a door leading out to the helipad. I walked towards the highest point. I didn't even think about lifeboats, I hadn't been assigned one. The rig was tilted.

I looked out and I saw the leg floating by itself. I knew that it had tilted, but I didn't know why. There was an escape valve which was open. It made a lot of noise, so I closed it. I came over to the lifeboat which was also tilted. Some people, including me, put on lifebelts.

#### THOUGHTS

I didn't think about God or anything like that. I was just happy I had reconciled with my son. We had argued about some unimportant things. I was thinking clearly. I thought that when the lifeboat is hanging at that angle, it will go headfirst in the water. It was impossible to get the lifeboat loose. It must be weightless before you can release it. I knew how to release it. In my optimistic fantasy I figured that when the lifeboat had turned and was in the water, it would be weightless for a second or so, that's when it had to be released. It was like a pig in a pole. I checked if the lifebelts around the lifeboat had come off.

Some people entered the lifeboat. I checked that it was loose, had to be ready to release the lifeboat, I crawled into the lifeboat through the wheelhouse, went down and found the release handle. When I noticed that there was water on the outside, I pulled like crazy. I had ruptured the tendons in both arms. I personally saved myself and the others. In the moment, I didn't think of it like that. I cried afterwards because I thought if I had pulled one kilo or twenty grams less, it might not have been released. Why did I not ask for help?

It came up with the keel in the air. It was upside down. We managed to drag some people

from the water into the lifeboat. One guy came swimming a little later. He was hanging there with his legs down the propeller. I grabbed him and dragged him to the side of the lifeboat – a real wet and white Englishman. I pulled him inside; he was only wearing underwear and shoes. There was blood running down his body. It looked very dramatic because he was so pale. I still remember him saying «thank you very much». He wore socks and gave away his shoes.

There were some friends from Tvedestrand who had been “deep down” - they swam to the lifeboat.

Then a supply boat came over. We were a group of people who managed to get on board it. I was among those people. Then the lifeboat had to move away from the supply boat.

#### THE SUPPLY BOAT (NORMAND SKIPPER)

When I came inside, I was soaking wet and freezing even though I hadn't been in the water. I saw dead people lying there. I remember “how good it feels to shower. Oh, how sad it was – all the people who were gone. All of my friends who were gone”. I cried. I got a coverall and a bed and went to sleep. I was there until the next day. I was hoisted up to the Ekofisk complex from the supply boat.

#### EKOFISK COMPLEX

I called Håkon Magnus. They phoned home and informed them that I had been rescued. I knew the Sparks (telegraphist) there and got him to personally call. The call should have been done by Stavanger Drilling.

Then, I was transported to Sola airport and then to the hospital where they examined my ruptured tendons. I was given some clothes and went out to eat. I travelled home the next day.

#### PROCESSING

I was crying a lot because no one had helped me pull the lever. I was in shock. Me and my friend from Vikkelen went to look at the lifeboats to check if I was right. If I had missed a kilo or just a little, we would have died. If we had been two people pulling it, we would have made it. A silly thought, but I thought about it. I still think about it.

I also heard about another lifeboat that was released (Ref. Harald Hansen, 41328872, Lifeboat 1, Hamresanden, in agreement with him on the 9.11.2015). They couldn't release it in the front. The wire went along the side of the boat, so they got the hook from the front, pulled it to the sides and cut the wire. That trick saved them.

I talked with my mate, talked with him a lot, we actually spoke yesterday, and I talked to my family. I went back to sea to another rig shortly after the accident. I had a recurring nightmare for some time afterwards. I feared being trapped or locked inside.

Ever since then, I have disliked lifeboat training. I shouldn't because the lifeboat saved me. But it's still like this. I did not like those lifeboat manoeuvres – those exercises. It was awful. Now they have switched to diving lifeboats.

I was on helikoptervelt afterwards. I was so scared. Two people had to look after me.

When Estonia capsized, I got unwell. I don't know if I've «caught» something. I didn't receive any follow-up. I talked with my mates. Particularly with Terje Andersen – talked to the point of boring him.

There was a welder from Stavanger who had watched the whole thing. When I met him, he told me that he had it way worse than me. He thought it was a lot worse to stand safe and sound on Edda and watch people drown.

#### CONTACT WITH THE AFFECTED FAMILIES

It was difficult to keep in touch with those who had lost their loved ones. I was alive, while their husbands were dead. Whether you were rescued or not was coincidental.

#### OM BOARD KIELLAND

The deck had been converted into a storage place and the storage room was used as a cinema room. There were things there that weighted many 100 kilos. It all started to tumble around, and there were people there too. The cinema was a provisional common room. The cinema was located next to the crew mess.

I remember that a wire broke. I saw one person who climbed on the outside, he was hit by the wire and fell into the water. Another person clung to the personnel basket, I heard they had to break his fingers to get him loose.

#### HIS FAMILY

They were happy when they realised that I had been rescued. I don't know if anyone received follow-up. I have two sons who are at sea now. They started after all of this. One of them is off the Egyptian shore and married in the Filipins. The other is 4 weeks on, and 4 weeks off minus travel time and he has a good salary. Mærsligg.

It was mostly my old friends who helped me and were there for me when I came home. One helped me from day one. He is a seafarer, and we could talk about everything. To be honest, I don't know if I was emotionally damaged.

## MAGNE KÅRE SILDELID, CONTROL ROOM OPERATOR, STAVANGER DRILLING

By Else M. Tungland, 2. November, Hotell Victoria, Stavanger.

### PERSONAL DETAILS

[Mag-sil@online.no](mailto:Mag-sil@online.no)

Monday 2. Nov. Hotel Victoria Stavanger

From Stjernarøy

### IMPLEMENTATION AND USE

Else M. Tungland conducted the interview with follow-up conversations by Marie Smith-Solbakken.

Consented that notes from the conversation can be made public and included in the memorial collection about the Alexander L. Kielland-accident and be handed over to the Norwegian Petroleum Museum, the state archives in Stavanger, the national library and the labour movement's archives and library so that the posterity can take part in this (Telephone 23.01.2019)

### BACKGROUND

Survivor, lifeboat 5

First trip as a control room operator

Employed by Stavanger Drilling

### MARCH 27, 1980

He arrived at Kielland just hours before the accident (he shared a cabin with Vike).

The interview is conducted in the hotel restaurant of hotel Victoria. He notes that this is the place where some survivors were gathered after the accident. The hotel has changed a bit since then.

### FIRST AND LAST TRIP

Magne Kåre worked on Alexander Kielland, employed by Stavanger Drilling. He had been to sea before and was a fully educated master mariner. In the previous autumn, he had become father to a little girl. Now, he wanted to spend more time with his family, and he had promised his wife to quit working at sea.

27th of March 1980 became his first and last trip offshore. He was 28 years old.

Sildelid came from work at a gas tanker where he had been for about 4 months before he got a job in the oil industry. In his previous job there had been a strict focus on safety. He was used to things being in order, and he immediately reacted to the conditions at Kielland when he arrived.

#### THE STORM DOORS COULD NOT BE CLOSED

There were cables and hoses and other things that made it impossible to close the doors. The cables and hoses were going through storm doors that were supposed to be closed. (Sildelid explains: Storm doors are heavy, waterproof doors with gaskets which should always be closed in bad weather). There were things everywhere. There were electrical cables, air hoses and gas hoses going through doorways. When I got out of the helicopter, I had to climb over equipment and cables going through the door. That caught my attention.

Doors like that are supposed to be closed during bad weather. They weren't on Kielland. It was not possible to close them. I had never experienced anything like that on any boat I had ever been on.

#### WERE STABILITY CALCULATIONS DONE?

On the boats he had worked on, they often did stability calculations. He was a bit sceptical to the «hotel» they had welded on top. Had they even done any stability calculations here? He was too fresh to dare ask.

It wasn't without reason that they called it the Bangladesh of the North Sea.

#### PREPARATIONS FOR DRILLING AND MOVING TO THE BRITISH SIDE

A lot of equipment was unloaded on deck. It was piled up with drill strings . Unsecured. They were preparing the platform for drilling. At the top of the derrick, the hotel was stuck, 25 tonnes. What did that mean to the stability?

The next day, we were going over to British continental shelf, that's why they were hoisting drilling equipment on board. Ibsen was going to take over. He did not know how they were going to get rid of the housing containers.

He was told that they were going to the British continental shelf by the personnel department onshore. He had told his parents about it; thus, they were not worried about him when they heard that a platform had capsized in the North Sea. Because he wasn't supposed to be on the Norwegian side.

#### ON BOARD KIELLAND

The first thing he did, was to get some food. In the crew mess, he noticed that people around him seemed a bit anxious. The waves were high, but not very bad compared to what

he was used to from his time on boats. In retrospect, he has wondered whether there was something that wasn't quite right, some unusual shakings?

After the meal, he went straight up to the control room where he was to be trained in his new job by someone called Egelid.

#### HAULING

He was involved in hauling the platform. The platform had to be winched away from Edda. Someone said that the tension to the anchor winch did not work. It is impossible to know how much force you have. This was we were hauling the platform away from Edda.

#### THE BANG

He had been in the control room for just over an hour when it happened. They heard a loud bang, as if from an explosion and the platform tilted at least 30 degrees. He immediately realized that the situation was serious and that they had to get into the lifeboats. He was astounded by how bad it was.

The stereo fell off the shelf.

The corridor was now transformed into a slide into the abyss. Many people came falling from the cinema room. We held on to the railing and made our way up towards the door to the deck. The door was closed. The exit was blocked by people and objects lying on top of the door on the outside.

Somehow, they eventually managed to open the door.

It took a lot of effort. Me and a big fellow called Reve got the door open (he died). He was married to the girl who lived next to me at home on Sjernerøy. We managed to lift the door and get out on deck.

#### THE LIFEBOAT WAS SUCK

One knot at the front and one in the back.

Egeli and I managed to untie the boat. We were both seafarers.

When he reached the lifeboat, it was full. There was no room for more people. People were hanging onto it on the outside. Then it turned out that it was impossible to lower it. The mechanism didn't work when the boat was not hanging straight. Most people left the boat. Many jumped into the sea. Magne Kåre considered it a bad alternative. They were too high up; the waves were too big and the sea too cold. He assessed the chance of survival as greatest by remaining in the lifeboat.

Coincidentally, this was a type of lifeboat that Magne Kåre knew very well. In his previous job, he had spent a lot of time familiarizing himself with this type of boat.

If the lifeboats on Alexander Kielland had not been identical to the lifeboats on the gas tanker I had worked on before, I do not think we would be sitting here today.

I knew about another way we might be able to release the lifeboat.

We had to pull some levers. The boat could then be tipped and released with help from the waves. I got help from another seafarer who pulled with all his might.

He knew that they could die, but that there might be a ¼ chance that his plan succeeded. It did. We turned 180 degrees with the platform. The boat ended up in the sea with the keel in the air. At that point, we were 5 – 6 people left in the boat.

They rocked back and forth and eventually managed to turn the boat around (others say that there was someone on the outside who also took part in the turning operation). Then they started to pick up survivors from the waves. There were hatches on the side of the lifeboat where they could bring people in.

It is difficult to think about all the people who drowned around us. We saw the arms disappearing. Many of them were very young.

One of the people they managed to pick up was Egelid who he had been with in the control room.

He had been far down under water and was exhausted.

Some had been lying in bed were almost naked, like a big guy who was only wearing underwear. He was big and his skin was smooth, there was nothing to grab hold of. He locked my arm and knew that he was safe if he did not let go.

I pulled so hard that I could taste blood in my mouth.

Kåre Magne thinks they picked up around 27 people in this lifeboat. They were 33 people in the end.

I SPENT MORE TIME IN THE LIFEBOAT THAN ON ALEXANDER KIELLAND

The lifeboat drifted in the North Sea.

He knew they were safe inside of the lifeboat.

He was no longer scared. He was 100% certain that they were going to survive. It was only a matter of time before they would be rescued.

We had big problems with the unattached leg which was floating around us.

Many people were afraid. I told them who I was and assured them that no one was going to die. I was wearing a bright knitted sweater and was visible in the dark. It got calmer after this. I was afraid of colliding with other vessels. The fog was thick which made it more likely to happen.



An English man laughed hysterically. People threw up. Some were injured. We had to pump to keep the water out.

Several attempts were made to rescue them during the night. A helicopter tried to pick people up in a basket, but the weather was too bad. 6-7 people were picked up.

A supply boat picked some people up in a net, but the feeling that something could go wrong was in the air. The boats slammed into each other, leaving the lifeboat with cracks. The rest of them had to wait.

They learned that all search activity had stopped.

Around 5 or 6 am, they were rescued by helicopter with a harness.

#### RESCUED SECOND TO LAST

By the end it was just me and a guy from Hardanger left in the lifeboat. He was injured and half of his face had turned blue. I think he had given up at this point. I wanted them to pick him up first, but he said, «All night you've been saving others, now it's your turn! ». I told this story to someone sitting at my table at a gathering for bereaved many years later. It turned out that I was talking about their father. They had heard the same story from him. The father was now dead, but he lived for many good years after the accident.

#### FOLLOW-UP AFTER THE ACCIDENT

We arrived at the Ekofisk hotel sometime after noon. I got to call my family on the 28<sup>th</sup> when we arrived at the hospital in Stavanger.

I was examined at the hospital and then left.

I was walking around in my survival suit in Storgata (I was transported to Stavanger Drilling) down to Odds in Stavanger and bought new clothes.

"I did not spend much because I was afraid that they would take it off my salary. Others bought more."

I only bought the essentials I needed to get home.

"The shoes were too small. My feet were so swollen that when the blood circulation and everything was back to normal, I couldn't use them anymore".

I became friends with Lerbrekk, who he met after the accident. Did not receive any other follow-up.

#### FUNERAL WITH CONDOLENCE AND CONGRATULATIONS

Sildelid lost his grandmother two days before the accident. This greatly affected his father, who had a close relationship with his mother. The funeral, which took place a few days after the accident was not only sad. The condolences were followed by congratulations because his

son had survived the Kielland accident. Apparently, he ended up smiling a lot during the funeral.

#### THE PLATFORM IS SCUTTLED

My father and I went to see when they blew up AK in Nedstrandsfjorden. My father wanted to see it. I didn't like the fact that they scuttled it. I guess they did not want to find out what caused it because it could set a stop to the oil extraction.

#### AFTERWARDS

After this he went to back to sea.

He thought he would never be able to sleep on a platform again.

When asked what his wife thought about him going back out, he said: "I guess she understood "

They got divorced. He believes it was not a direct consequence of the accident, but more because he was away for long periods at the time (4-5 months).

#### A SEAFARER SHOULD NOT BE ALLOWED TO MARRY.

Sometime after the accident, he was offered a job as safety manager on Ekofisk. This was during a meeting with Securitas and the police (possibly Eng but he does not remember who it was).

He was offered a good salary and job on land, but he was still not convinced. He did not know enough about platforms. They thought that no one was perfect for the job, but that he had the necessary education and experience.

He asked for some time to think about it and took a walk around Breiavannet. The answer was no, he could not accept the position. He continued to work as a seafarer, 20 years as a captain. Until 1984 when he went abroad with LPG. For the last 24 years before he retired, he worked on a ferry.

#### SAFETY TRAINING- THEY PRACTICE FALSE TEACHING!

Many years later, he attended safety training at ELF. (600 people attended the 6-weeks training?)

There was an instructor who taught about the lifeboats. He spent a lot of time describing where everything was in the lifeboat instead of practising getting down and into the lifeboat and away from the platform. But that is the most important part.

I told them to get rid of all the food and water and instead fill it with woollen blankets. In the North Sea people neither starve nor thirst to death, but they can freeze to death. I asked to speak with the manager – I couldn't bare listen to him anymore. They practice false teaching!

I was transferred to another group with a different instructor.

Then I became an independent lifeboat instructor.

When asked if he still thinks about the accident, he replies:

It comes to mind quite often...

ADDITIONS 23.01.2019

There was a lot of cargo on deck. That is something I noticed. Why in the world would we have it on board? The platform was due to move to the British continental shelf the very next day. We didn't have to go ashore. We were informed of it by Stavanger Drilling, by those on land.

-Who told you this?

-The personnel department told me.

The contract had ended, and the other platform was taking over. Tugboats were also coming. They probably unloaded onto Kielland while at sea to save time.

My parents were not worried because they knew that I was on the British side. They didn't know that I was on Kielland until the day after, when my uncle told them.

We got equipment from Edda, lots of drill pipes on board. They were on deck. Drill strings were stacked on top of each other. The block hung from the top of the derrick.

THE WELDERS WHO CAME ON BOARD

The welders arrived in a separate boat. Oddbjørn Lerbrekk received them. They had brought lots of batteries with acetylene gas. None of them knew what to do. Both died.

The reasons were probably complex. I heard a loud band, like an explosion. The welders might have been unlucky enough to have caused it.

## KÅRE MAGNE KVÅLE, ENGINE ROOM OPERATOR, STAVANGER DRILLING

by Marie Smith-Solbakken 9. November 2015, Tingvatn.

### PERSONAL DETAILS

Born 1952

Gletnesveien 203, 4595 Tingvatn, 9. November 2015

### IMPLEMENTATION AND USE

Conversation in Kåre Magne Kvåle's home on the 9th of November. Notes sent for review and correction. (Email 5.2.2016)

Consented that the note can be used as a background note in the preparation of the presentation of the Alexander L. Kielland accident, including a photo collection, essays and polyphony which is a compilation of different statements from different people. (SMS 12. february 2016).

Consented that notes from the conversation can be made public and included in a memorial collection about the Alexander L. Kielland accident and handed over to the Norwegian Oil Museum, the State Archives in Stavanger, The National Library and to the Labour Movement's archives and library. (SMS 19.01.2019)

### BACKGROUND

2-year middle school at Agedal Middle School, Byremo.

2 years machinist training at Lista upper secondary school.

Sailed at sea as an oiler and engineman for Ugland shipping company and Brøvig shipping company. Machinist on MTB in the navy.

1975: Engine room operator for Moran drilling on Ekofisk Delta.

Spring 1976: Welding training at Tonstad Maskinfabrikk, Sirdal.

June 1976: Machine room operator on Alexander L Kielland, Stavanger Drilling.

1980: Mechanic, assembly supervisor, Skeie mek. workshop (now Eiken mek.).

1988-2006: Teacher, advisor, inspector, and temporary position as principal at Byremo upper secondary school, Audnedal.

2006: Employed in the project department in Aker Solutions in 2006 and worked with preparations for the start of projects in Korea at the DSME shipyard.

2010: Site Manager at DSME in South Korea, building of 2 drill ships for Vantage.

2012-2016: 6 months engagement as an EHS site manager for Aker Solutions to upgrade work routines in connection with EHS during installations – and the test phase on site, later site manager working with installations and commencement of the project in China.

#### WORK TASKS BEFORE ALEXANDER L. KIELLAND

I was employed as an engine room operator in the spring of 1975 in Moran drilling at Ekofisk Delta. When there were cutbacks in Moran at the end of 1975, I decided to take a welding course in the spring of 1976 at Tonstand Maskinfabrikk in Sirdal. I was offered a job after the course and was, among other things, involved in welding the world's largest anchor in Dusaviga in Stavanger in the spring of 1976. In June 1976, I was hired as engine room operator on Alexander Kielland for Stavanger drilling.

#### EDUCATION AND WORK TASKS AFTER THE ALEKSANDER KIELLAND ACCIDENT

1980: Mechanic, assembly foreman Skeie mek. workshop (now Eiken mek.)

1988: Started as a teacher at Byremo upper secondary school, Audnedal. He began as a teacher but later also had other tasks as advisor, inspector, and a one-year temporary position as principal.

Employed by Aker Solutions in 2006 and worked in the project department with preparations for the start of projects in Korea at the DSME shipyard.

2010: Started to work as a Site Manager at DSME in South Korea for construction of 2 drilling ships for Vantage. Aker Solution provides equipment to drill for oil in deep waters. The duties you have as a Site manager is to lead the installation and commissioning of the drilling packages at the shipyard and hand them over to the costumer.

2012: had a 6-month commitment as EHS Site Manager for Aker Solutions to upgrade work routines in connection to EHS during installations – and the test period on site.

Later did Site manager tasks with installation and commission on a project in China and then went back to Korea again.

Quit in Korea in October 2015 and received gratuity pension from Aker Solutions from January 1st, 2016.

#### THE CONSTRUCTION OF ALEXANDER KIELLAND

In the summer of 1976, I was part of a team from Stavanger Drilling that was involved in the construction process. It is normal for the costumer to have a team like this because we were the owner company and knew the platform.

I was employed as an engine room operator on Alexander Kielland. When the rig was ready for production, my duties would be operation and maintenance of machines and generators and the equipment pumps, compressors, evaporators, and boilers.

This was the opposite role of what I would later have when I worked for Aker Solution, there we supplied the equipment. In Dunkerque I represented the owner and was supposed to look after the interests of the owner (Stavanger Drilling).

The owners' representatives are responsible for ensuring that the equipment is installed correctly, and according to specifications in the contract. This is usually done through tests to show that equipment is in accordance with the specification.

I can't remember exactly how everything went down in 1976, but all designs, procedures, and specification must be approved by the ship classification society (in this case Veritas). The representatives from Veritas, the owners' representatives and the shipyard are present to supervise the testing of equipment (which requires class approval).

Today they call this a commissioning, and all parties must sign a document confirming that tests are carried out in accordance with the requirements. All deviations must be documented. Normally, this document will be signed by the representative from the ship classification society (Veritas), the owner (technical manager), and the representative from the workshop. In the case of Alexander Kielland this it was signed by technical manager Leif Barkved and Sverre Karls Kristiansen.

It is the workshops responsibility to document for the ship classification society that all specifications are in accordance with material quality, material thickness, welding procedures, and the construction of the structure. All drawings, and procedures must normally be pre-approved by a ship classification society, and this is followed up by one of its representatives. All deviations must (at least per today) be approved by the classification society.

Veritas is a classification society, and they have specific requirements to comply with. The technical manager is often concerned with the bigger picture – that the equipment is assembled correctly and that the work is done in accordance with good craftsmanship. Often, the client (in this case Stavanger Drilling) comes up with other and additional requirements, then the shipyard/ Veritas can choose to accept it or not, but it is usually rejected.

The shipyard's role is to deliver the equipment according to specification. If a conflict arises, and Veritas finds that it has not been delivered according to specification, Veritas will not issue a document of approval for the vessel. There may very well be a conflict between the construction company and the owner, but it usually ends up in a commercial conflict where the owner states that they will not take over before things are rectified. It is the classification society that decides whether the vessel is in a seaworthy and operational condition.

I cannot remember that there were any particular conflicts regarding Alexander Kielland. There will always be discussions and meetings along the way as the client (owner) naturally wants the best possible product. I was an engine room operator on Alexander Kielland and was not significantly involved in the discussions between the classification society, the workshop/ shipyard, and the owner.

It is a very difficult and demanding job to be a technical manager in this phase of the construction. Nevertheless, there is no doubt that the classification society is responsible for checking with material quality and welded according to procedures and certificates.

We stayed at a hotel in Dunkerque, in the city centre. We ate dinner together, which is normal on a construction site. We did things together. Went to museums, went to the beach and to the D-day beaches. We had a caravan. We went to the Norwegian church abroad. Other than that, I don't remember anything special.

I was involved in towing the platform from the shipyard in Dunkerque over to Ekofisk. You can find the documents concerning the reconstruction to a hotel in Stavanger Drilling's offices. You can check there that the timeline adds up.

#### ALEXANDER KIELLAND ON EKOFISK AS A HOTEL

He worked as an engine operator on Alexander L. Kielland in the Ekofisk area as well as on German territory during the construction of the pump station B11. His job description included keeping the generators going, controlling the compressors, produce fresh water and carry out maintenance of all technical equipment. He worked 12-hour shifts.

#### COLLEAGUES FROM STAVANGER DRILLING

*Ragnvald Ofte:* We worked together at Kielland. He worked for Stavanger Drilling. He was a technical assistant. He was an educated chief and at the same time worked on a small farm. He was from Herad in Farsund municipality.

Kjetil Hauge: I don't know if he is alive or not.

Torstein Sæd: Died in the Kielland-accident.

Lothar Apostel: Died in the Kielland-accident.

Sæbø: Stayed on Kielland all the time, he was a drill crew, he worked on the preparation for drilling, he was not there when the accident occurred.

*Paul Røyseland:* I don't know what happened to him. He got married in Sandnes. I don't think he was there during the accident.

#### MARCH 27, 1980

The weather was bad. We were next to the Edda platform and connected to it with a gangway. When the weather was bad, we retracted the gangway and winched the platforms away from each other. That is what happened that day, there was nothing uncommon about it.

I had been on the rig for a week. The plan was to remove the housing unit and prepare it for drilling.

#### THAT EVENING

We worked 12-hour shifts between 6 in the morning and 6 in the evening and vice versa. Before I went off duty at half past six in the afternoon, I was in the control room, running some of the winches that we used to haul the platform away from Edda. I did what I was told. I checked how many tons of force there were in the wire and reported in to Sæd and Egeli.

The platform manager, Torstein Sæd was in the control room with Egeli and me. The platform manager instructed us through a walkie-talkie.

It was me, Sæd, and Eivind who worked the control room. There may have been some more people, but that's how I remember it. There were also some people on deck. Then we did as we were told.

I clocked off at six and ate in the cafeteria. Then there was a screening at around six thirty in the cinema room. We were in the small cinema room. The movie had just started. I sat quite far in the back because I came in late. I sat close to the person operating the movie. I think it was Leif Reve who operated the movie, he did not survive. Leif was a crane operator and a capable film operator.

At first, we heard a few bangs, then some shaking. People looked at each other, wondering what was happening. Then there were some more bangs and the platform started to tilt.

When it tilted, everything in the cinema slid towards the wall. And then it was – I don't want to call it panic – but people were trying to get out. I walked out through the corridor where the officers lived. There I saw the technical manager, Osaland from Haugesund. He was sitting in bed. I went into his cabin and told him: you must come quickly. «I'm coming, I'm coming, you don't have to wait for me» Osaland said.

Then I said, «if you don't come now, I will never see you again». Anyway, getting out was difficult because there was a 30-degree list. Went up the ladder which was the wrong way and over to the steel door which had to be pushed open. I didn't know how this would end.

I must tell you; I was actually thinking about the accident that had happened on the shore of Feie. It happened not long before Alexander Kielland. It also tilted. It was a serious accident. The people who got into the lifeboats or jumped into the sea were the ones who died. It didn't go all the way around. The people who stayed on the platform survived (see platform capsize outside of Feie). Deep Sea Driller-accident.

I thought about those who went into a lifeboat and died, and that if they had stayed on board they would have survived. I thought that Kielland hadn't overturned. It was supposed to float, it was designed for floating.



## LIFEBOAT 5

I went up to lifeboat 5, which was my lifeboat. I found a life jacket and wasn't sure if I should enter the lifeboat. If we had lowered it, it would have hit the pontoons and probably be crushed in the harsh weather. Some people climbed the anchor cable, and some jumped into the sea from the platform. We were a group of people standing outside of lifeboat 5 and we wondered what to do. Then a helicopter arrived above us, but it did not have a lift so they couldn't help us. The Edda platform was so close, yet the rescue so far away.

I was responsible for lifeboat 5. We decided to give it a try, so we got on board. Then the anchor wire(s), which held the entire rig, snapped. Everything tipped around. The lifeboat hung from the platform in a wire and followed when it capsized. The lifeboat was released from its hooks when it landed, but it landed with the keel in the air. The platform went under, and the lifeboat was left floating upside down.

We opened the side window and saw people floating in the sea. We collaborated with the people on the outside, and together we managed to turn the lifeboat around. There were many people in the sea around us, and we pulled in those we could. I saw a person swimming some distance from the boat. I found a rope, but when I was about to throw it to him, he was gone. Many of the people on the outside were injured, one of them had a big cut on his thigh, he survived. We pulled them in through the windows.

## NORMAND SKIPPER

Normand Skipper was our stand-by boat, but it was not by Alexander Kielland at the time. It had received another mission on another platform in Ekofisk. It had been sent to another platform to get something, but it was not far away. I remember seeing that the platform was gone, only the bottom of the pontoons were visible in the sea. There were many people in the boat, I guess around 30. I went to Dusavigå after the accident to see lifeboat 5, it was a terrible sight.

There were a few attempts to start the engine. Chaos, people threw up, we drifted for a while.

After a while Norman Skipper came, and I jumped over to it. It turned out that this was too dangerous. There was a great risk that people would die while jumping from the lifeboat to the supply boat. Additionally, the lifeboat took a terrible beating against the ship's side of Norman Skipper. They threw some blankets and provisions to the people who remained in the lifeboat. Then the lifeboat was floating around while they waited for the helicopter to pick them up the next day.

I don't know why I jumped over to Normand Skipper, but I guess I thought that was my best attempt at helping people. To get them from the lifeboat into the supply boat. It was quite safe in the lifeboat as well, but I think we agreed that we should try to get from the lifeboat onto a supply boat. It was probably too big of a risk. I had to time my jump to the point where the boats were level with each other. There were large waves, and a miscalculation could have disastrous consequences.

After I came on board, I was taken to the cabins. The captain decided that it wasn't sensible to continue. It was too risky to bring people on board like that and the lifeboat could be smashed to pieces. They could not continue. Blankets and provisions were thrown to the lifeboat, and they just lay there, drifting, until they were picked up by helicopter the next morning.

I felt bad about jumping over to Normand Skipper. I was there until dawn.

Then we were hoisted on board Edda. We got woollen blankets and were received in the best possible way. Then we were transported by helicopter to Stavanger. There, we were met by people from Stavanger Drilling.

#### STAVANGER DRILLING

Stavanger Drilling met us when we came ashore. We were received by the personnel manager from Stavanger Drilling. We came as we were. My technical manager, Osaland was the first person I met in Stavanger. He had been through quite the drama, jumped in the sea, been on a raft and hoisted up in a helicopter.

I wanted to drive home from Forus and thought it would be ok. Stavanger Drilling sent me in a Taxi.

#### WHO DO YOU REMEMBER FROM STAVANGER DRILLING?

I don't remember many.

Jan Erik Geirmo, he too was in Dunkirk. We travelled by train together to Dunkirk.

Later, the sister rig, Ibsen, almost sank. They made the mistake of forgetting to close a hatchet to the pontoon, and it almost capsized.

#### CAME HOME TO HÆGEBOSTAD AFTER KIELLAND

After Kielland, I received payment for three months or so. I went around wondering what to do. I didn't have any plans or any ideas.

I spoke with Alf Torfinn Skeie from Skeie Mek Verksted, he told me they needed people, so I started to work there after the general staff holiday. They needed people, but he was also kind to give me the job. Alf Torfinn is the brother of Bjarne Skeie, the oil-entrepreneur.

In the days and times that followed, there was a lot of commotion surrounding this accident. The neighbours came to visit and to hear about what had happened and how I was. A lot of research was conducted on the sequence of events as well as on people's reactions to the accident.

Are Holen led a study to map the reactions in survivors up to the 2000s. Later, Are Holen was knighted for the work he has done for survivors of disasters such as Kielland and Utøya.

A lot of people asked about the accident, but we didn't talk a lot about what feelings we had after the accident. I didn't talk to any outsiders about it, other than those closest to me such as my wife.

#### THE FAMILY

I had just gotten married in August. We did not have kids. My wife was alone at home when she watched it on the news. The in-laws came over that night.

Then she didn't hear anything until my sister, who lives at Lura, told her that she had found out that I had been rescued. She had made a lot of phone calls. (Gerda Kvåle, teacher, Lura). My wife wasn't notified until later by Stavanger Drilling and the rescue centre.

#### HOW HAS THE ACCIDENT AFFECTED YOU?

My life completely changed. I stayed at home and had nightmares in the first period. In the early days after the accident, there were so many comments and speculations in the media that I was anxious to open the newspaper to see if anyone new had made a statement about the accident. After a few months, I met one of the managers at Skeie Mek and he asked me if I wanted to work there. I worked there for 8 years.

#### PROFESSIONAL CAREER AFTER KIELLAND

After 8 years at Skeie Mek workshop, I wanted a challenge. I learnt a lot that I've had good use for later. I realised that I wanted to try my hand at teaching. I wanted another job. In my spare time, I finished teacher education. I worked 150% the first year. I started as a teacher in an upper secondary school and worked there for 19 years. I started as a teacher in mechanical subjects, but I held many different positions there before I quit in 2006.

In 2006, I joined Aker Solutions. I have worked in South Korea and in China. I never went back to the North Sea. In 2013 and 2014, we were contracted to MMO (a division of Aker Solution) in connection with a platform upgrade on the Snorre A platform. I thought it would be ok, but I wasn't sure if I could handle it. I told my managers about Kielland and said that I might not cope well with going to the North Sea. I was transferred to another project before that became relevant. Then it did not happen after all.

I was put on another project. I travelled to Korea instead.

Even 34 years after the accident, I was still afraid of my reaction of going back to a platform. My wife certainly did not want me to go back to the North Sea again. She wouldn't have handled it well. It was bad enough before the accident. *It is terribly sad to lose friends and to think about all the sad fates.* But everyone has a survival instinct - and are happy to survive themselves.

#### COMMISSION OF INVESTIGATION

Pentagon was supposed to be a safe platform, but it wasn't used in the way it was intended to be used. Perhaps there was too much uncalculated load in some places? Cracks in bracings and the welding of the hydrophone probably weakened the structure. That's what the commission of investigation concluded. It was probably caused by unfortunate welding and unusual use.

#### ALEXANDER KIELLAND HAS MEANT A LOT

It was important that it was turned around and checked for the remaining deceased. It was very exciting when that operation was going on. It was very strange that the platform was scuttled afterwards. For me personally, I chose a completely different career after that. It became the end of my offshore career.

## RAGNVALD OFTE, ENGINE ROOM OPERATOR, STAVANGER DRILLING

By Marie Smith-Solbakken, 30. November 2015

### PERSONAL DETAILS

27.07.1941

[srofte@gmail.com](mailto:srofte@gmail.com)

Farmer Herad at Lista

Trained machinist.

1977-1980: engine room operator (2 trips), Technical assistant Stavanger drilling

Later professional career.

### IMPLEMENTATION AND USE

Conversation carried out on the phone on the 30<sup>th</sup> of November 2015. Interview read out on the phone and corrections were made through the phone. Working environment, tasks and routines on board were discussed at Ragnvald Ofte's home together with Kåre Magne Kvåle and Eivind Egeli on February 12.

Consent that the note can be used as a background note in the preparation of the presentation of the Alexander L. Kielland accident, including a photo collection, essays and polyphony which is a compilation of different statements from different people. Consent given 12. February 2016

Consent that notes from the conversation can be made public and included in a memorial collection about the Alexander L. Kielland accident and handed over to the Norwegian Petroleum Museum, the State Archives in Stavanger, The National Library and to the Labour Movement's archives and library. (Email 26.12.2018).

1977 A call came, and then it was just a matter of signing on. Signed on in Farsund. I travelled out to the rig from Esbjerg in Denmark by helicopter. Alexander Kielland served as a hotel platform. First in the Danish sector and then in the Norwegian. It was a fairly new rig. I was not involved in the construction, but I accompanied the tow to Tananger. They installed the barracks on deck. It had several floors. Kielland stayed on different places at Ekofisk, first by Eldfisk and then by Edda.

#### WORKING ENVIRONMENT

It was ok. We had nothing to do with the people who worked for Phillips. We worked shifts. Us from Stavanger Drilling stayed together, we shared a cabin with four people. It was the permanent cabins on the platform.

#### THE FRENCH MAN

We often heard noises and bangs from the platform when the temperature rose during the day. We called them the French man, here comes the French man again.

#### 27<sup>th</sup> of MARCH 1980

I came on board at eleven thirty. We took turns to keep watch. Nothing was unusual. In the evening, we did the winching and pulled Kielland away from Edda. The bridge between the two platforms was retracted, everything was normal. The able seamen did the hauling together with the first mate from Stavanger Drilling. Torstein Sæd was the platform manager and led the hauling process.

I was in my bunk when I heard a bang. First one and then another, then it listed 20 or 30 degrees. I had trouble getting out of the cabin. I didn't think anything, it went by so fast. I had a survival suit but didn't have time to put it on. I only thought about getting out. I got up on deck. Looked out, and saw that lifeboat 4, to which I belonged, was floating with the keel in the air. I was only wearing a t-shirt, thin shirt, and bare feet. The platform tilted to starboard.

Lifeboat 4 had broken loose. I knew I had to get over to the port side. I walked towards lifeboat 5.

We had to buckle up. We couldn't lower it. Some walked out, some came in and some just stood there and considered whether it was safe or not to enter the lifeboat. The waves came straight towards us. Would the lifeboat be smashed and break against the platform?

Someone wanted to lower it down, but it would have been crushed right away. Me and some others managed to avert it. We had no choice but to turn around with the platform. We were the crew, so we knew.

It was a Dutch davit (lowering mechanism). When the lowering signal is given, it is released immediately, in contrast to the Norwegian one which can be regulated.

The rig tilted more and more, and we went around with it. We were left upside down. The entire time I had a feeling that I would manage to save myself. I had an inner strength, that's how I felt.

The hooks released when we got into the water. The lifeboat was upside down. Those on the outside pushed on the hull, we managed to right the boat. We wouldn't have been able to do it without them. I didn't wear a life jacket. People were soaking wet. We picked up as many people as possible.

#### RESCUE

A heavy fellow swam over to the lifeboat. I wasn't strong enough to pull him inside. He held on to the railing, and I told him to hold on so I could rescue the others. I released the heavy one (Bjørn Berntsen? Died 10 years ago). The young one was no more than two or three meters from the lifeboat. I saw that he was having problems. The heavy one didn't have enough strength to hold onto the lifeboat, so when I let go, he went straight down. But he came up again, so I had to keep holding him when he came back up. I really held him. He didn't have the strength to hold himself up. We managed to drag him into the lifeboat. I wanted to save the young boy who was further away, should have tied a rope around me and swam to him, but I had to hold the heavy one. That boy disappeared. I will never forget the despairing look on his face. I still see it.

I went to look for a rope, but when I found it, he was gone (Kåre Magne Kvåle).

#### IN THE LIFEBOAT

I refused to start the engine because the oil had spilled everywhere. I was afraid it could start a fire. There were boats all around us. So many boats, lights everywhere. Everything was under control. It could have been nice to run the engine to get some heat, but a lot of the heat goes out through the cooling water.

The atmosphere was tolerably good. People were seasick, I threw up myself.

Someone on board wore two life belts, I didn't have one myself. I yelled at the guy with two and took one of his life belts which I gave to a young boy. The young boy who drowned would probably have survived if he had worn a life belt, he would have made it. I didn't have a life belt myself. When I got on deck, there were no more lifebelts left. It makes me angry to think that some people grabbed two.

Normand Skipper came up to our side. They put out a large net between the boats. A good number of people got on board this way. But the waves were big, and the boats bumped into each other. Then our lifeboat started to crack.

The supply boat left us. Then we drifted by ourselves until the morning, to around four thirty. A helicopter with a basket underneath came, it was not successful. The basket was flying all over the place and it was difficult to get hold of. Maybe one man managed to get in it. Finally, a rescue helicopter arrived. It had a lift, and a man came down to help us.

Two and two went up together, I went with a guy who was injured. It was a guy from Kristiansand. Then we were flown to Ekofisk and placed in the sauna.

In the morning we had some food and were transported ashore. I was wearing my survival suit when I arrived at Forus. Several doctors were there. Those who had been in the water were examined. I hadn't been in the water, so I walked on.

They transported us by cars to the city centre. We were taken straight to a clothing store. Everyone was wearing survival suits; it was the only thing we had. I walked around the city centre wearing it. Got new clothes from head to toe.

#### COMING HOME AND AFTERMATH

Then it was time to get home. My wife picked me up. I don't think she realised how bad it was – she didn't understand how serious it was.

I stayed home for a while. I received salary for three months and received 25,000 in compensation. Lived off my wife. She was a teacher. I had more than enough to do, I was tired in the evenings after long days of physical work. I got a new job in the Gulf of Mexico. I had stayed home from March to November. I was scared when I went to Mexico. I thought that if it wobbled, I would be scared.

I have had nightmares and I have had problems with my nerves. It hit me a few years later. I lost sleep. That was also in connection to the fact that he fell out with his wife. They managed to repair the relationship.

#### THE CHILDREN

We had three kids, the oldest was born in 1970, then we had one in 1972 and the youngest was born in 1979. The seven-year-old said «Daddy will be fine because he is such a good swimmer». But it was a bit far to the mainland from Ekofisk.

#### THE CAUSE

It is hard to tell. I can tell you what I think, but I do not want to be quoted on it.

I got on board in Esbjerg and went to Alexander Kielland which was located at H7. From there, we took the rig straight to Tananger. There, we raised the platform. We lifted the platform and removed ballast. Sverre Kristiansen (who lived on Storhaug in Stavanger) was technical manager.

The pontoons were visible, and I came down to inspect it. I asked Sverre why there weren't horizontal bracing between the B and C bracings and the C and D bracings. There were bracings between A and B and between D and E. Sverre told me that it was because the supply boats had to get closer in underneath the platform, and that it was strong enough. Veritas had approved it.



They inserted those bracings on Ibsen (this must be checked).  
Stavanger Drilling trusted Veritas.

#### SINKING

Strange. It felt like sinking it was a matter of life-and-death. Why was it so important? Was it because someone had something to hide? There were lots of valuable stuff there that could have been reused. There was also a lot of oil and diesel left in the tanks. I don't know if they emptied them. If not, it will pour out one day.

#### WERE YOU CLOSE TO ANY OF THE DECEASED?

I lost two people that I knew well. I crane operator called Reve and a German sailor who was married to a Norwegian girl from Jæren. She was at one of the gatherings.

#### HOW DOES KIELLAND AFFECT YOU NOW?

It feels far away. It feels like a bad dream.

Lifeboat 4 had released itself; it was the lifeboat I was assigned to, and it was drifting away from the rig with the keel in the air.

## EDMUND ARNE MONGSTAD, ROUGHNECK, STAVANGER DRILLING

By Edmund Arne Mongstad, 6. April 2016.

Born 3.9.1954.

98673848

[Edmund.mongstad@gmail.com](mailto:Edmund.mongstad@gmail.com)

### IMPLEMENTATION AND USE

Interview conducted on the 28.10.2015. Notes sent for correction on the 6. April 2016 with request for consent to use in presentations of the Alexander L. Kielland-accident. The notes are corrected and rewritten by Edmund Arne Mongstad via email on the 6. April 2016.

Consented that the s can be used as a background for the preparation of the presentation of the Alexander L. Kielland accident, including a photo collection, essays and polyphony which is a compilation of different statements from different people. (Email 6. April 2016).

Consented that notes from the conversation can be made public and included in a memorial collection about the Alexander L. Kielland accident and handed over to the Norwegian Petroleum Museum, the State Archives in Stavanger, The National Library and to the Labour Movement's archives and library. (SMS 19.12.2018)

### BACKGROUND

Before the accident:

Worked at a manufacturer of keyboards, Signa Plast,  
1 year

Diver for Mowi for 1,5 years

Worked in CD Catering for 6 months I.e buffets

1 year as a roughneck for Nordenfjeldske Drilling on the rig Nordskald

1 year for DP2 on the Frigg field as a roughneck for Stavanger Drilling

Then he worked for Stavanger Drilling as a roughneck on Alexander Kielland. His duties were to prepare it for drilling. He was supposed to work as a derrickman when the rig started to drill.

After the accident:

2 years in school. Preparatory course at the engineering college in Bergen and thereafter 6 months of isometric drawing course at Stord

Journalist at Strilen approx. 3 years

Journalist/editor in industry magazine and offshore magazine, 1.5 years

Fisherman for Solund in Sogn og Fjordane with his partly owned small fishing boat for 4 years.

Later freelance diver for different companies, crew member on a medical boat, crew on various fishing boats and freelance journalist for approx. 2 years.

2,5 years: journalist for the daily newspapers Sogn Dagblad and Firda. Office Solund. Drove a boat rather than a car. Covered the coastline.

Moved away from Solund and started to work for Grieg Forlag as a journalist and editor for Småbåtliv and Fiskerimagasinet, for approx. 1 year.

Began to work as an editor for Kystmagasinet, Aquatic and later Padling and En gullkantet fremtid. Part owner of Atlantic Forlag AS. The publishing house was sold 7 years ago.

Have worked there since then. Now employed as an editor in Media Digital as editor of Kystmagasinet, Padling Norge, Padling Sverige, En gullkantet fremtid, Northern Seafood, Norway Exports and Piscus.

IN THE AFTERNOON MARCH 27, 1980

We worked in the equipment room and in the pump room. I came from the Frigg field and DP2 where I worked as a roughneck, but I was to start as a derrickman on Kielland. I was in the pump room, which was located next to a provisional cinema, clearing up the mess between pipes and bracings. Much of the drilling equipment had arrived. Kielland was to be converted into a drilling rig and was going to drill on the English side. We were in the process of preparing Kielland for a new mission. I was supposed to stay there during the preparations. The next job would be on the English side. We looked forward to it, and that's what we talked about.

On the day of the accident, the weather was bad and there were strong winds. The waves regularly hit the deck and created some shaking, which was normal. Suddenly, we felt an extra hard knock and strong shaking, more than normal! I looked at my friend, Oscar Olsen, who stood talking to someone on the floor, and I saw that he felt uneasy. He started running towards the stairs which led up to the deck and the exit. I realised that something was about to happen, and I got out of the area with pipes and valves and started to run towards the exit. But when I was halfway to the stairs the floor disappeared under my feet because of the platforms quick listing. I slid backwards and passed out by some pipes that hit my head. When I woke up, I was lying in water. The room was about to be filled with water through one of the open hatches.

I came to myself. I felt terrible and was bruised, but I got up. It hurt to breath. It turned out that some broken ribs had punctured one of my lungs. I was also bleeding as I had hit my head in several places. I stood there and expected the platform to overturn at any moment. It was

dark and sirens were howling from the neighbouring platform Edda. There were people who had been in the cinema room which were trapped by equipment and other things, they gave off horrible screams of death as the water continued to rise. I was sure that I wasn't going to survive. I've worked as a diver and been in difficult situations before. Even though I was badly bruised and had trouble breathing, I did not panic. I knew my way around and I was in good physical shape. That helped me. In addition, my arms were strong after several years on the drilling deck.

#### THE CINEMA ROOM

I will never forget the noises made by those poor people in the cinema. You cannot imagine the sounds people make when they fear for their lives. A lot of people were lying in the dark, struggling and screaming under cable drums, plates and drilling equipment. The cinema room was closed in by provisional walls and the equipment that was placed in the front of the room had not been tied up. Heavy pipe parts and other equipment crashed through the room as the platform rapidly tilted. A flood of equipment crashed down, hitting people, and blocking exits. I was lucky that I didn't get the heaviest equipment on top of me, but I was still hit by pipes and valves as I slid down the floor. This is what broke some of my ribs and caused the puncture in my lung. I heard that I was the worst injured among the survivors.

#### THOUGHT OF THE FAMILY AND GOD

As I stood there, after I came to myself, I thought primarily of my family back home, but I also thought about my childhood faith and God. I was one hundred percent sure that I wouldn't survive. What would happen to my family and my two beautiful daughters of 8 months and soon to be 5 years old? How would they cope? I was very worried about them. I also wondered whether I would go to heaven. I was not a Christian, but I was raised in a Christian family and Christian environment. Would I be forgiven for my sins? These were the things I thought about. But I felt no fear of dying and I was completely calm.

#### THE EVACUATION

The rig stayed still for some minutes, heavily listed. So strong was the list that it was not possible to walk on the floor. I knew my way around because I was a regular crew member and I figured that I had to try to get out. It was completely dark, and I dragged myself up along some pipes and other things until I reached the stairs at the top of the room. I made it up the stairs and had a clear view. Half the platform was now under water but at the very top I saw a lifeboat still hanging from the davit. Because I was in such a bad condition, I realised that the lifeboat was my only option. I would never make it if I ended up in the water.

I managed to pull myself across the deck and over to the railing. I looked down at the pontoons with walkway leading to the lifeboat. There were lots of people standing by the walkway and

none of them showed signs of wanting board the lifeboat. But they had seen several attempts at lowering the lifeboats. The other boats had been smashed against the platform by massive waves. Wind and waves crashed into the part of the platform that was still above water.

I managed to signal some people a few meters under the deck I was on. They gave way and I jumped down. I sprained my foot and got a bit hurt, but I was otherwise ok. I crawled under the arms of those who stood still and did nothing. Then I finally made it to the lifeboat. There were no life jackets left in the box by the lifeboat, so I boarded without one and fastened the seatbelt. There were maybe 7 or 8 people in the overbuilt lifeboat which could normally hold 50 people.

Immediately after I got on board the lifeboat, the entire platform overturned with the lifeboats still hanging from the davits. Someone came over and managed to release the boat, but since there were few people on board and almost no one had secured themselves, the lifeboat was left upside down while the water rushed in through the sliding hatches on the side. We organised ourselves and tried to rock the boat to turn it around. At the same time, it turned out, there were people in the water who had helped us. We managed to right it, but it was half filled with water. We looked out and there were an inferno of foam, waves, equipment, and people floating around. While we were drifting in the waves, a couple of people came on board.

#### NORMAND SKIPPER

Finally, the supply boat Normand Skipper came to our side. They had a large net hanging over the bow. The large waves made it difficult to time when to jump in it. A couple of people jumped. I was number three or four to jump, I came straight into the net and was thrown on board the supply boat by the hands of strong crew members. From what I've heard, they lost one of the people who jumped, and the procedure was stopped. The remaining people in the lifeboat were later picked up by a helicopter. The supply boat continued to search, but the crew kept a close eye on my condition in case it was necessary to evacuate me quickly. In the morning we were hoisted on board a basket to the Ekofisk complex and then flown by helicopter to the mainland.

#### TREATMENT IN THE HOSPITAL

I was admitted to Stavanger hospital. They expected many more to come, but I was apparently the only one from Kielland. I had a drain inserted in my lung to drain blood and other things out of my lung so I could breathe properly. I stayed in the hospital for three days and my wife quickly came to visit. I asked the hospital if it was possible to get closer to the rest of my family. The hospital requested an ambulance, and I was sent to Bergen by plane. I had almost half the airplane to myself. I was connected to a lung machine the entire time. I was treated very well in both hospitals. At Haukeland they supplied me with books, newspapers, and sweets. I recovered quickly.

#### STAVANGER DRILLING

I was employed by Stavanger Drilling. It was a good company to work for. They paid me a visit in Stavanger. They also sent a tailor to take my measurements as I didn't have any clothes. I got a full set of new clothes at the hospital and was followed up very well. I had bruises all over my body due to beatings from the accident, which turned yellow after a while. I still recovered quickly afterwards.

#### HOME

I had two children, a girl born in 1979 and one born in 1975. I had spoken with my wife right before the platform capsized. Suddenly, the news of the accident aired on the radio. She was afraid that I would not survive and was worried about a possible future alone.

When I got home, my grandfather recorded an in-depth conversation with me about the accident. He thought it was important to get the information out while it was still fresh in memory. The tape exists somewhere.

I have a very social family. At the time, we lived at Frekhaug, a little north of Bergen. I was in the process of building a new house when the accident happened. I had no problem talking about the accident immediately afterwards. We talked a lot about what had happened, and I was the hero in my hometown for a while.

#### REPERCUSSIONS

I had troubles traveling by ferry from the island I lived on at first, particularly if there were some waves. I also didn't sleep very well the first year. I had never had problems like that before. A psychologist came to visit a few weeks after the accident, he was doing his doctorate in crisis psychiatry. We had some longer conversations about my reactions to the accident. My GP was very kind and helpful, and he did everything he could to help me recover quickly.

As for later reactions, I haven't been bothered much. But one day, a year after the accident, I was sitting in the classroom and the fire alarm went off. It was an unannounced fire drill. The siren sounded very similar to the one I heard from Edda during the accident. I was completely paralyzed and unable to move, while everyone else found their way out. Nobody knew that I had been on Kielland, and I had to be supported out of the classroom. I also had trouble seeing the movie Titanic and I didn't dare go to the cinema to watch it.

#### LIFE AFTER

I had a boat and one year after the accident, I started going out to the sea again. I studied for a few years before I got a job as a journalist, editor and later a fisherman and professional diver. My journalistic career started in Stilren, where they were looking for people a couple of years after the accident. I thought that I might have a talent for it as there were many good writers in my family. I met at the editorial office, was interviewed, and got the job. I had never written on a typewriter or photographed before. I started with a form to learn touch typing on a keyboard and luckily, I managed to use all fingers. I received good training and did well

in the job. I eventually moved to Solund in outer Sogn og Fjordane and worked as a fisherman for four years. Then I started to work as a freelance journalist and later a permanent journalist in Sogn Dagblad and later at Firda. Then we moved back to the Bergen area, and I have worked as a journalist and editor since then.

#### COMPENSATION AND TREATMENT BY EMPLOYER/SOCIETY

I eventually received NOK 400,000 as compensation. I was in the process of building a house, so it came in handy. We had just finished the foundation wall. It took a while after the accident before I received any financial support at all, even from the public sector. So, I experienced difficult economic times in the early phase after the accident.

#### CONSEQUENCES AND LESSONS LEARNED

There was undoubtedly increased safety after the accident. They changed many rules and regulations. I had worked in the North Sea for three years. Several times I 'd had near-death experiences in my career in the oil industry. The safety in the oil industry was not the same as it is today, and there were several near accidents.

KJELL JOHAN KYLLESEID, SKILLED WORKER, HMMV HAUGESUND.

By Ellen Kongsnes

#### PERSONAL DETAILS

Survivor Haugesund, HMMV Johan

Kylleseid (f. 1939)

Kjellkylleseid@yahoo.no

Consent by phone 22.1.19

The men were playing cards in the cabin because there was fog so they couldn't get to work. Kylleseid stopped by his cabin. And then, a bang.

The platform listed so heavily that it was impossible to get out of the door. He did not wear shoes. I managed to climb out of the cabin window. It was difficult to walk on the iron bars without shoes. He made his way towards the lifeboat at the highest point.

#### Lifeboat 5

LANDED ON HIS HEAD, UPSIDE DOWN.

Avoided being struck against the platform hull. Had to release the splints.

Turned the lifeboat by moving the crew from side to side. Eventually managed to turn it around.

Then the circus began.

Pick people up.

In through the window

Quite a few

Trygve Børsheim is lying in the water. I pull him in through the window. He is feeling seasick.

I'm so sick, I have to throw up. Throw up wherever the fuck you want. Then he vomited all over me.

#### ENGINE

The exhaust pipe broke during turning. They had to drift in the lifeboat with no engine. A supply boat wanted to rescue us. They were about to smash the rescue boat. Tied to supply boat. High seas, pounding against the sides, lost track of the boat before they could rescue the rest.

Got clothes and a coverall.



#### RESCUE

Tried to jump into the supply boat but fell overboard.

44 years then, 76 years today.

HMV for several years.

#### OFFSHORE

Went back to sea after three weeks. They called me. Back on the same Foxtrott. New accommodation platform. I was out there for a week. It went ok.

Offshore until 1992.

#### SECURITY

We had some training. I attended lifeboat training in Kristiansand before I went offshore.

The first weeks were miserable. All the funerals.

But after that, he hasn't thought much about it.

Not until the Sleipner-accident.

It was awful. It's the only night I haven't slept. It all came back to me.

At least, the safety is better now. The safety has improved at the subcontractors as well.

He believes that it is coincidental that many of the deceased worked for HMV. Coincidentally, there were many of them there in the same place at the same time.

They have their own safety course at HMV – pool training and lifeboat training.

#### THE CHILDREN

His wife came home from the hospital with the son who had broken his nose. He got to sleep in dad's bed. Their daughter was three years old. Their son was seven years old.

At four in the night, she was visited by HMV who told her that her husband had been found. Learned about the accident on TV.

Niece, neighbour, and brother came over. Mourning music on the TV. Ran back and forth. Can still feel it. Terrible. Was given a pill for her nerves.

The next day at 23:00, he came home. His wife did not want to cry on the dock. He was driven to the door. They had been drinking beer on the boat. He was completely exhausted. Felt half-dead. Tired.

Sad the first weeks. The funerals.

Made my way up from the cabin together with a co-worker. He didn't make it. A few hours earlier we had played cards together.

It was painful to talk. What are you supposed to say.

I didn't talk much about it. I pushed it away.

The thing that saved him was that he was experienced at sea. There never was a question of whether he was going back to sea or not.

It was mostly the helicopter ride my wife feared.

I never talked to the people who wanted to research us. If they wanted to talk, they would have to come to me.

Kjell Hestvik, trial in the US, they lost.

There weren't any pubs like Dickens in Haugesund.

They drank at each other's houses.

In the time after, we met at each other's homes and shared a bottle of booze. They sat there and cried.

At least we got it out.

My wife talked a lot with the other wives.

Jan Vestre. Workmate.

He bought a house and Kyleneid bought a boat. They attended the funerals together.

JAN VESTRE, WELDER, H MV HAUGESUND

by Marie Smith-Solbakken, 23. April 2016

#### PERSONAL DETAILS

BORN 1951

[Else.marie.vestre@gmail.com](mailto:Else.marie.vestre@gmail.com)

#### IMPLEMENTATION AND USE

Agreed to participate in the conversation on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of April 2016. Phone call interview on the 26th and 27th of April 2016. Notes from the conversation sent for review and correction the 27th of April 2016. Consented that the notes can be used as background in the preparation of the presentation of the Alexander L. Kielland accident, including a photo collection, essays and polyphony which is a compilation of different statements from different people (SMS 13.06.2016)

Consented that notes from the conversation can be made public and included in a memorial collection about the Alexander L. Kielland accident and handed over to the Norwegian Petroleum Museum, the State Archives in Stavanger, The National Library and to the Labour Movement's archives and library (SMS 18.01.2019)

#### BACKGROUND

1973: H MV, worked as a welder

Sent out to the North Sea as a welder.

2000: Disability pension

#### NORWEGIAN INDUSTRY

This is a story about Norway, our industry, and our work life. It's important to note that this is one of the most serious and worst things that have happened to Norwegian industry. It's important to remember this and not forget what happened, who we lost and those who were affected. Many people were. At my workplace we were almost in shock. Many people from H MV died. We talked a little about it, but not much. We did not cry in front of each other but every night my eyes teared up when I went to bed.

This is as story of Norwegian industry, and it is important to present it as an important part of Norwegian history and for this history to be preserved.

## HMV

HMV took good care of us. They did the best they could. Those of us who were healthy were allowed to go out again in the first pool. We were afraid that they would label us as crazy if we wanted to go back to sea. It was a given that those of us who had been there were given priority.

The entire place was haunted by the accident until most of us had retired. Every 27th of March, they put down a wreath.

## REACTIONS

I didn't have any reactions. I never told anyone about what happened unless they asked. If people ask about it, I tell them the story. I have never entered discussions about what happened or held lectures about it.

## THE BEST PART

It was a Norwegian guy who interviewed us, but it says that it was Edward Hughes. They sent it to those of us who had made a statement.

## STARTED IN 1977

My first stay in the North Sea was in 1977. I worked with the installations and preparations for production. The first platform I was on, was Albuskjell Alpha. None of the platforms I worked on were in production. We prepared them. All modules were in place, and we welded steel and pipes between the modules to connect them.

## ALEXANDER L. KIELLAND

We lived on various Swedish accommodation platforms before Kielland. We had lived on Kielland (while it was next to Edda) for about six months before the accident.

We all got on very well. We lived four people in the containers where they had installed bunks. It was cramped, but we were well looked after, and the food was delicious. No one complained back then. But today we would have complained. Now, they have single person cabins with TVs in the room. Back then, we were together. In the evenings we sat and talked, played cards, or went down to watch movies together.

JOHN NILSEN

Its written about in The Best. They had to use force to free him. He had his whole weight on his fingers from the sea and up to the deck. He hung from the basket with his body on the outside of it. You find unknown strength when in need. He too went back to sea.

WORKED ON FOXTROT AND LIVED ON ALEXANDER KIELLAND

We went out there on the Saturday. It happened on a Thursday. We worked on Albueskjell Foxtrot. That day, the weather was bad, and we couldn't make it over to Foxtrot. On this trip, the four of us from HMMV shared a cabin; Kjell Kulleseid, Jan Bringsvor (died), Lars Johan Iversen (died) and me.

CAPSIZING

We had been eating well and were full after dinner, and even though we were young, we went to have a little rest. We lay in bed and chatted and relaxed for a while. At first, there were some strong shakings, then it tilted. We threw ourselves on the floor. The only thing on our mind was to go to the highest point.

We went out of the window. We lived on the 2nd floor, where there were stairs down to the deck. When we got to deck it was important to make our ways up so we wouldn't be hit by the lose objects that came crashing downwards.

LIFEBOAT 5

We got up to the lifeboat. There were quite a few people there. Some people told us we were crazy if we boarded the lifeboat. We saw that people who had entered the lifeboats be crushed between the brazing. Me and Kyllesid still chose to enter the lifeboat, mostly because it was so bitterly cold outside, and we didn't have a lot of clothes on. We only boarded it so we wouldn't freeze to death. The two others chose to stay behind on the outside, and we never saw them again.

When we left with the lifeboat there were 8 of us inside.

As the rig capsized more and more, we were at the highest point the entire time. We heard people shouting about whether the safety plug had been pulled out (It must be pulled out when the lifeboat is to be lowered). There was someone who made it to the release rope when we were in the sea.

The people who observed this from Edda told us that our lifeboat came up like a bullet. We laid down inside. We all got wet. The water came through the hatches, the lifeboats weren't waterproof. It was not dangerous, but we all got wet. One guy was only wearing underwear.

With some help from those outside, we managed to turn the boat around. After that we pulled people inside. My arms ached for days. I believe that we got 24 men into the lifeboat, so we were a total of 32 people in the end.

#### CONTAINERS RIDING THE WAVES

When we couldn't find any more people, we tried to start the lifeboat. We started the engine and wanted to get away from there. Someone was afraid it would catch fire because battery acid and diesel had poured out when it overturned. The engine was turned off because we were afraid of oxyhydrogen gas. I was very focused. I felt ok and looked out to see how things were going. There were many containers in the sea. Several meters above us, containers were riding the waves. All I thought was: I hope they don't hit us. It was dark, difficult to see anything, and we were drifting around.

#### SUPPLY VESSEL

At around eight or eight thirty, we were pulled to the side of a supply vessel. There were some who managed to get on board. They took big risks. They had pulled us in at the front and in the back and people were climbing up on the net. I don't know how many. There were many there to receive them.

They almost crushed us with the fender beams. The boat got a massive crack. They had to let us go. By then, we had taken in a lot of water. And many people had vomited. When I pumped the water out, the pump would not take any more. It was full of grease. I didn't tell anyone about the crack either. We were floating around and there was no need to create panic.

#### THE ENGLISH FISHING BOAT

Around midnight we were hit by an English fishing boat – it was looking for survivors. We bumped into that boat. When I looked out of the roof hatch, I saw that they were watching us from deck. I was terrified that the crack would get bigger if we were next to each other and kept bumping. I shouted: "Go away. Go to hell". That's why we drifted apart.

#### SIKORSKY

A couple of hours later, a Sikorsky arrived. They lowered down a basket. We tried to catch it. I caught the basket. Then they picked up a man and pulled him up. The basket came back down and was swaying above us for about 15 minutes. It took a long time for us to grab hold of the basket. The next person eventually managed to get hold of it and get up. It was maybe three people who made it. It was difficult and risky. We gave up. They lost contact with us.

#### HANDED WARM CLOTHES FROM A SUPPLY BOAT

A supply boat came up to us in the morning and managed to throw over a line. And we received bags of warm clothes, woollen blankets, and overalls. It was nice to wear something warm.

#### SEA KING

The Sea King arrived. It lowered a man down to us; the helicopter was hovering in the air. They didn't take long to hoist us up. They were good at their jobs. It was a high-level rescue operation. When we got into the helicopter, it was like entering a greenhouse. It's impossible to describe the feeling. It was an amazing feeling. I think most people who came up there had the same feeling.

#### SMOKED

Back then, most people smoked. The tobacco was wet. They were waiting for us with cigarettes and matches when we landed at the Ekofisk complex. It felt good. It was like coming to heaven for the second and third time.

Then they led us inside. We stripped out of our clothes and went straight into the shower. Then to the sauna, then back to the shower, and to the sauna again. I put on a padded coverall and went down to the dining hall and ate the best food in the world.

#### THE COLLEAGUES OUT THERE

They kept their distance, we sat and talked among ourselves.

#### THE HANGAR

We arrived in Stavanger at the hangar at Sola at around half past six in the morning. There, personnel came to examine us. Those who needed a doctor was appointed to one. The rest of us were driven to the KNA hotel where we got a room. At that point I called home to my mum and dad. They notified my wife.

#### HOME

HMV came to my wife in the morning. It was the foreman who visited Hanne. It was Arvid who came, he is no longer alive. That's when my wife was informed about it. We had two kids, the oldest was 9 and the youngest was 5 years old.

#### THE WORST PART

I had a twin brother out there, Geir Vestre. I wondered how he was doing. That day, we had played cards together. Geir was an electrician and worked for Stavanger Drilling. I did not know that he had made it before after I returned home. I think it was when I came to my parents' house. They had received a call that he was alive. He was in the other lifeboat and were picked up later than me.

There were two lifeboats, and we were in different ones. Our time had not come yet.

#### MY FRIENDS

It was terrible. We lost an incredible number of people from HMV. It was heavy. We started to work again after the Easter break.

#### THE FUNERALS

I attended all the funerals I could. I helped carry Iveresen's casket. Bringstol and Iversen – had they come with us, they would have survived. It was painful to think about.

#### THE CAUSE

We did not discuss it. What can I say. I have no idea. Maybe there was too much strain on the leg that broke off. Too much force on the chain coming up from the leg.

#### REACTIONS

I did not have any reactions afterwards. Me and my brother discussed this, we came out of it well.

We didn't need comforting. We managed fine by ourselves.

It was hell to lose those we lost; it was a difficult period. My nerves are as good now as they were before.

#### MOST VIVID MEMORY

My most vivid memory is Trygve Børsheim standing and breaking windows on a container when we walked up on the rig. He broke windows, jumped inside, and pulled out lifebelts to hand the people on the outside who didn't have one. He came on board the lifeboat I was in. I thought he was dead, I didn't dare walk over to him, but it turned out he was alive. He had a brain tumour a few years ago. I have often thought about what he did and how many people he really saved.

#### FELT SAFE

We felt safe on the platform – we thought it was a safe place to be.

#### MEANING

Afterwards, the security improved a lot. They added an incredibly amount of security measures. It was of great importance to the safety in the North Sea.



## SVEIN VEGARD VERMUNDSEN, ASSEMBLER AND SHEET METAL WORKER.HMV

by Tor Gunnar Tollaksen, March 2005 and February 2019

### PERSONAL DETAILS

Born: 22. June 1948.

Residence: Kopervik.

### BACKGROUND

Background: Haugesund Mekaniske Verksted, HMV, from 1970. Worked offshore for some years before the accident in the Ekofisk area.

Profession: Assembler and sheet metal worker. HMV had hook-up (preparation and completion) on the Edda- platform. That's how I started to work in the North Sea.

### IMPLEMENTATION AND USE

Svein Vegard Vermundsen has been informed about the memory database where interviews with survivors, witnesses, bereaved and others connected to the accident are made available for future research. Vermundsen supports this work and wants the interview to be included in the memorial database on the "Alexander L. Kielland" accident, which is handed over to the Norwegian Petroleum Museum, the State Archives in Stavanger, the National Library, and the Labour movements archive and library. The interview was approved with clarifications on the 20<sup>th</sup> of February 2019.

### MARCH 27, 1980

Svein Vegard Vermundsen was relaxing in his cabin with three workmates, when they heard a bang.

-The weather was quite bad on the 27<sup>th</sup> of March 1980. It was grey and foggy, and quite a bit of wind. We could not go to work because the helicopter shuttle was cancelled. We relaxed in the cabin and had planned to go to the cinema at 9pm. The movie which began at 6.30 pm, was usually for those on board the Edda platform, says Vermundsen.

- The bad weather in the Ekofisk-area that afternoon meant that I was not on Edda that day. We were waiting in the cabin. Eventually the gangway was retracted and Kielland was hauled away from Edda.

Vermundsen never made it to the cinema that night. Instead, he experienced the worst nightmare of his life.

#### A POWERFUL BANG

- That was a hell of a blow, we said in unison. It was a load bang. Then, the platform suddenly tipped and got a list. The only thing that kept it from overturning completely were the anchor cables. We fought our way out onto deck. I put on a life jacket, but I can't remember whether I brought it from the cabin or if I found it on deck.

Vermundsen tells about loose objects that flew through the air. Containers that plunged into the sea. People ducking away while clinging to the railing. Many went towards the highest point, which was the B-leg. So did Vermundsen. Some jumped into the sea, others tried to lower a lifeboat. Vermundsen saw that one of the lifeboats got crushed against the platform.

-I was completely at a loss for what to do. I saw a man being hoisted up in the personnel basket from the Edda platform. For a moment, I felt like there was no way out, but I came to a point where I had to decide what to do.

#### SAVED BY HIS BROTHER

When the last anchor cable, which was really tense, snapped, he was the last person to jump into the lifeboat. Vermundsen says that it wasn't possible to release the lifeboat because it hung in the hanger with a heavy load. The release mechanism only worked when the lifeboat was in the water.

-We probably turned around with the platform and were fell into the sea with the platform over us. I don't know how far below the surface we went, but we discovered that we were floating up. But the boat was lying upside down in the water. We tried to turn the boat from the inside by rocking it from side to side. It didn't work from the side we wanted to turn it, so we tried the other side, and then we were able to turn the boat around. It was probably possible because of the people who clung to the boat from the outside.

Vermundsen was in the lifeboat with 13 others. Then they started to pull colleagues into the boat. Around them, oil workers swam for their lives, raised their arms, and screamed for help.

-We were able to turn it around and pull people into the lifeboat. Some were very difficult to get on board because they were completely exhausted and unable to help, while others were easier, they partly pulled themselves up. In the end, I think we were over 30 people in the lifeboat.

Not long after, the supply vessel «Normand Skipper» arrived, where his brother, Reidar Vermundsen, was the first mate. The entire time people in the lifeboat were afraid that the boat would be crushed against the ship's side. Vegard Vermundsen was one out of eleven people who took the chance and jumped on board the supply vessel when a wave lifted the lifeboat high enough. The rest of the people in the lifeboat were brought to safety and hoisted up by helicopter a few hours later.

-I had a strong desire to return home to my wife and three children the entire time.

Vermundsen was one of the first people to go to the North Sea from Haugesund Mekaniske Verksted, HMMV. After the accident, he tried to go to sea again and he was among other things in the Statfjord-field for a short time. He had to give up on a further career in the North Sea and was eventually disabled by the injuries he had sustained during the accident.

- I have learnt to live with the pain. All in all, I have coped well. But I would have traded anyone to get back to work.

#### QUESTIONED BY THE POLICE

I was questioned by the police in Stavanger. This was shortly after the incident. I remember that one of my cabin mates was also questioned. He said that the police opposed him. It was as if they thought they knew more about it than us who had been there. My impression was that those questionings were "good for nothing".

#### THE CAUSE OF THE ACCIDENT

-No, I have not given the cause of the accident any extra thoughts. We recognized that the leg broke off, but us co-workers did not discuss what had caused it. We lived on the platform and noticed that there was some work going on. The rig was moving on to a different mission.

PER MANGSETH, INSULATOR, TEKNISK ISOLERING A/S

By Else M. Tungland, 17. november 2015, Åna Sira

#### PERSONAL DETAILS

976 73 288,

Eikedalsveien 14, 4420 Åna-Sira

#### IMPLEMENTATION AND USE

We have had several follow-up conversations during the fall of 2016 and at the latest on the 24.01.2019.

Consented that notes from the conversation can be made public and included in the memory collection about the Alexander L. Kielland accident and be handed over to the Norwegian Petroleum Museum, the State archives in Stavanger, the National library and the Labour Movement's archives and library (Telephone 24.01.2019).

#### EHS

We interview him in his kitchen in his home at Åna Sira. He starts by saying that he does not remember much. He was 25 years old at the time. It is a long time ago.

We tell him about the project. He especially pays attention to what we say about the EHS. You ask about EHS – there wasn't any!

#### CAN YOU TELL US ABOUT THE TIME YOU BEGAN WORKING IN THE NORTH SEA?

When I was 16 years old, I moved from Vennesla to Oslo (his sister tells us that he lost his father around this time). I lived in Maridalen. I was so sick of school. I considered going to sea. I got a job in catering in the North Sea. The people who worked there asked why I didn't work with them instead. So, I did. I started in "Teknisk Isolering as" – a company with main office in Drammen. I was good at math and had worked there during the summer holidays.

We were doing the technical insulation around water pipes. We were moved around like cows. 12 hours shifts in addition to the flight.

I worked on the tank and was flown to AK to sleep there.

The weather was rough on the day it happened, but we had seen worse. AK was a sturdy platform in bad weather. I always felt safe there.

I sat on the toilet on the top floor when it happened. Suddenly, it tilted. I had to climb and squeeze through the door. I got a solid grip on a radiator, or something else that was on the

wall. Heavy iron door. You get a lot of strength in a situation like that. I realized that something serious was happening. My only thought was to get out of there.

I grabbed an external ladder – there was quite a bit of panic around me. People were standing in line to the outer stairs that led down to the steel deck where the lifeboats were. I jumped down onto the steel deck, about 4 meters down. I hit my chin. I've had a lot of problems with my teeth after this (they started to fall out after a while).

I WAS FIT AND DIDN'T SCARE EASILY

I have later been told that some people freeze and panics while others just continue in situations like that. I'm someone who continues.

Down on deck I met my finish friend Esko Juhani Kærki, we had known each other for a long time. I had become a part of the Finnish group.

I also spoke with a tool pusher, Svein Harald Moseid from Vennesla that I knew. I briefly spoke with him. He had to go down because he felt a responsibility for the other people. (I can see from the lists that he died).

I tried to get an overview. I saw people jump into the sea. The son of Teknisk Isolering in Bergen was trying to deal with a lifeboat. I thought it looked dangerous to get into that lifeboat. We were wondering if the platform would overturn.

I climbed upwards. Went on the outside, passing the queue. I held onto netting. I got up and discussed what to do with the others. Some people jumped. They put on anything they could find. 2-3 of the people I talked to made it. They were from Porsgrunn, Skien, Sandefjord? Easterners.

Kærki and I boarded a lifeboat. I was sure that it would go down, was just sitting there and waiting. A hell of a bang. We went down headfirst. People were on the outside of the boat. We were tossed back and forth. It turned around. Pulled many people inside. I saw two of the people who had jumped.

The ambience turned a little tense. People were injured. The radio guy from Kielland tried to get the radio working. We electricians knew that it wouldn't be possible when it wasn't grounded. An argument broke out.

A boat arrived after a while. A good amount of people managed to get on board it. The atmosphere got even more tense. We heard the planes above us.

Esco and I hit each other to try to stay warm. My leg froze. I have had problems with it ever since.

A helicopter eventually came. Seaking. They lowered a basket. Many were too frightened to get into it. I went up and dove out into the air to get hold of the basket before the rescuer

came down to us. I thought that I will either manage to get up or I will fall in the sea, and they will rescue me. I was a good swimmer. I was the first person who got up in the helicopter. Not many of people managed to get up.

I was taken to the Ekofisk tank.

There, I changed out of the wet clothes and put on dry ones. Sat and waited, I couldn't relax. I was filled with adrenaline.

DO YOU KNOW HOW YOUR FAMILY REACTED?

My sister rushed to the car. She was at the cottage in Setesdalen. She travelled with my mum. My mum said that it would be ok because I was such a good swimmer.

AFTER ARRIVAL IN STAVANGER.

The newspaper published a photo of me when I arrived by helicopter.

Someone from Teknisk Isolering brought me to Stavanger to buy new clothes. I bought a fucking ugly sweater, not something I would usually buy.

I got a room at the SAS-hotel. Many journalists came and knocked on my door. The journalists were completely mad.

A story of the Idi Amin-times comes to mind. A journalist shouted out at the airport: are there any rape victims here or anyone who has lost their family, I would like to interview you!

I went to see my family in Vennesla. I don't remember much of this. I had a partner who couldn't bear to stay with me any longer.

I continued to work in the North Sea. I think I went back 2 times after this. I didn't like it. I didn't receive any follow-up. I felt like the others were afraid or worried about us.

I started to work onshore, still for Teknisk Isolering.

I was good at math and started to develop a software. A system to manage inventory stock. Statfjord C.

THE SHRIMPS IN GANSFJORDEN ARE BIG

A rough life and many bad jokes among colleagues

I didn't tell anyone that I had been on AK.

I attended meetings with politicians. The prime minister. I have always been good at expressing myself.

We were told that money wouldn't be an issue. They were going to solve everything. We were going to receive the help we needed. Empty promises! Nothing happened after this!

I had a Rolex watch which was not replaced. They thought I made it up. I also had some very expensive shoes which were not replaced. My pockets were also full of money.  
I received a fairly small compensation – almost nothing.

A lot of fuzz regarding the rising of the platform – it never ended.

One day, I had suddenly had enough. Fuck you! I told my boss and left work. I got in the car and drove to Oslo. I don't remember much of the years after this.

Wandered around. I didn't feel comfortable. I could get really aggressive. I looked like shit. I only remember bits and pieces.

I biked a lot around Europe, sometimes by myself and sometimes with friends.

I remember people running away in panic when I took off my helmet to buy ice cream. This was somewhere in Switzerland. My hair was dyed in three different colours. I ended up in different punk-scenes around Europe. I spent time with Nick Cave, before he became famous.

GOT HELP

My mother worked really hard to help me get back on track.

A crisis psychiatrist and a lady from NAV finally managed to help me.

I started to study informatics at NHI, it was a 2-year education as  
an engineer.

I worked with 4 colour layout and print in Ratatorsk.

An easy-to-read newspaper

Got married.

The lady from NAV (whose name he does not remember) eventually helped him get a compensation from the government as if he was 90% disabled.

IN THIS REGARD "I LOST A HAND AND AN EYE".

I saw what she had written and when I met her, I said «I can see you and I can shake your hand». The lady from NAV told me that it had to be that way because she didn't have anywhere else to cross off in the form. He received compensation.

He used the money to get a hot air balloon certificate in the UK.

His wife and her sister also got a certificate. They became the first female balloonists.

He flew for Greenpeace, and he had a contract with Statoil. Showed people Norway.

He was opposed by the Norwegian balloon community.

Had a child in 1987 – a boy.

80-91 COMPLETE CHAOS.

Nearly all his friends died.

Lost his mum.

A terrible fucking time.

Got calmer after his second son was born in 1991.

Got a job in the Science Park. This was the first «real» job after AK.

STARTED INTERVETT

Today, the company is called Manamind? In the 90s it was called Intervett and it was one of the first consultancy companies that focused on digital media. The company was located in Stavanger and Oslo.

1999 he moved to Århus. Tele DK.

He fell out with his ex. He and the kids moved from Denmark to his sister in Norway. He thought the ex would have been able to look after them properly. Vennesla wasn't a good place to be. He met some women now and then before he met his current wife 9 years ago on the internet. Gerd Jorun(?) from Flekkefjord.

His sons now live in Oslo. Informatics – Nets.

They are committed boys who are involved in Save the Children's youth organisation. The complete opposites of their father.

He recommends us to talk with his sister Anne Siri Brødvik who lives at Stray. She is a hardworking lady. She has seen how much chaos there was afterwards. Backup mum.

THINGS GOT BETTER WHEN I STARTED TO SEE A PSYCHIATRIST.

RUMOURS OF SMUGGLING

There were rumours that Kielland was a transit for smuggling. The products came in containers with supply vessels, unloaded them on Kielland and were picked up by another supply vessel going to a different port. There was no control. Bulletproof. After the Kielland accident, I was visited by the police who wondered if I was involved. I wasn't. That was not cool. I got in a lot of trouble from it. It blew my career. I worked for Teknisk Isolering (Technical Insulation).



#### GOT A JOB AS A DRILL CREW MEMBER

I grew up in the same town as Sven Harald Moseid, who was a tool pusher. He died. He offered me a job in the drilling crew. I was just going home to quit my job and then I was going to work with him. Kielland was going to England, and they were preparing it for drilling. It was the last day it was supposed to be on Ekofisk. But it didn't turn out that way.

#### REPAIRS AND MESS

Hoses and cables went through doors. It was not possible to close doors that were supposed to be closed. I don't know what they repaired, but it was very messy. Manholes were installed. I was down on the lower deck with Moseid that day, a lot of repairment was happening. There was a lot of mess, things everywhere. He was stressed and worried about the rig. I don't know if the manhole covers were screwed on the day it overturned, but I don't think so. It tipped over very quickly after the bang, and it tilted until it overturned. It went so quickly; I think it took 14 minutes.

#### CAUSE UNCLEAR — NEEDS A NEW INVESTIGATION

It is a shame that we don't get to see the details of the settlement. The operator, owner, shipyard and overseeing authorities had their own agenda. Why are we not allowed to see what it says? It's not right!

I believe that it was the maritime conditions, hauling and anchoring over time that tore the platform apart. In addition, there were bad welds and cracks, and the rig could not withstand being moved this time. After all, it capsized around the same time as they hauled it away.

It will probably be my sons who will finally know the truth.

I hope that the authorities will open a new investigation. It is important to get clarity for us survivors, but also for the people who lost someone. Why did they die? Even after all these years, many questions remain unanswered. It is the biggest industrial accident in Norway, so the authorities should pull themselves together and turn every stone to find some answers. We have a right to know. It still matters. It's not fun going around and think about these things. Why the fuck have they not done this properly. Had it happened today, they would have turned every stone. We were barely compensated and had our careers and lives ruined. I have struggled a lot after this.

PER MANGSETH

Date: 31st August 2023.

Location: Sola Strand Hotel

Interviewed by: Tor Gunnar Tollaksen.

Background: Per Mangseth talked about how he experienced coming out of "Alexander L. Kielland" in a plenary session and was further interviewed about this afterwards.

"Kielland" was notorious. It wasn't a place you particularly wanted to be. It was my second time there, and I usually tried to get to other places because the platform was so notorious.

I had been on the platform for a few days when the accident happened. I was part of a work team that was shuttled around to other platforms in the Ekofisk area. I worked together with a Finn, Esko Kärki. He also survived. We worked together quite a lot, so we had this thing where we walked around and looked around. We found out where we were on the rig, where the lifeboats were, where the escape routes were. We had this as a routine every time we came to a new rig.

When we got to Kielland, we realised that there was a hell of a lot of work going on. Then we spoke to Moseid and went inside and looked at the platform. The doors were up, i.e. the bulkheads. We saw that there were wires running through the doors inside the platform. Manholes were screwed up inside the platform. On the deck, manholes can be screwed up to go down. These were screwed up. There were wires running through many doors.

I particularly remember that a door on the E-leg was open. Here we saw that there were welding cables and power lines. Work was being done to convert the platform back to a drilling rig, a lot of work had to be done and they were running out of time.

*Was this a topic among those of you who lived at "Kielland"?*

No, but Esko and I talked about what this was all about. Later, others have also mentioned this, about what kind of work was going on.

In retrospect, I've thought about that since the door was open on the E-leg, it must have caused the E-leg to fill up very, very quickly. When the doors are open, the water is free to flow in. The platform filled up incredibly quickly, which it wouldn't have done if the doors had been closed. It had been a housing platform and was going over to the British side to drill. It was supposed to be converted to what it was designed for. There was a crew out to redesign the whole rig.

*How did you experience the work culture as an oil worker?*

I was young and didn't really give a shit. But many people got a lot of abuse from the Americans.

They were quite rough. No mummy dearest and a tough environment. It was very different from platform to platform. My first trip out was in 1976 to Frigg. I worked until 1983 when I was blacklisted. At the time, there were many rumours about what had been going on on the "Kielland" with smuggling and mismanagement. I was visited by the police at my workplace and they wondered if I had been involved. I certainly hadn't. Then someone recognised me out on Ekofisk, and that's when I was blacklisted. I had talked, I was quite outgoing, and had pointed out things on the platforms if I saw something that wasn't as it should be. I went to the people who worked there permanently and said "that's not good, we shouldn't do that". Things eventually improved after "Kielland", but I was blacklisted when I pointed out unacceptable conditions and subsequently trained as a programmer.

*Was that blacklisting well known among you oil workers?*

Yes, if you made a mistake or did something that cost a lot, you wouldn't get out again. That's just the way it was.

## PICKED UP BY LIFEBOAT 5

EIVIND EGELI, CONTROL ROOM OPERATOR, STAVANGER DRILLING

By Else M. Tunglund, Marie Smith-Solbakken, Ellen Kongsnes

### PERSONAL DETAILS

Norheimsveien 2, 4026 Stavanger

909 95 572/ 51 56 68 61

### IMPLEMENTATION AND USE

Interviews conducted on December 17<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup>, January 5<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> and October 19<sup>th</sup>, 2016.

Agreed that all notes from interviews and conversations as well as handed over documents can be used. Autumn 2016.

Several interviews have been conducted with Eivind Egeli. The interviews were conducted both separately with Else M Tunglund, Marie Smith-Solbakken and Ellen Kongsnes and jointly. Notes from these conversations have been reviewed and corrected. In addition, a joint meeting was held with Ragnvald Ofte, Kåre Magne Kvåle, Eivind Egeli and Else M. Tunglund and Marie Smith-Solbakken at Åpta.

### BACKGROUND

Eivind Egeli (born 1926) survivor. Control room operator.

Went down with the platform to approx. 20-30 meters under water. Was pulled into lifeboat 5. Picked up by Norman Skipper.

### SEAFARER

Egeli had been a sailor abroad for over 30 years when he got a job as a control room operator on Kielland. He started to work on Alexander L. Kielland because he wanted to spend more time at home. His career in Bergesen shipping company, where he worked before, was coming to an end. The retirement age here was 60 years. He could have retired after this, but very few people did.

His longest trip was in Asia and lasted for 18 months. His wife joined him on many of his trips. So did his oldest daughter before she started school. His wife came on some of the trips after the oldest daughter started school too, when the grandmother could take care of their child.

### THE DAY OF THE ACCIDENT IN THE CONTROL ROOM

I had just started my shift and was on duty in the control room. There was a new control guy on board, Sildelid. He was going to release me when my shift ended. I showed him around and told him how things worked. The plan was to have a cigarette break, and then go through everything again. We had just sat down when we heard a bang, then all the alarms went off.

The rig tilted to 35-40 degrees. The typewriter, radio, TV, and all loose objects fell towards us.

#### THE PUMPS DID NOT WORK

I couldn't get the pumps started. If I had, we could have levelled the platform. We realized that we had to get out.

I met someone on their way to the cabin. "Get out! We're sinking", I told him, but he did not listen. He died.

Sæd wanted to go into the pump room. I told him that we had tried to start the pumps, but that it was useless. He didn't listen. He ran down.

He made it up the corridor and managed to open an iron door and get out to deck.

Then we put on life jackets.

#### THE LIFEBOAT WAS GONE (LIFEBOAT 1)

When I came to the lifeboat that I was supposed to be in charge of, it was gone.

They had already lowered the boat, gotten it into the sea and driven away.

I saw another lifeboat being smashed and falling into the water.

I knew that those who ended up in the sea would be dead after a few minutes in the cold water.

I walked up to the B pillar where lifeboat 5 was. The person in charge of this lifeboat did not show up. 8 men entered it. Several of my men came along.

#### THE LIFEBOAT WAS STUCK (LIFEBOAT 5)

The lifeboat hung in the davit. They couldn't release it. I didn't go inside. My plan was to jump into it when the platform tilted so much that the lifeboat was level in the sea. But then, the wires snapped. 3 or 4 wires from the B-pillar. Each of them had a force of 350 tons. The platform overturned with great speed. I clung to the davit, didn't have a chance to let go when it capsized. I saw the nets on the platform. I saw the lights high above me, struggled my way up. I felt like I was about to burst and held my nose and blew out through my mouth. I don't know if that was the right thing to do? Both of my lungs were damaged. Once I got my head above water, I couldn't breathe right away. Many days went by before I was able to breathe properly again. Some guy hit my back to help.

I went around with the platform. I was approx. 20-30 meters deep.

It was so peaceful down there. I wasn't scared. Ascended. The question was, will I reach the surface before I run out of air?

#### THE LIFEBOAT IS FLOATING UPSIDE DOWN

I came up before the lifeboat. Then the lifeboat shot up, and it was left with the keel in the air. Some guys shouted, “the lifeboat is here”. We clung to it, and they opened the hatches and pulled people inside. “There’s Egeli”, someone shouted. And then I was pulled into the lifeboat.

They laid down in the lifeboat and pulled a lever to release it. They were 8 people and they managed to get it loose. I only wore thin trousers and a thin shirt. The wind felt icy, and I thought to myself that I might die within the next 10 minutes.

#### NORMAND SKIPPER

After a while the supply boat Normand Skipper arrived. They began by taking those who were worst off. I was thrown aboard by a big sailor.

The rescue was difficult. The waves were large. The lifeboat hit the ship’s side and it started to crack. They had to give up before everyone in the lifeboat had been rescued.

The crew on Normand Skipper knew Egeli because he normally delivered their mail. “Did you remember to bring the mail?” was the first thing Dikke (skipper Didrik Stonghaugen) asked when he saw Egeli on board.

I ripped off my clothes and put on a wetsuit. For a long time, I was covered in duvets.

Dikke (Didrik Stonghaugen) brought me some trousers. You could fit five of me in them. He was a big and fat man.

Those who were rescued stayed on Norman Skipper overnight. Then we were transported to the C-platform.

#### BACK IN STAVANGER

I arrived in Stavanger the following morning. My family was informed that I was alive. I spent 1 day at the hospital. They did an x-ray of my lungs, and the doctor told me that they were damaged. I have been short of breath ever since.

#### INTERVIEW AND INVESTIGATION

They shielded me from the press. I told the insurance company about the rig, the course of events, and what had happened.

#### HOME

Phoned home.

His daughter brought him clothes. The house was full of people when he came home. The daughters did not go to school that day.

I couldn't sleep. My mum was there too. She heard about the accident while on the bus to Bekkefaret. The bus driver and another person talked about an accident on Alexander Kielland. She knew that I was there and asked them what had happened. They told her that it was "nothing" – probably didn't want to scare her, but she realized that something was wrong and went to our home.

#### LIFE AFTER

He survived the Alexander Kielland accident and proudly shows us photos of both grandchildren and great-grandchildren. His daughter helps him shop once a week, otherwise he does most things himself. His house is clean and well-kept. Both he and his wife got cancer a few years back. His wife died. Egili survived and is almost 90 years old:

I always say that the man upstairs does not want me, and the man down there is afraid of competition. The only solution is to find myself a cloud and start by myself.

"Then, I will come to you, grandpa", my grandson said when he heard this.

Egili did not work offshore after the accident. He tells us that he doesn't really like the sea anymore. He got a job in the Ports Authority instead. While he worked for the Port Authority, he additionally received a huge retirement package from the offshore job, so he has been doing well financially.

#### COMPENSATION

The compensation of NOK 25.000 to survivors was a joke. Everyone laughed at it.

Those who lost their loved ones received up to 1 million. Even that is not enough.

He didn't care to take it to court, but other people did.

Some got an attorney from the US, but it didn't lead anywhere. The Americans had nothing to do with Norway.

#### NOW

He no longer has a driver's license because he had an episode after parking his car outside the shop one day.

I fainted. The doctor took my driver's license after this incident but told me I looked healthy and could apply to get it back. When I went to deliver my driver's license at the police station, they told me the same thing, but I'd had enough of it.

I said that a man my age shouldn't have a driver's license! Imagine what could have happened! Just minutes before I fainted, I drove on a road where there are children walking to school. I

would have killed myself. The policewoman said it was the first time anyone had said something like that. Usually, people stood there crying to get their driver's license back.

#### STAVANGER DRILLING

We were preparing the platform for drilling. A lot had to be done before it was ready for drilling. The hotel had to be removed. The derrick was there the entire time. We were in the process of sending people ashore. The next day, there was supposed to only be 16 people left because it had to be rebuilt to be able to operate as a production platform again.

Stavanger Drilling knew that there were cracks forming. Every time Torstein Sæd was there, he checked the bracings and pillars. (Egeli believes it was D6, he would go into the bracings through a manhole, take the lift down. I think it was the cross bracings by the hydrophone). They kept an eye on cracks. He took the lift down. They knew that the crack was going to be repaired. The crack had also been reported to Phillips.

Egeli had previously worked with Kaasen (director of Stavanger Drilling) offshore. I knew Alf Kaasen; he was a telegraph operator. He was my telegraph operator while I worked on the Bergesen boats. I travelled home from Dubai with his wife. Nice lady.

He also knew the other platform manager, Kjetil Hauge, well. Around 2pm on the day of the accident, Kjetil Hauge left Alexander L. Kielland. He was the last person to leave the platform before the accident occurred (Stavanger Aftenblad).

Leif Reve, who was a crane operator, died. I met him on my way out to the deck. I stopped him and asked, "where are you going?". He told me he was going down to the cabins, he broke loose, and ran down to the cabins. He was going back to look for others.

#### AFTERWARDS

That's enough. My wife wouldn't have let me continue. I started to work for the Port of Stavanger Authority. I remember when the coal ships got a list. I didn't like it.

There was a gathering at Atlantic for those of us who experienced the accident.



## EIVIND EGELID ON THE CRACKS AND ANCHORING

By Else M. Tungland and Marie Smith-Solbakken, 9. January 2016

Sæd always went down to the pump room and controlled the shafts. There was an elevator going down.

To D6 ?

Yes, it was where the hydrophone was placed. He checked it, always. It was one of the first things he did every time he came on board. I did not go with him because I was in the control room.

I heard that he had noticed a fracture, that's why he went down there, to check on it.

We knew about the cracks. The first thing Sæd did was to go down and check the development of the crack. He always went down there with another person, knew there was damage to the hydrophone. He looked at it every time he came on board.

We, the people at the office, and Phillips knew about the crack. We were going to shore in Stavanger the following day to repair it.

Sæd did not say much about the crack. The German who always went down there with Sæd (Lothar Apostel, who was among the deceased), talked about it.

They kept it under surveillance, it was a weakness with the hydrophone. They came into the control room after they had been down there and talked about it.

## PERSONNEL ON BORD ALEXANDER KIELLAND

There were more than 400 people there in the morning, but we sent people ashore all the time. There were approx. 200 people on board when the accident happened (212 people on board, 123 died, 89 survived). Had it happened the day before, it would have been an even bigger disaster. I got the crew-list from Stavanger Drilling. It was written there that three people were on their way to the platform around noon. They were taken off the flight because some Americans needed their seats. Where were they? They were at Cod. For a long time, we assumed they were dead.

We left the control room, found lifebelts, and handed them out. I saw Sæd running towards the control room, and I yelled "There is no use in going in there, it's impossible to start the pumps". When the tilting passes a certain angle, the emergency units do not work. We thought the rig would sink in a normal way.

#### ANCHORAGE

We received a drawing where he showed us how the platform was anchored (can be found in the project folder) and explained why it was not anchored at all the bracings.

Eivind Egeli showed us on the picture (police report, Bjørn Lian) where the fracture was and explained how to get down there as well as what was done to keep it under surveillance.

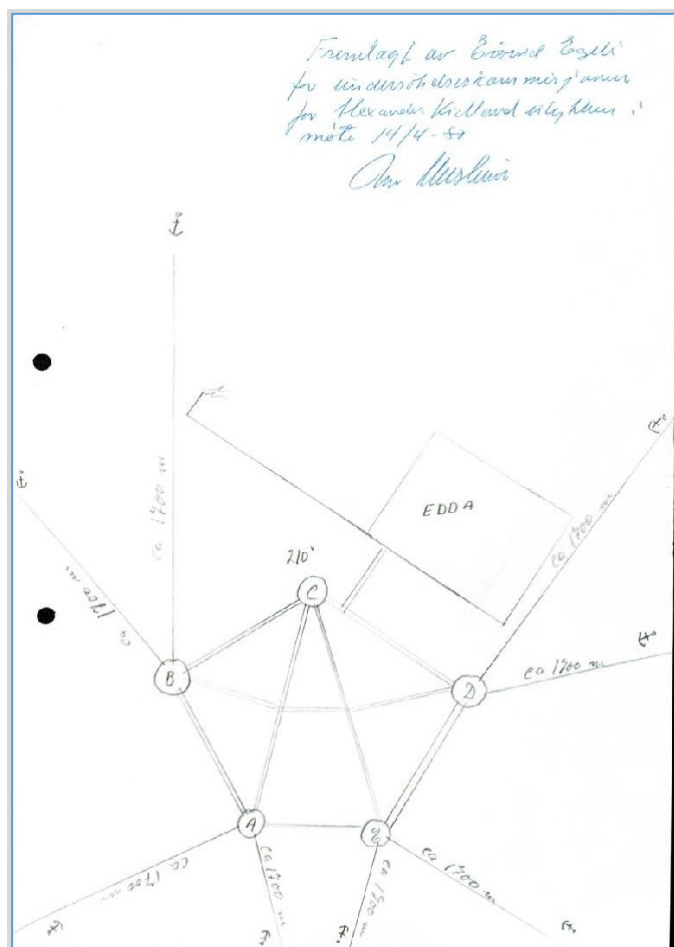
Take the lift down to the pump room, unscrew the manhole and walk inside. The platform is raised.

#### ALEXANDER L. KIELLAND WAS ILLEGALLY ANCHORED

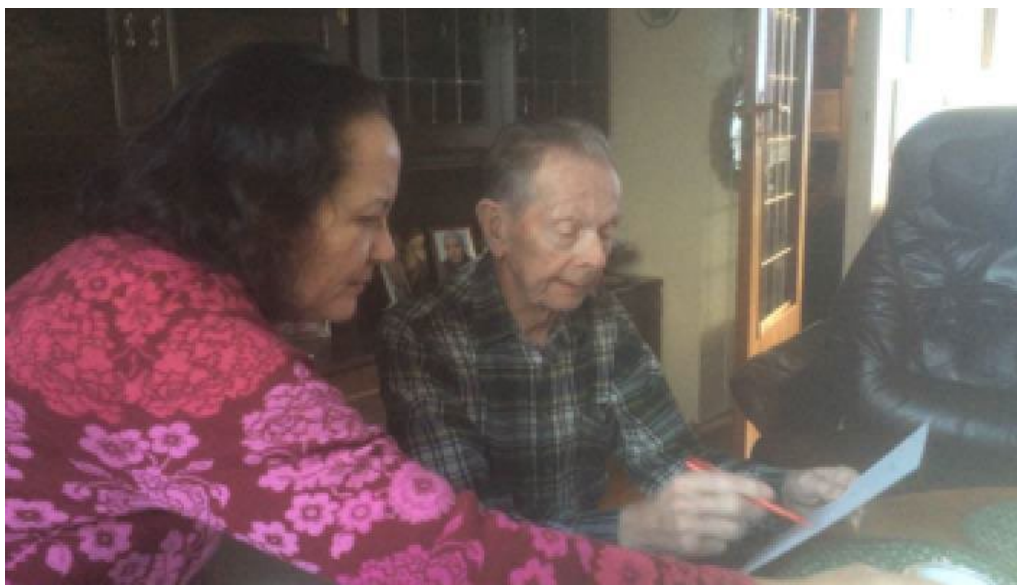
I read the manual which was in the control room one night while I was working. Hauge (the platform manager) told me to familiarize myself with it because I was to be responsible for anchoring when the platform started drilling. This was a couple of months before the accident. It reads: "A pentagon rig must under no circumstances be anchored on the open sea unless all ten anchors are used". The rig was anchored with eight. They couldn't drop anchor from the C pillar. It was not possible because there were oil pipelines in the sea there. It was impossible to drop all ten anchors.

Phillips and Stavanger Drilling makes the anchor plan, and it must be approved by the authorities. Once it is anchored there, it had to be approved by the platform manager and representatives from Phillips. And it was approved. Both Hauge and Sæd knew that it was required to drop all ten anchors.

The same manual could be found on Henrik Ibsen and at the shipping company. A trustee told me that they had been looking for those pages but that he couldn't find them. Those pages were gone. I'm sure it must be possible to get hold of that book?

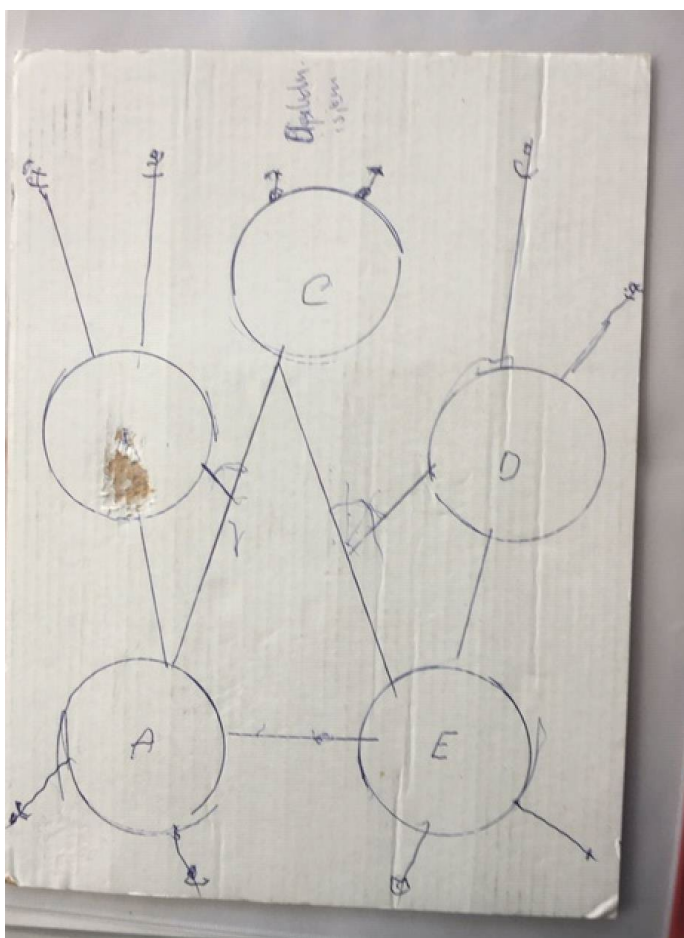


Drawing by the commission of investigation. The National Archives.



Picture 6) Eivind Egeli explains Else M. Tungland the construction, anchor plan and how the platform was loaded.

Photo: Marie Smith-Solbakken. (Screenshot January 15th, 2016, of an iPhone-video)



The platform from above; pillars, bracings, and anchor system. Especially loaded areas are marked. Drawing by Eivind Egeli, January 15th, 2016. Reproduced with permission.

#### WHERE WAS THE FRACTURE?

It was downstairs. Apostel told me about it. He was a roustabout and always went to inspect the crack with Sæd. They opened the manlid and illuminated it. They would come by the control room to tell me what was going on. I could not leave the control room. Sæd or Hauge relieved me when I had to leave the control room or was off duty.

#### KIELLAND CAPSIZES

I clearly remember that we were hit by a hell of a wave, it hit the C leg and pushed the platform, I could feel the platform moving. The wave then crashed back and up underneath the deck. It could be felt throughout the entire platform. Additionally, the wave hit the crack in D6 by the hydrophone. It could not take it”.

#### KIELLAND WAS GOING TO TANANGER FOR REPAIRS AND REMODELING

The next day we were supposed to go to Tananger to rebuild it. Sæd and I talked a lot about this.

#### THE LOGBOOK

The people in the control room kept notes which the platform manager entered in the logbook. Sæd and Hauge shared the logbook, it belonged to the rig. They each had their own logbook on land which they wrote in when they came home. That’s normal, that’s how the captains did it. One that they shared and one private.

#### LIFEBOAT 1

They left with the lifeboat; they lowered it too soon. It could hold 48 people. When I got there, it was gone. It was I who was responsible for that lifeboat. Those who did it are not doing well.



Picture 7) Journalist Ellen Kongsnes (right) bring engine room operator Eivind Egeli (middle) together with Torgeir Moan (left) from the commission of investigation. Egeli wants to present his knowledge of the formations of cracks, anchorage and hauling of the platform to Torgeir Moan.

Sola Strand Hotel November 17, 2016, during the prelaunch of the polyphony. Photo: Marie Smith-Solbakken.



Picture 8) Eivind Egeli (right) explains Torgeir Moan (left) from the commission of investigation why and how they knew about the fractures in the constructions on Kielland. Sola Strand Hotel November 17, 2016, during the prelaunch of the polyphony. Photo: Marie Smith-Solbakken

## EIVIND EGELI IN STAVANGER AFTENBLAD ON THE ACCIDENT AND THE OPERATION OF THE PLATFORM

Ellen Kongsnes, Stavanger Aftenblad 28. October 2016.<sup>93</sup>

Eivind Egeli sat in the control room below the helipad and smoked a cigarette. Suddenly, the platform tilted.

The TV and the typewriter flew across the room. He had to get out of there. Up on deck some of the crew members were escaping towards the lifeboats, others were looking for life jackets. The platform was already tilted to 30 degrees.

On his way to the platform deck, Egeli met the platform manager, Torstein Sæd who ran in the opposite direction. He wanted to enter the control room to start the pumps that could stabilize the platform. But the power had gone, and the pumps did not work. Egeli shouted it to him but Sæd did not hear him. Egeli knew that the platform manager had known about a crack in the platform leg for a long time. Now, the same leg had broken off and was floating in the sea right by them.

The gangway between the Alexander L. Kielland platform and its neighbouring platform Edda on the Ekofisk field had been retracted about half an hour earlier, at 17:50. The gangway was installed between the platform legs C and D. It was the D-leg that had torn off.

Eivind Egeli clung to the derrick and went all the way around with the platform when it overturned. Both of his lungs took a hit when Kielland capsized.

He will turn 90 years old in November. Now, he is sitting in his living room at Tasta. He never went offshore again after the Kielland-accident. He got a job in the Port Authority before he retired some time ago. He's had a lot of time to think.

Back in 1980, he was employed by Stavanger Drilling and worked as a control room operator on board the Alexander L. Kielland platform. When the platform tilted, something happened that Egeli has thought a lot about:

-We ran from the control room and up onto deck when I met platform manager Torstein Sæd who was on his way towards the control room. I yelled: "There's nothing you can do in the control room, it's impossible to run the pumps. When it lists to a certain degree, the emergency units do not work".

### THE CONCERNED PLATFORM MANAGER

But Torstein Sæd did not listen. Eivind Egeli never saw him again.

Sæd was one of the three platform managers on "Alexander L. Kielland". They called him "the bear", the strong, quiet, and conscientious Torstein Sæd. The 49-year-old had never been a talkative man. But in the months leading up to the accident, he was quieter and more pensive than usual. He did not talk much about it to anyone. But his wife, Erna Sæd, felt that something was wrong. He dreaded going offshore. He even bought himself life insurance without telling his wife. When she was informed about the insurance, her husband had already died in the accident he had feared.

<sup>93</sup> Kongsnes: 2016b



Her story was not heard by the Norwegian commission who investigated the accident. Nor is there anything about Torstein Sæd's secret in the notes from the police's questioning of Eivind Egeli.

- It was the day after the accident. I was still completely out of it, Egeli says today. The police were more concerned with how the survivors had managed to save their lives.

#### THE RIG COULD BE RAISED

Eivind Egeli confirms that the ballasting was a recurring problem.

He had also overheard several conversations between platform manager Torstein Sæd and the German deck crew member Lothar Apostel. They expressed concerns over a crack in the cross brace at the bottom of the platform.

-Sæd talked about the crack. But he was more concerned about the ballast being wrong than about the crack. He liked the idea I had for a button, says Wigerstrand.

According to the 1981 main conclusions by the commission of investigation, the lower braces on the platform were not once examined between the time the platform left the shipyard until the day of the accident - for three and a half years. This was because they were under water.

However, control room operator Eivind Egeli knows that this is not true.

-We raised and lowered the rig many times while out in the field, says Egeli and is backed up by Kvåle, Ofte and Wigstrand.

#### NO TRAINING

Eivind Egeli was really a sailor. He was never trained to handle the platform. As far as he knows, none of the others received training either.

Many people had not even read the operations manual. The shipyards requirements for safe operation were not followed.

-First, the D-leg broke. This was because the anchors on the C-leg were not in use. We only used eight out of ten anchors, even though it was written in the operations manual that we always had to use ten.

Egeli believes that this put an extra strain on the other platform legs.

- Could the accident have been avoided?

- I'm not sure about that, says Egeli. It could have been a lot worse too. If the wave that hit the platform somewhere else, two of the legs could have broken off. Then the platform would have capsized within minutes, he says.

- We did not have any training. I was told to read the manual a month before the accident. There were no wires on the D-pillar, so there was an extra strain on it. The operations manual from the shipyard states that all ten anchors must be used, but we only used eight, says Egeli who worked in the control room right below the helipad on the Kielland platform.

JOINT CONVERSATION WITH EIVIND EGELI, KÅRE MAGNE KVÅLE, RAGNVALD OFTE AT ÅPTA  
by Marie Smith-Solbakken and Else M. Tungland, 12. February 2016.

The fractures were discussed with colleagues Kåre Magnus Kvåle and Ragnvald Ofte from Stavanger Drilling. They discussed how and whether it was possible for Sæd and Apostel to control it when it was in the sea. They agreed that it was possible, because the platform would be raised and the bracings, including D6 which were filled with water when the pontoons were below the waterline, could be raised and the water washed out. Raising and lowering normally took 1 ½ hours.

The colleagues Kåre Magnus Kvåle and Ragnvald Ofte were present when Eivind Egeli told that the platform manager and himself, a control room operator, knew about fractures, and that they kept cracks under surveillance. They knew there were cracks in D6. Because some people do not find this information credible, we arranged for survivors from the crew of Stavanger Drilling to discuss this together. We also asked for the information to be articulated and requested signatures from those who were present, to properly document their statements.

#### INSPECTION OF THE UNDERCARRIAGE

Ragnvald Ofte: I remember that the platform was elevated in Tananger. Me and Sverre Kristensen inspected it. We went around it on the outside. The pontoons were open.

*Eivind Egeli:* Hauge asked me to familiarize myself with the stabilization rules. Birkeland worked in the trade union. He told me that he had heard that the platform should be anchored with 10 anchors. We had the book but couldn't find the pages where it was written. But we had both read that it should always be anchored with 10 anchors when on open sea.

#### RISING AND INSPECTING THE PLATFORM

We raised it from time to time. When the weather was good, we elevated the rig, so we could inspect the inside of the bracing. They opened manholes and went inside.

#### THE ACCIDENT

Apostel was crushed by the pickup boat.

#### THE CAUSE

«You're lying spread-eagle with the anchors, that's the fault», said the seamen The anchor plan was approved by the maritime authorities. Criticising Vertitas felt like criticising the Communist party in the Soviet Union.

#### FRENCH LAWYER

*Eivind Egeli:* At Atlantic hotel there were Norwegian and French lawyers. There were 3 or 4 lawyers, I didn't know any of them. A lady was there to translate. The Norwegian and the French lawyers started to argue, and she said, "That's not what he said!" I don't know what it was about.

#### HAULING

In bad weather, we always retracted the gangway and winched away from Edda.

*Kåre Magne Kvåle:* It was the first time I did the winching. I thought we didn't get enough force on the wire. I operated the winches from the control room.

When we loosen some of them, we tighten it. The anchors were in the same place. I loosened four of them and tightened the remaining four.

How much tension, we couldn't get the proper force.

#### PREPARED FOR DRILLING

They prepared for drilling. Moseid talked about arranging mud.

The travelling block was jammed. Something went wrong. It fell with a bang, something broke. They had to repair something. They only came out to trim it so it wouldn't get more stuck.

#### JOKING

Osland (chief) said: "How did you get down here. You know, I did like Jesus, I walked on water»

## EIVIND EGELI'S CONFIRMATION

Eivind Egeli hereby confirms that:

Stavanger Drilling knew about the fractures.

*"The platform manager, Torstein Sæd kept cracks under surveillance. The first thing he usually did when he arrived, was to go down and check the progress of the crack. He always had a helper with him, Lothar Apostel, who helped him unscrew the manlids. They would often visit me in the control room, have a cigarette and a chat. They talked a lot about this then. The people at the Stavanger Drilling office must have known about this."*

Åpta, February 12, 2016

Eivind Egeli

Present witnesses: Kåre Magne Kvåle, Ragnvald Ofte, Else M. Tungland, Marie Smith- Solbakken

Eivind Egeli bekrefter med dette at :

**Stavanger Drilling visste om sprekken**

Plattformørstein Sæd holdt sprekker under oppsikt. Noe av det første han brukte å gjøre hver gang han kom ut, var å gå ned og kontrollere utviklingen av sprekken. Han hadde alltid med seg en hjelper, Lothar Apostel som hjalp til med å skru opp mannlokk. De kom ofte inn i kontrollrommet til meg, tok en røyk og slo av en prat. De snakket mye om dette da. De på kontoret i Stavanger Drilling må ha visst om dette.

Åpta 12. februar 2016

Eivind Egeli

*Eivind Egeli*

**Tilstedeværende vitner:**

Kåre Magne Kvåle

*Kåre Magne Kvåle*

Ragnvald Ofte

*Ragnvald Ofte*

Else Tungland

*Else Tungland*

Marie Smith-Solbakken

*Marie Smith-Solbakken*

## HARRY VIKE, RADIO OPERATOR, STAVANGER DRILLING

By Else M. Tungland, 17. June 2014, Sandnes

### USE AND IMPLEMENTATION

Consented that notes from the conversation can be made public and included in the memorial collection about the Alexander L. Kielland-accident and can be handed over to the Norwegian Petroleum Museum, the National library and the Labour Movement's archive and library so that posterity can take part in this (Telephone 23.01.2019)

### CONNECTION TO THE ACCIDENT

Survivor. Had a permanent job on Alexander L. Kielland as a radio operator. Arrived there on the day of the accident.

### WHAT HAPPENED

I had just arrived; had only rested a little and eaten some food. There were two large waves that came quite close to each other, then there was some thundering and shaking and then it tilted. The weather was bad, but we had experienced similar weather before.

I only had time to say; "mayday, mayday Kielland is capsizing" before the power went out.

We didn't get very concerned right away. We thought that even though the platform sank, some of it would be left on the derrick. We thought so based on what we had heard and how deep it was. But the rig tilted more and more, and the anchor cable became tense and eventually it snapped. It hit everything surrounding it with a massive force, people were... yeah, it was awful to look at. Then I thought; what will happen to Grete and Steinar? I thought about the fact that I had a life jacket, but not about how cold the water would be.

I jumped into the water and started swimming. I saw a lifeboat and started swimming towards it.

I came across someone who was floating exhausted in the sea, without a life jacket. I managed to pull him with me to the lifeboat, which lay upside down in the sea. We managed to turn it around. When I got on board, I see that the man I brought with me has lost his grip. My first instinct was to jump in and save him – but I didn't. The only thing I did is to take off my life jacket and throw it to him – but with the wind – I don't know how it went. Probably not good.

I was frozen, exhausted and was pressured by the others to get into the boat as quickly as possible. I would be lying if I told you that I'm very bothered by this, but when I look back, it is perhaps the most painful memory.

When I managed to contact help from the lifeboat, I was told that, yes, they had understood the situation and the rescue operation was underway.

After the hospital we were taken to a nice clothing store in Stavanger, and we were able to buy new clothes from head to toe. I had never had such nice clothes before.



## HELGE GEORG KNUITSEN, PLUMBER, NYMO AS, OIS

By Marie Smith-Solbakken, 24.10.15, Sørlandssenteret.

### IMPLEMENTATION AND USE

Øystein Hakestad had arranged for a conversation. Notes were sent for review and correction. Knutsen has agreed that selected quotes can be used in publications and presentations. Consented that notes from the conversation can be included in the memorial collection and be handed over to the Norwegian Petroleum Museum, the State archives in Stavanger, the National library, and the Labour Movement's archives and library (SMS 19. December 2018).

### BACKGROUND

Came from the sea.

Plumber.

Started to work in the North Sea in 1980, employed by Nymo.

Started over, from the bottom. Employed by Nymo for 5-6 years.

### MARCH 27, 1980

It was a foggy day, and we were informed that there would be no flights to Eldfisk Bravo. It was one of my first trips. I was fresh, it was a bit exciting.

After breakfast we sat in the common room and waited and played cards. The fog still hadn't cleared by lunch. We spent the entire day playing cards, people went to bed now and then. It was legal to smoke, so that's what we did.

We heard a hell of a bang, the Dane should have been here now, someone said, and we laughed and continued to play cards. Then came another load bang and the platform tilted. In a way, we were lucky because the platform tilted in the direction of the door, we were sliding in oil and water towards the doorway.

Oh my god we should have had a survival suit. Shit, it's in my cabin, so I didn't bother. I got outside and it looked like the sea was boiling in the doorframe, then containers came flying, oil drums, planks, not a single thing had been tied up. Pipes, pieces of metal, planks, the containers – everything slammed over a bunch of people. They turned into minced meat; it was not a pleasant sight.

### ON DECK

I got out on deck, climbed with my fists first, we instinctively seek towards the highest point. There was a shaft going out, I was in my own head, let's get out on that shaft. On my way out, I noticed a box with life jackets next to the winch. I got the last life belt. Someone threw it to me. «Wear this», he shouted.

The platform was tipping a little, at the same time, we saw people being picked up by the crane on Edda. Some people hung from the basket but fell back into the sea.

Someone who stood next to me, died. I kept in touch with his father. The boy had seen someone trapped behind a window, he went over there and kicked the window in to save them. I never saw him again.

I mostly thought about myself. I had to try to get down to the water. There was a helicopter above us, hovering over our heads. It was filled with people but had no winch. They couldn't pick up anyone.

#### IN THE WATER

I stood there, looking around me. I'm not taking any risks, if that shit breaks (the wire), we are doomed. I walked back up. The last thing I remember is that the wire broke, someone I know was hit in the back by the wire, his body opened like a rotten tomato, I don't remember anything else before I was in the water. My feet got stuck, but I managed to free them. I didn't have air and my brain was working overtime. I could feel the water bubble around me. There was a huge bubble, a big air bubble and as it passed me, I sucked as hard as I could, got water in my lungs and came to the surface. I usually wear glasses, so I couldn't see for shit, and I wondered how to find my way around. I had a lens from my glasses in my hand, so I tried to look through it as I swam towards a pickup boat. Then someone shouted that a lifeboat came adrift. I swam towards it. Of course, it was upside down. We swam up to its side.

There were two guys from Kragerø there. We had to come up with something we could do. I started to swim with big strokes, but they eventually got smaller and smaller.

The bottom in the air. Helge Falk and I pushed a guy named Gunnar from behind so he could grab hold of a rope which lay along the lifeboat. We tried to turn it over against the wind, pushed Gunnar up and we hung by his legs in the rear of the lifeboat. I shouted to the others that they had to move to the other side of the boat.

We were 15 people lying or hanging there, someone crawled on top of the others, I slapped him.

People were panicking to get on board.

#### IN LIFEBOAT 5

People were sitting in their underpants. The boat driver wore only underpants. The diesel pipe was broken, the boat driver was afraid of diesel gas.

We drifted around. We sat down in the boat. I was extremely seasick. We all vomited like pigs. People were peeing, letting it pour out in their seats. I felt a bit calmer. We are in a boat, its ok.

I sat next to Gunnar Falk from Lillesand and one other person. We tried to stay warm by hitting each other's backs. After a while, a supply vessel came to our side. There was a storm and massive waves. Some people jumped across; I didn't understand how they managed to do it. We hit the supply vessel and the roof of the lifeboat cracked. They handed us woollen blankets.

Our clothes were soaking wet. We were sitting there while 10 or 12 people jumped across. It was during this process, I later learned, that they lost us on the radar. We spent a total of 9 ½ hours inside of the lifeboat.

We started to feel a bit better. There was a heavy man lying very still on the bench, someone said "I wonder if he's still alive". Then he said "I'm not dead. I'm seasick". He was from Finland. A big guy, a massive machinery. He lives at Dølmo.

We kept our spirits up. We could sit there for days; we had food and water. Knutsen began to view the situation more positively.

#### ON BOARD THE HELICOPTER

Then, a helicopter arrived.

Gunnar Falk jumped into the basket. It went well, he grabbed the basket almost right away.

The guy next to me had a bruised face, he tried for 20 minutes to get hold of the basket. He was frozen blue. The pilots tried their best. He came down and said, I can't do it, you try. So, I went up there. I saw Ekofisk, but I couldn't see much, and then the basket came down. I grabbed it with my left hand, the waves were big, the helicopter was ready – it flew right above my head. I had a tight grip of the basket with my left hand, while I held onto the sprinkler system with my right hand. A wave came and I threw myself into the basket and managed to get both elbows inside. The feeling of having four hands pulling you inside of the helicopter – that was a great feeling.

One of the rescue men said, I was sure you were going to fall, I was ready to jump. I answered: No one could have made me let go. I would have clung on to it to heaven and back. I would never have let go.

They gave up, didn't try to pick up more people. People couldn't grab hold of the basket.

#### EKOFISK COMPLEX

- Came on board the platform and to the hotel there. It wasn't long after.

We arrived at the hotel and were well received. I was actually somewhat dry. I arrived in jeans, socks, and shoes. I was handed a coverall, size 64 and a pair of socks. It was gigantic, way too big for me. They took good care of us at the hotel.

I went to Stavanger to buy clothes wearing the coverall. I was admitted to the hospital because I had water in my lungs.

#### THE HOSPITAL

When we landed at Sola, we were escorted by car to the hospital. I walked around the hospital. Then the nurse yelled at me and said, "you have to go back to bed". I got up again, I had to see who had been rescued.

I was told, "You have to lie here until tomorrow", I didn't want to lie there until the next day. In the end, the senior physician came: We'll send him home and give him some pills.

#### RESCUED AND AFTERMATH

It felt good to be rescued.

People were so happy to see each other. An instrument technician jumped and put his arms and legs around me when I saw him.

He had thrown the film projector through the window in the cinema and got out. He went back to sea after the accident, but eventually had to quit, he couldn't stand it when it splashed in the shower.

There were many people we had to send back to shore.

#### A STORY I HEARD

Someone who had given up. He wore a survival suit and drifted in the sea and thought he didn't have a chance. Then came an old man who swam past him, they managed to get onto a life raft, they both survived. (Who are they?)

Another friend jumped in the sea with the survival suit under his arm. He put it on in the sea on a plank.

#### REACTION

We received NOK 20 000 as compensation. There was a prime minister who told us that money would not be a problem.

2000, 2001 when my wife died and had visited Nigeria. There were murders all around me.

#### PSYCHIATRY

The psychiatrists said there would be a reaction. I had to empty my head and start over. I talked through the whole thing with a psychiatrist. They kept us as research objects. They asked me about everything under the sun. My wife – everyone was interviewed. I was asked what I thought of it? Just let it be. Sink it, they won't find anything anyway. We know what happened. They found one man.

#### AFTERTHOUGHTS

Norway as a maritime nation has lost many people at sea, they are dead, there is nothing unique about it.

My strength is that I am able to talk about it. Talking about it is the smartest thing I have done – get it all out.

The entire time, I was sure that I would survive, nothing else crossed my mind. I never thought that I wouldn't survive. I'm glad to be in the situation that I'm in now.

The old cook who could barely walk, he couldn't survive, but did survive!!

It has been a burden for my entire family. My mum had lost her dear daughter, my wife did not like it either... and the kids, yeah. Most boats were docked at the time, that's why I started to work there and that's why I continued.

#### EHS

I had attended fire safety training.

One reaction is that I do not like to keep my head under water.

Helicopter overturn - three overturns. I did it three times. I almost blacked out. I can feel the panic.

#### RETURNING HOME

We went to buy clothes. The streets were filled with orange coveralls. We took a private jet home. I took a taxi and told the taxi driver that I didn't have a wife. He said "shiii". I hadn't told the old lady that I came. I didn't have my glasses, but when we passed Hisøya, we drove by my wife. She came over, she knew it was me because it was a Kristiansand taxi. It felt good to put on my glasses and see her.

It felt good to meet the other survivors. Some memories have faded but not all of it.

#### REMEMBERS

I remember that someone said to me: when we land, I'll walk in front of you so you can find the way.

The rescuer had some Gul Mix cigarettes. I asked if I could get one. Took one drag and then the guy behind me stole the cigarette.

It was wonderful, I felt like I was born again.

ALF G. TARALDLIEN, IRON AND METAL WORKER, NYMO AS, OIS

By: Marie Smith-Solbakken

#### PERSONAL DETAILS

Born 1954

Employed by Ois

Residence: Kragerø

The police report reads: Was in the small cinema, out on deck, in the sea with a life jacket, lifeboat 5, rescued by a supply boat.

#### IMPLEMENTATION AND USE

Telephone, January 23, 2016. Notes handed over on April 5<sup>th</sup>, 2016. Corrected by Alf G Taraldlien. Agreed that the notes from the conversation can be used as a foundational document in presentations of the Alexander L. Kielland accident; including photo narratives, essays and the polyphony which is a compilation of different statements by various people. Consented that the notes can be handed over to the Norwegian Petroleum Museum. ref. email 7.4.2016.

Consented that notes from the conversation can be made public and included in the memorial collection about the Alexander L. Kielland accident and handed over to the Norwegian Petroleum Museum, the National library and the Labour Movement's archives and library so posterity can take part in this history. (SMS 19.12.2018)

#### THAT DAY

The weather was bad. We were supposed to take the flight to Eldfisk Bravo in the morning. It was cancelled due to bad weather, strong winds and large waves. We spent the day reading and watching movies.

#### WHEN THE ACCIDENT OCCURRED

The cinema room was too crowded, so we went up to the steward and borrowed his film projector. We set it up and went to the crew mess to watch the film. We had sat down and started the film, when a massive wave crashed into the platform, so it tilted. The film projector fell.

We reacted instantly, jumped out of our chairs, and ran outside to check what it was. We made our way out in the corridor leading to the catering, walked with one foot on the floor and one on the wall. Here, I put on a life jacket. I put one on and brought an extra one. When we got out, we figured it was best to walk towards the highest point. We went up. There were several people there. I saw a person who didn't have a life jacket, so I gave him one. It was Helge Georg Knudsen.

I saw the lifeboat and considered it too dangerous to board. If it had been released, it would have hit the bracings. It was cold outside. I was only wearing jeans and a t-shirt. It was windy and cold and nasty.

We took shelter in the winch room of the anchor and stood there for a short while. We closed the door and stood there, sheltered from the winds and weather. Then, we noticed that the rig started to tilt more and more. We got out of our shelter and saw how tilted it was. We walked down to one of the legs and made our way over the railing on the side of the leg where the anchor was dropped. The anchor winch snapped, and the rig tipped all the way around.

#### IN THE SEA

This is the end of me, I thought. There was nothing to hold on to. I was sucked down into the sea, but a few seconds later, I was back at the surface.

When I was at the surface, I looked around. I saw a lifeboat with the keel in the air and I see that they are hoisting people with the cranes from Edda. I thought the best option was to get over to the lifeboat. I got over there and clung to it for a while. We could hear that there were people inside of it. We pounded and hit and agreed to go to one side and started to rock the boat. The lifeboat fell on my head. When I came back up, I hung my arm in the rope hanging from the lifeboat. Eventually they grabbed my life jacket and pulled me into the boat. *Do you remember who?*

At least now I was inside. I was very cold. I had been in the sea for 20 minutes. The sea was 4 degrees.

We sat in the lifeboat. There were quite many people. We didn't manage to start the engine. People started to throw up and the diesel was leaking. After a while, a supply vessel came up to our side. It put out a net in the water, and people started going up through the roof hatch to get over to Normand Skipper. Some people jumped into the net and then they were lifted on board. Not everyone jumped. Some were picked up by helicopter.

#### NORMAND SKIPPER

I got out of my wet clothes. We got to borrow clothes from the crew. I took a warm shower and lied down in a cabin. We spent the night at Normand Skipper.

The guy on the bridge did a fantastic job at manoeuvring. There was one person they didn't get on board. The guy on the bridge reversed the vessel into the waves so that the wind and waves washed the lost person back onto the deck.



#### EKOFISK COMPLEX

The next morning, we were hoisted on board the Ekofisk complex. The medic there examined everyone's mental condition and checked us for injuries before we were sent ashore.

My family was informed that I had been rescued. My wife was pregnant at the time, and my family had been up all night, my wife, kids, brother, and parents.

#### KRAGERØ

Helge Eneberg, Anders Helliksen also grew up in Kragerø. We were in the same lifeboat. Helge was only wearing underwear.

#### HOME

I stayed home for a month or so before I tried to go back to sea.

#### OFFSHORE AGAIN

I worked on Ekofisk until 1985. Then I got a job in BP. I Started as a deck hand in 1985, then crane operator and deck foreman until 1999. The next company I worked for was Saga petroleum. There, I was involved in the rebuilding of Petrojarl Varg. I worked as a crane operator and storage crew there until 2009. Then I switched to Talisman and was involved in building the YME platform and getting YME in position. It stopped there and it was scrapped. They had to lay people off. I was laid off.

Then I got to take part in the construction of Goliat. I was involved in constructions in Korea for a year and a half. I was a crane operator and responsible for the storage rooms on Goliat.

#### CHANGES AFTER KIELLAND

The conditions on board were addressed and taken care of.

#### HIGHER DEGREE OF COMFORT

It is strange to think back and compare how good the conditions are today compared to how they were on Kielland. In each container, we were four people. The showers were at the end of the row of containers. There was a line of showers and a line of toilets. The roof was made of wriggly tin. The comfort we have today compared to back then, is like night and day.

#### RESCUE EQUIPMENT

Everything concerning lifeboats and security in general has been taken care of.

## LATER DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS

When you are involved in building a new rig, you get your say along the way if something should be done differently. The problem now is that building is happening abroad. They don't have the same understanding and respect for the Norwegian regulations. Varg was followed up by Saga. They influenced the construction. It was ashore for three weeks, then right to the field and not long after it was producing.

Yme: far too much that was set up did not meet the standard requirements. They didn't follow up on what they were told at the shipyard in Abu Dhabi.

We have had the same problem on Goliat. The things we pointed out were not followed up. Neither the Hyundai shipyard nor the Italians (ENI) had the same understanding of Norwegian standards and regulations as us skilled workers.

## THE LESSON

If the rules and regulations that have been made in the North Sea are going to work, the construction projects abroad must be followed-up on. The skilled workers need to be listened to.

If we want to keep the high standard, it must be built in Norway. We are struggling to do it according to our standards abroad. We try to explain it to the shipyard. It is deficit and is often neglected. They do it according to the first technical drawings they get. That's my experience.

If something is to be changed, it will be twice as expensive.

## CONTACTS

Stein Olav Li in Vest Telemark blad wrote about the boys from Kragerø in a newspaper article.

ANDERS HELLIKSEN, PLUMBER, NYMO AS, OIS  
By Marie Smith-Solbakken

PERSONAL DETAILS

Born 1959

BACKGROUND

1976 Tangen shipyard at Kragerø, apprenticeship plumber

1980 Plumber employed by Nymo as a plumber.

1982 apprentice electro IOC from Arendal offshore

1986 IOC on land mostly at Stord, Stavanger

1990 Salesperson for ABB on electrical

2002 Self-employed telephony IT

IMPLEMENTATION AND USE

Conversation, Oslo 23. January 2015 with Marie Smith-Solbakken and Anders Helliksen. Corrected by Anders on the 05.04.2016. Anders has agreed that his story can be used in presentations of the Alexander L. Kielland accident, via email to Marie Smith-Solbakken 05.04.2016.

Consented that notes from the conversation can be made public and included in the memory collection about the Alexander L. Kielland accident and be handed over to the Norwegian Petroleum Museum, the State archives in Stavanger, the National library and the Labour Movement's archive and library so that posterity can take part in this. Consented on the 14.08.2018.

IS IN HIS CABIN

I had been working at sea for almost a year when the accident happened. I worked on Albuskjell Alpha 2/7. I had been there for two days when the accident occurred. It was the day before Easter. I was meant to work the entire Easter break.

On March 27<sup>th</sup>, there was a lot of fog, and we couldn't get to work. We were 5-6-7 people who sat in the cabin playing poker. It was Ivar Olsen from Arendal, someone from Trondheim and an electrician. I don't remember the names of the others. None of the people in the cabin survived except for me.

KIELLAND GETS A LIST

Supper was served at 5:30 pm. I went to bed before supper and was awakened by a load bang at 6:30 pm. I lived in the back of the container. Behind me was a window. We were moving to Ibsen the following day. The bags were placed on the floor in front of the beds. The closets

along the wall had been emptied and everything was ready for us to move the next day. As we heard the bang, everything came crashing down on the poker team. Bags, closets, survival suits all in utter chaos. I realized that something was terribly wrong. I managed to open the window.

People howled and screamed. It was panic and chaos. I only thought about getting out and crawled out of the window to the gangway between rows of containers and eventually got out in open air. There was a staircase leading down to the deck. When I got down on deck, I saw that Kielland was very tilted.

They had emptied the storage below deck for equipment and put it in containers on deck behind the C-leg. The containers come sailing into the living area. Some people were walking there.

I managed to get out of the way before a container hit the people behind me, I got some of their remains on me. I can still hear the noises of human bodies being crushed.

I move towards the highest point. There is a queue up the ladder, we all had the same idea. Life jackets are handed out down the ladder. I get the last one. I was in my underwear and grabbed it. I instantly felt bad for taking it. A guy called Lia from Telemark who lived in Kristiansand stood behind me. I climb higher up wearing the life jacket. We look at each other. I get up behind the winch where the anchor chain is, it's impossible to get any higher. I stand there for a while and think. Just before I left, I had learned that my wife was pregnant. My father never had a father. My cousin, Stig, lost his father when he died at sea. Now, my child will not have a father because I will die at sea. In our family, all fathers die at sea. That's what I thought about.

I stood there and wondered what to do. There are loud bangs and noises. I see one of my workmates, Ivar Olsen shooting out of the container cabin like a bullet. The platform sagged down and cabins filled with water, those who were inside were pushed out. Bjørn Skaanes and some others were crushed between lifeboat (6?) and the shafts. People are struggling. I give up on the lifeboats when I see what happens to Bjørn. He was an experienced guy that I would have followed. I am at a loss for what to do.

#### JUMPS INTO THE SEA

I'm at the highest point. The platform lists more and more. If it tips over, I must get away, I think and jump into the sea. I came into some kind of bubble and was sucked deep down. I wouldn't have made it if I didn't wear a life jacket. When I came back to the surface the platform was gone. I had red diesel all over me and was completely red when I got up. Someone told me that he thought I was dead because of the way I looked.

I saw the pontoons and a lot of people. Everything was gone, the whole thing. Around 10 or 15 meters from where I was, there was a life raft and a pick-up boat. Then a friend from

Kragerø, Helge Eneberg appears. We swim together to the raft. It was filled with water, but we managed to drag ourselves aboard. I have always been a sea person. I've always liked to go for a swim. When I got into the water, I thought yes! even though I was out of energy. As we lay in front of a broken lifeboat, the second chef appears out of the water between us. His eyes and mouth were open. We tried to hold him by his hair, but we lost him. He had long hair. He sunk down between us. There was a helicopter hovering over us. I waved my arm, lower the winch, I thought.

Helge Georg Knutsen was myopic, very myopic. He had thick glasses and came swimming with a lens in his hand through which could see. Helge could not drown; he talked like a waterfall. He could never get water in through that mouth, we joked. Helge Eneberg from Kragerø was a big contributor to my survival, both getting me into the lifeboat and holding me while I was hanging there.

We manage to get into the life raft, but we're about to freeze to death. We see the bottom of lifeboat at a distance. We agree to swim over there. When we get there, I am completely exhausted. I had been in the sea for a long time. My fingers were as thick as smoked sausages, and my legs and arms were like logs. We are around 15 people outside of that lifeboat. I grabbed the rope and tied myself to it, if I die, they'll at least find me, I thought. The others start rocking the boat. I'm hit by it, but it does not hurt. If there hadn't been people on board, we would not have made it. They open the sliding windows and pull us inside. Everyone gets on board.

#### IN THE LIFEBOAT

Some got sick. The diesel pipe broke. There was diesel gas, and it was very cold inside. Some were annoyed with the Spark. You must squeeze in to talk and then release, or he did something else wrong. The Spark was from Stavanger. People got angry.

#### NORMAND SKIPPER

We got in contact with Normand Skipper after an hour or so. They come to our side and put out a net for us to jump into. The first time they came, we crashed, and the roof cracked. We agreed to try one more time. When the Supply boat is down in a wave trough, we are up. That's when we jump into the net. Eneberg, Abrahamsen, Taraldslien and some others. We stayed on board there until 10 am the following day. We were given clothes by the crew there.

#### EKOFISK HOTEL

At 10 AM we are hoisted up to the hotel. I walk straight into an office, find an internet telephone, and dial the number of Phillips in Tananger. A woman picks up and I introduce myself and tell her that I have been on Kielland and ask her to call my parents to inform them that I am alive and well. I also ask her to call the wives of Eneberg and Taraldslien and inform them that they are also doing well. My mum was informed at 04 AM that I had been found but did not know whether I was dead or alive. She was completely out of it. It was the woman in Tananger who informed them of my survival.

#### SOLA

We arrived at Sola and were taken to a store where we got new clothes. Then we were transported to the KNA hotel.

#### JOURNALISTS EVERYWHERE

How could they know where we were, who we were, and when we arrived. They knew that we were from the same city, had been in the same lifeboat, same supply boat, and same hotel. The man came straight over to us at the airport. How did he know - it was strange.

#### MEETS HIS EMPLOYER

We flew to Kjelvik. The shipping company was waiting for us and drove us to the office in Grimstad where Ugland was. There, we met the personnel coordinator and the personnel manager. They took good care of us. They booked a taxi to take us home.

#### MEETS THE FAMILY

Two journalists were waiting outside the house. They had helped my mum and dad get information. We agreed that our family would spend half an hour together before the journalists could come in.

#### TRIAL AGAINST PHILLIPS

About a year later, Reme calls me and wonders whether I would like to support the legal case against Philips. They had established the Kielland fund and wanted to take legal action against Philips. He asks if I want to go to Detroit.

I went to Detroit and was accommodated in a hotel. There were lawyers who interviewed me and asked me to sign their reports. Every day they flew the reports to Ohio and presented the documents as part of the trial. They did not want me present in court. I would have been ripped apart in court because of the language barrier.

I was there for a week. We were not successful.

Do you remember what happened?

#### TRAVELLED FROM STAVANGER TO DRAMMEN TO GAIN SUPPORT FOR THE KIELLAND FUND

I had been on a roundtrip and asked all the bereaved and survivors from Stavanger to Drammen if they wanted to take part in a lawsuit. Many wanted to join, almost all of them.

It was powerful to meet the bereaved. Absolutely terrible, they asked if I had seen their fathers and what had happened to them. I think they wouldn't have sent a twenty-something out on a mission like that today.

There was a little one in Porsgrunn, a small child who grabbed my pants and asked me to tell him about his dad. I couldn't tell him anything, I didn't know him.

#### THE CAUSE

I met someone on the ferry to Denmark who said that....

#### CONSEQUENCES

It was another world. The safety was like night and day before and after Kielland. After the accident, everything had to be reported, notes had to be written, and two or three forms had to be filled out every time we moved. It became a different world.

#### PHYSICAL AILMENTS

I got problems with my back. Still, I was lucky. I survived.

#### COMPENSATION

I received NOK 25 000. I used it to buy new clothes and to replace the cash I had lost. LO had a lawyer who recommended everyone to sign and accept the ex-gratia payment. It annoys me to this day.

#### DNB

Me, Taraldlien and Eneberg and some others had a meeting with LO lawyer Karl Nandrup Dah in a conference room at DNB in Porsgrunn. There we received a check of NOK 25 000 which we cashed out at the counter.

It is an ex-gratia payment which means that you cannot demand anything else later, he said and recommended we accept it.

We accepted the offer. Signed the papers, received the money, and drove home with NOK 25 000 each. We felt very rich, laughed, and joked all the way home in a white Renault 12.

#### KIELLAND WAS GOING TO ENGLAND TO DRILL

We were told that Kielland was going to drill on English territory. That's why all storage below deck was hoisted up onto the deck and into containers. Everyone knew it was going to England.

Hoisted up equipment from the room below the cellar deck and then stacked it in containers. It was to be towed to England the next day. We were moving to Ibsen. The containers were going to shore in Norway. Why would they have done this if the entire rig was going ashore? We discussed the fact that it was going to England and that we would get female crew members. There were women on board Ibsen.

#### HENRIK IBSEN

Ibsen tipped over because of the manhole. They tested the ballast and forgot to close a manhole. Ibsen was reconstructed in Stavanger.

#### ALMOST LOST HIS JOB

I worked 14 days on, and 14 days off and then had 6 weeks off. I went to Detroit during my 6 weeks off. When Philips got to know about it, they wanted to fire me.

They are going to the coordinators at NYMO..Bjørn called me in anger and said: “what the hell are you doing, Philips does not want you back”. I threatened with LO and the whole package and was let back.



## HÅKON JARL HANSEN, SAILOR, STAVANGER DRILLING

By Else M. Tungland og Marie Smith-Solbakken, 20. november 2015, Taravikveien 53, Karmøy.

Consented that notes from the conversation can be made public and be included in the memory collection about the Alexander L. Kielland-accident, which is handed over to the Norwegian Petroleum Museum, the State archives in Stavanger, the National Library in Stavanger and the labour movements archive and library (Telephone 23.01.2019).

### SURVIVOR LIFEBOAT 5

When the accident occurred, he was in cinema room 2. He believes he sat next to platform manager Sæd.

We meet him and his wife in their home on Karmøy. They also lived here in 1980.

The sofa is still in the same place.

I worked on deck as a sailor and rig crew on Alexander Kielland. He was, among other things, responsible for installing the gangway to Edda and for putting it out and retracting it. On the day of the accident, we were preparing AK for drilling at the English sector. The platform was going to Stavanger (the hotel was to be removed).

I watched a film behind the crew mess. Cinema room 2. It was one floor up from the cabins. We were four people in each room. Cramped together with minimal space.

«Cinema» sounds nice, but it was a provisional arrangement. A movie screen on a stand and a projector. I don't remember which movie we watched. I guess we were about 15-20 people in there. I sat next to platform manager Sæd.

The weather was bad that day. We heard a loud noise – a crash boom. The floor raised and we fell downwards. We made our way over to the door, Sæd was in the front. He shook his head. The door was blocked. We couldn't get out. We had to drag ourselves over to another exit. We held on to the railing and passed the control room. Sæd was right behind me. I think he went into the control room. He disappeared.

I only had one thought: to get up to the highest point. I wasn't scared because we had been told that Alexander Kielland could not sink.

I got out and reached one of the lifeboats. There, I participated in handing out life jackets. I didn't want to board the lifeboat right away because I saw that some people had been crushed by the other lifeboats.

I waited for too long and didn't jump into the waves before the platform turned around. I twisted and turned and was pulled under water. Something black pushed me downwards. I lost hope. Then and there I was sure that it was the end, but suddenly I was back at the surface. The life jacket pulled me back up.

Then the lifeboat catches my eye. I managed to swim over to it, but it was upside down. I couldn't see a single person around me. I was disappointed and lost hope again. I tied myself to a rope which was attached to the boat, and I thought: at least they will find me.

Then 2 or 3 other people appeared by the boat. We managed to turn it around with the help of a wave. After this we couldn't open the side hatches. They had to be opened so we could get into the boat. Once again things looked dark. But somehow, the hatches were opened (based on other interviews we know that there were people inside of the boat).

After a while, it was comfortable to be in the sea, but terribly cold in the air. When I got out of the sea, I felt like a pillar of salt. I was freezing cold and couldn't move. I needed help to put my hands down. Then they dropped me to the floor in the lifeboat. I made my way to the front of the boat where there was more space. I only thought about moving my body to be warm.

Someone wearing a woollen sweater told me that I could sit next to him to maybe get some heat from him (probably the guy we interviewed from Sjernarøy). I hesitated because I didn't like the idea of sitting that close to another man, but I sat down, and he took his arms around me so we could keep warm. We got a tarp over us and got some heat from that.

Many people were panicking and didn't feel safe in the boat.

Attempts were made to rescue us during the night. 7-8? People were picked up by the supply vessel in a net, but it was dangerous. The waves were big. Pure madness. I didn't even consider it. The boat bumped into the lifeboat, and it cracked a little. We couldn't stay there because the supply boat would smash us to pieces.

Around 6 or 7 am, the rest of us were picked up by helicopter. In a harness.

We were flown to Ekofisk where they were ready to receive us. They guided us straight to the sauna. I got out of my clothes on the way there. The sauna is one of my best experiences. Afterwards we were served breakfast. Then we were put in sleeping bags until 8-9 am. We arrived at Forus at approx. 9:30.

I nearly exploded, but they spoke gently with me and told me they were getting a doctor. The doctor said it was ok. They called the shipping company, and I was picked up by a young man in a car. Then we went to town in orange coveralls to buy new clothes.

There was one place where they wouldn't let us buy shoes on credit. If we couldn't pay cash, we didn't get shoes. That was disappointing. But I suited up. Then I caught the ferry – the Westamaran from Stavanger to Kopervik at 15:00.

The boat ride was torture. I was terrified. Afraid I would fall asleep and not get off where I was supposed to.

My father picked me up (we lived right next to each other).

Once I got home, I went to lie down on the sofa. That's when I realized how tired I was.

## JOINT CONVERSATION WITH HÅKON JARL AND ELDBJØRG HANSEN ABOUT THE AFTERMATH

By Else M. Tungland and Marie Smith-Solbakken, 20. November 2015, Karmøy.

*Eldbjørg:*

He was home for approx. 1 year after the accident. The way it worked was that he could say refuse 3 boats. If he didn't want to go back out after this, he lost his job. The doctor gave him sick leave because he couldn't work at sea.

He was employed by the government for a while. Road projects – moving garages. He didn't really like it on land.

Then he got an offer from Stavanger Drilling for a job on Henrik Ibsen, which at this time was in Dunkirk in France (for repairs).

*Håkon Jarl:*

Something happened while we were there. Stavanger Drilling got in a dispute with Phillips Petroleum? We got fired and were almost chased out. Stavanger Drilling lost contact with Phillips and I was laid off.

After this, he got a job with Einar Rasmussen in Kristiansund on a hotel rig on the English side. It could hold about 500 men. Decent job.

For the last 6 years before he retired, he worked on a tanker.

*Eldbjørg:*

After that night in the life raft, he never got ill again. His immune system was strengthened by it?

One of the survivors whose name was Lerbrekk, got in touch. He came to visit him on Karmøy. Other than that, he had little contact with the other survivors.

He did not attend any of the gatherings for bereaved.

I saw a woman in Haugesund. (Possibly a psychologist?)

I received 25.000 in compensation. It was a severance package so we wouldn't be able to demand more.

Lerbrekk chose not to accept the offer. He received a higher compensation and re-educated himself because he was physically injured.

JOHN AIRD, SURVIVOR — «AND THAT WAS THAT»

In conversation with: Simen D. Idsøe and Ingebjørg Haugom  
November 17th 2022

*John Aird was 36 years old when Kielland capsized. He was an engineer for De Groot and had his workplace at Edda. When the accident happened, he was in the cinema at Kielland watching the movie «Jeremiah Johnson».*

I remember everything. We left the Edda platform in the evening, right about six o'clock because of bad weather. I was sitting at the back of the cinema, watching the movie «Jeremiah Johnson». It was probably about 18.30 when there was a tremendous bang. The platform went down about 30 degrees, everybody was obviously panicking. All the chairs were piling up back at the cinema. We were right next to the moon pool, Kielland was getting ready for drilling. Beside the moon pool they had a lot of drilling pipework. All the pipework fell down into the cinema, I don't know if that killed a lot of people. I got out of the back; I knew there were ladders going up to the deck. I went up to the deck. I decided that I would try to get a lifebelt. I crawled in between the temporary accommodation and got into one of the rooms. I found a lifebelt on top of a locker. I threw some lifebelts down to the boys who were there as well. I started to make my way up between the accommodation and the drilling derrick. I got close to the top of the deck, obviously it was hard to get there. It was hand over hand trying to pull yourself up. When I came out of there, I was sort of under the Kielland heli-deck.

I think at one point when I was going to the cinema, I noticed the assistant captain going to the control room. He was helping with the maneuver off the Kielland away from Edda platform.

When I got to the top. I could see some of the platform legs out of the water. And the guys who already had entered the lifeboats couldn't get them released. I could see the Edda platform, a lot of people had walked to the bridge to Edda to get to safety and were now jumping into the water. One of the cranes from Edda came out, I think they were dropping safety baskets. I could hear the rush of all the water coming in from behind me on the lower decks. The water was rushing in and I could hear the windows smashing. The chain that was out from the platform broke, it came right over the top of my head. That was when the platform started to go down. Basically, I was just hanging on to things, when it turned over I was suddenly under the sea. I don't know how nothing hit me. But eventually because of the lifejacket I came popping out of the water.

It was chaos. There was steelwork everywhere. I had been thrown clear from the platform and the waves were maybe twelve-fifteen-twenty feet high. I was trying to get something to hold on to, in the end I managed to get hold of a barrel. Then a lifeboat suddenly appeared in front of me. It was upside down. I could see other people in the water closing in around the lifeboat. I managed to get over to the lifeboat and hold on to it. Me and some other guys were hanging outside the boat.

I knew that it was designed to flip over so I went to the end where the engine and the propeller was. And suddenly it flipped over, all those hanging on the side disappeared, I don't know if they came back up again. I tried to pull myself onto the boat. I think I lost my trousers then, they fell off. It was freezing cold. There were two Norwegian guys, one of them was Dag Jarle Jensen, they used to work for me. There were about seven people in the lifeboat from when it flipped over. Dag Jarle Jensen leaned over and pulled me into the lifeboat. When I got down into the lifeboat, there was darkness and the smell of diesel all over the place. In the end I think we were about 17 people who ended up in the lifeboat. I found out that the radio operator was on board and some of the crew. I think the lifeboat was number 5. In the meantime the boat had started to drift around. I heard some of the boys in the crew wanted to switch on the engine. But we ended up not turning it on.

We were floating around for about half an hour or so. And all of the sudden there was a supply boat coming alongside us. I think three of the guys jumped onto the supply boat. I wasn't going to try that, no way. The radio operator managed to contact the boat and told them to stay away from us. There was a lot of wind and the sea was heavy, the supply boat was drifting into us. The supply boat came over to us again, they threw clothes and blankets over. It really helped. A helicopter came close, and another two or three guys managed to get up the ladder. It was a bit scary because of the weather, so the rest of us sat tight. We were there for probably eleven hours, in the lifeboat.

When the sea quieted down, there came a Sea King helicopter. It dropped down a guy on a winch, and they managed to get the rest of us up to the helicopter. From there they took us to the main complex. We were then transported by helicopter to Stavanger hospital. They gave us some clothes and there was a temporary hospital where we got a bed. I had some wounds that I didn't notice before coming to the hospital. We were there all morning. After I had a shower, someone came and said "look we got a call from Edinburgh radio". And they wanted me to speak to them. The people on the radio managed to get a hold of my family and told them I was safe. De Groot, the company I was working for, got a representative that came to see us. And asked us what we wanted to do, did we want to go home, did we want to stay or go back to their office? I think there were three of us who went back to their office. The guys from the office decided to take us out for a meal, and then get some clothes from local shops. They hired a private jet that took us from Stavanger airport. And then they hired taxis to drive us home. The taxi ride took about five to six hours. And that was that.

I went back to work about two months after, on Edda. I was there for another three years. We had some ceremonies. We had some lifeboats on the water and threw some wreaths into the water. I started working for Phillips Petroleum, I was at the Tananger base for about a year and Stavanger after that. I worked on and off in Stavanger for about ten years or so. I was one of the engineers working on raising the platforms on Ekofisk. I was also part of the Kielland foundations.

I think one of the chains got caught on the D-leg when they were separating the platforms. That's

what ripped the D-leg off, I think. The D-leg also had problems from before because of the welding that was on it. Then doing that maneuver that assisted pulling the D leg away. That's what I think. I have read all the reports and all that.

I only received my salary. There was no compensation.

## IN THE LIFE RAFTS

GUNNAR ØVREBØ, PLUMBER, HMMV HAUGESUND

By Else M. Tungland and Marie Smith-Solbakken 2.11.2015, Haugesund.

### Personal details

(1953)

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Klokkarvegen 4, 5515 Haugesund

### IMPLEMENTATION AND USE

Consented that notes from the conversation can be made public and be included in the memory collection about the Alexander L. Kielland-accident, which is handed over to the Norwegian Petroleum Museum, the State archives in Stavanger, the National Library in Stavanger and the labour movements archive and library so that posterity that take part in this. (Telephone 23.01.2019).

### BACKGROUND

Plumber, HMMV

Lived in six-people cabins on Kielland.

Had two children who were 7 and 3 years old.

MARCH 27, 1980

*What did you do?*

I worked on Edda and lived on Kielland, walked across the gangway. I was working with finishing Edda, it was new.

*What happened on the day of the accident?*

I sat in the middle of the biggest cinema room when the platform trembled – it did not make a bang as in an explosion, but it gave a mechanic sound of something that breaks. The waves were crashing into the rig. Not long after the movie had started, the rig tipped over and everything came crashing towards us. The thin walls shattered, and objects were falling towards us. A ping pong table came flying towards me and I had to jump over it. I slipped out



of my flip-flops, I was barefoot and only wearing jeans and a t-shirt. We didn't have a chance. I got a tunnel vision; my only thought was to survive.

I knew about a shortcut out of the cinema room. There was a hatch that I needed to jump up to. I was able to grab onto it with my fingers and lift myself up and out. You get unimaginable strength in a situation like that. No one else went out the same way as I did.

I saw someone who swan dived and got into the basket. It was a northerner who lives in Nordheim.

I GOT THE LAST LIFE JACKET IN THE BOX

I found myself a life jacket and stood still to think. Many people were crushed by loose objects. The guy who ran next to me was hit by the truck, that's why he never returned home.

The lifeboat was crushed on deck. I saw people jumping into the sea, but I thought it was a bloody terrible idea. I walked down. Many people came right behind me. Got up on the buoy. I climbed upwards as I held on to the wire. It lay over the pontoon and got more and more narrow. The people behind me were hit by the wire when it snapped – approx. 10-20 people. The platform overturned, and I was thrown into the sea. I saw my life flash before my eyes for about 20 seconds.

I was way below the surface. My only thought was to hold on to the life jacket. You get tunnel vision. Empty oil drums and other wreckage came crashing up underneath me. I was knocked into the pipes and was blue from the waist down afterwards. When I came back to the surface, I couldn't feel my legs. A boat (a kind of rowboat) came sailing past me. It was filled with water. I climbed into it. There was someone sitting on some pallets. An Englishman managed to turn a life raft that had been thrown from the Edda platform. I managed to make my way over to it.

There were around 10 of us in the life raft. We were waist deep in water. All the rescue equipment was gone. We sat there for three hours. Some were injured, others vomited. We were bailing with our shoes and held onto the tarp with our hands. Then a British helicopter arrived. We were hoisted up in a harness, one by one. The rescuer who came down swam to the life raft and picked us up. The rescuer's name was Mike Yarwood.

I felt safe when I got on to the life raft, but we could have died from the cold. My body temperature was 35 degrees. Everyone who was on the life raft made it out alive. We were transported to the Ekofisk hotel where we got clothes and a massage. I had a brother who worked on the same oil field. They were informed quite quickly who had been rescued.

I spent one day at Rogaland hospital and then I went home. First, we went to buy new clothes, wearing the coveralls. People in town knew why we were there. It was a representative from HMV who took us shopping. They paid for the clothes we bought.

I caught the Westamaran home. I was accompanied by Otto Grinde Andreassen (now deceased). I was probably one of the first to return home.

#### FOLLOW-UP

HMV was not the best company to be employed in. My employer did not follow me up after the accident. I stayed at home without a sick leave, no job, and no pay, it was very bad. I was compensated NOK 25 000.

I had worked at sea for two years. I was not contacted after the accident. I was forgotten, had to get a new job. I have worked in the industry the entire time.

#### THE CAUSE OF THE ACCIDENT

Faults in the construction, cracks, material fatigue, then they tightened the chains way too much when they winched the platform.

Nothing was safety proofed on Kielland, gas cylinders and drilling equipment came crashing through the walls.

#### THE GATHERINGS

I have not been to the gatherings for survivors. I was invited once. I didn't need it. It's not something I think about often. I didn't attend the funerals either.

#### CONSEQUENCES OF THE ACCIDENT

I have become more observant, inspecting things that are new, not trusting people, more sceptical, and I like to know where emergency exits, and escape routes are when I'm in unfamiliar places.

Money talks. Kielland was not of great importance. There was perhaps more safety training and lifeboat drills afterwards, but all that is quickly forgotten.

Svein Inge Jensen from HMV was there with me. We talk, but never about what happened on Kielland.

I have succeeded in putting it behind me. Someone I know never got back to work. He is struggling. (His current wife said he had nightmares from time to time, even 9 years after the accident).

BBC

I participated in the TV-show “This is your life” (BBC) about the rescuer Mike Yarwood.

There also was a reportage in “Hjemmet”.

The Englishmen were more focused on safety.

LEIF JØRGEN MYKLAND, PAINTER, MARITIM SERVICE, OIS

By Marie Smith-Solbakken 9. November 2015, Voreland

Personal details

Born 1948

#### IMPLEMENTATION AND USE

Conversation held at Voreland in Myklands home. Photos by Tord F Paulsen. We took notes of the conversation. The notes were read out on the phone on the 9<sup>th</sup> of July 2016. Some corrections were made, and some statements were added. Agreed that notes from the conversation can be used as a basis document in the presentation of the Alexander Kielland accident, which includes a photo narrative, essays and polyphony which is a compilation of different statements from different people. The notes were emailed to Mykland on the 9<sup>th</sup> of July 2016. Consent given on the 9<sup>th</sup> of July 2016.

Consented that notes from the conversation can be made public and included in the memory collection on the Alexander L. Kielland accident, which is handed over to the Norwegian Petroleum Museum, the States archives in Stavanger, the National Library and the Labor Movements archive and library so that posterity can take part in this history (Telephone 23.01.2019).

#### BACKGROUND

Employed by Maritim service in OIS

1977: painter at Frigg

1978: Foreman painter on the Ekofisk oil field

#### LIVED ON DECK

I stayed on Kielland a lot. I lived on the third floor in a double cabin. One person worked the night shift and the other worked the day shift.

#### LAST STAY ON KIELLAND

I don't remember how far into the period I was. I worked on Albuskjell Foxtrot. The last day, there was too much fog so I couldn't get to work. It was our last night on Kielland. We had packed up our stuff because we were moving to another rig. Kielland was going to shore in Stavanger. It was out there on dispensation.

In the morning we couldn't get to work due to the fog, and the wind started to blow up during the day. Around 5:30 pm it was dinner time. Afterwards we could choose to go to the movies or back to the cabin. I chose the cabin.

#### KIELLAND TILTS AND CAPSIZES

Shaking and banging noises, then the rig tilted. I jumped out of my bed and slid towards the door. Me and the chair crashed into the door, the cabinets fell to the floor.

I walked out to lifeboat 4. They had started to lower it down. It was smashed to pieces. It hung from one hook, dangling against the leg at the very bottom of the pontoon, facing Edda.

They had only managed to release one of the hooks.

I walked on the outside of the wall of the living quarters and came up to the highest point. I found a life jacket. There were quite a few people standing there, waiting. No one expected it to overturn. I expected that we would be rescued by a helicopter.

When I walked along the wall, I could see through the windows that there were people who couldn't get out of their cabins because the doors were blocked. If I had had something to hit with, I could've tried to save them. I think I saw a guy in there who worked with «arendalsvensken». He was never found. He was Swedish and lived in Arendal.

The mooring wire was very tense, it snapped and hit many people like a bullet, a lot of people were killed by this. I considered it best to jump in the sea. I tried walking on the leg for a bit, I crawled on the outside of the leg while I was trying to assess the waves. I jumped down in a wave trough and it took forever to come back up. I couldn't see or do anything. When I came back up, I could see the Edda platform. I saw a rubber life raft drifting upside down. We were two or three people who got hold of its ropes and managed to turn it around.

We had trained for this. We knew how to turn a raft around in the water. I hung on to the rope. Turned it against the wind, two men went underneath it and then we managed to turn it around. My legs were already when I pulled myself into the life raft. At first, there were three of us, then one after the other floated or swam over to us, and we pulled in those we could. In the end, we were 10 people in the life raft. We quickly drifted away and were left alone in the waves, with nothing to see and no more people to save around us.

#### THE LIFE RAFT

I have never heard so much swearing. At first, we just sat there. We sat there for four hours. We hoped that someone would spot us, we saw supply vessels, but they didn't see us. We didn't want to open the raft too much because it got so cold when we did. We were waist deep in water and were soaking wet. It gradually got quieter. It got dark and some people started to nod off or fall asleep. We had learned that we should not fall asleep. So, we woke each other up. Someone was seasick and threw up all the time. I kept hitting him in his back, but I got gradually more impatient.

We took good care of each other in the life raft. We joked with the older guy so he wouldn't fall asleep. It was the same when we were getting out of the raft, no one pushed their way forward. It was nice and calm.

A guy who didn't wear a life jacket when Kielland capsized asked what he should do. I guess you must jump, I told him. And we'll try to find you. He came into the life raft. He was a little older and from Haugesund. There weren't enough life jackets for everyone. I felt a bit safer wearing a life jacket.

#### NOT SCARED AT THE TIME

I was not afraid, but by the end I started to think more. Our situation was looking more and more hopeless, and I thought about the following: we were wet and cold. It was so hectic that we didn't have time to get scared. Thinking about it afterwards, we should have been terrified. We sat and waited for four hours before we were found.

It felt so good when we eventually saw the searchlights. We figured that they had spotted us. Everyone in the life raft survived. It was a British RAF helicopter that found us. They struggled to get down to us. Every time he landed; it was several meters away from us. Then he started to hoist us up one by one in the harness.

We were flown to the Ekofisk hotel. They were prepared for us there, everything that could crawl, or walk was there to receive us. They measured body temperature, put us in bathtubs and some were given hot chocolate. I was put in a bathtub. I wasn't very chilled. It was comfortable.

#### TV PROGRAM IN NEWCASTLE

Those of us who had been on board the life raft stayed in touch afterwards. We were invited to Newcastle «This is your life». We went together. The rescuer, the British one, was lured in for a live interview. He had saved many people, fishermen and others. From Kielland he had saved mostly people from Haugesund, two people from the south of Norway and two Englishmen.

It was good to see everyone. It may have been a year after the accident.

#### THE AFTERMATH

I have been on a few boats and gone out to the North Sea afterwards. If the weather is bad or I can hear shaking, I get a bit anxious. I heard some blows from the deck, and I jumped out of my bunk. There were enough jobs – plenty of people wanted some time off. I released people during Christmas and New Year when the weather was guaranteed to be bad. I didn't like it there during those times.

I didn't suffer from aftereffects. I worked until I retired at 65 years old.

A widow of someone I worked with would call me day and night to ask what happened to her husband. I am pretty sure he went down with lifeboat 4 – which got crushed. I couldn't tell her anything as I didn't know for sure.

My wife at the time told me that I was more easily irritated. I also take safety more seriously than I used to. When I meet young people who seem to not care about safety or who jokes about it, I speak up. I do not like that attitude.

#### CONSEQUENCES

Security measures were increased and there were some new rules. When Kielland capsized, the survival suits were locked in a closed compartment below deck. This changed after Kielland.

The company did what they could. We were two out of seven people who made it. They did what they could.

#### LATER CAREER

I worked in Korea, Japan, and China with building ships. I was the painting inspector. But I refused to crawl around on bamboo sticks, I demanded proper scaffolding.

#### MY WIFE AND MUM DID NOT KNOW ABOUT THE ACCIDENT

We had just built a house. She had gone to bed early. The guy who snowploughed in the morning told her: "I'm happy Leif is ok". She didn't know anything about it. We got divorced a few years later.

My mum was informed in the morning that I had been rescued. They didn't have a telephone, nor had they watched TV.

#### Now

It feels good to talk about it. It's good to repeat it. I have thought through the entire incidence many times, very calmy. I have thought about what happened in retrospect. It was so hectic at the time, and it is good to know what actually happened.

#### THE CAUSE

I have thought about it. There were so many speculations back then. A lot of research was conducted on the cause. There were so many theories. I assume that the professionals found the cause. They concluded the case and got rid of the evidence.

It was probably a reason why they sunk it as deep as they could. Everyone is entitled to their own opinion. I found it suspicious.

We didn't talk about it. I was just happy to be alive. We were quiet about it.

#### COMPENSATION

Not many days after I returned home, I was summoned to a lawyer in Arendal who was engaged by Philips and who wanted to give me a compensation. I was offered NOK 25 000, but I had to promise that I would not make any future demands. Back then, NOK 25 000 was a lot of money for someone who had just built a house. I accepted it.



## ODDBJØRN LERBREKK, HELIGARD STAVANGER DRILLING

By Ellen Kongsnes, February 2016, Varhaug.

Consent: 22.1.19

SURVIVOR OF ALK. WELDER.

### THE ALEXANDER KIELLAND-ACCIDENT

Was picked up in lifeboat 5. The greatest aftereffects: fear of water and fear of flying. Was paralyzed by the tsunami. Obbjørn first came to Ekofisk – then to the Tor-platform. Rescue helicopter to Sola where he was registered and taken to the hospital. I didn't understand why I had to be admitted to the hospital. I signed myself out at my own risk and caught a taxi home. After a few days, my arm turned blue and yellow. The doctor told him that he had torn some muscle tendons and suffered internal bleedings. They considered sick leave. The workplace was gone. I received three month's salary.

But I held two other jobs as well: I had my farm, and I was a welder. So, I went straight back to work. I did not see the point in being at home doing nothing. I talked with my mates and partied with my mates. Drank some beer. I guess some people hid away. They probably regretted it later.

### THE SAFETY

The Kielland accident made me lose faith that humans can dominate technology. Humans barely know what they are doing. Building platforms and creating thick user manuals. The manual reads that the platform is required to be examined at the shipyard regularly. This was not done at AL. It is the same as not taking your car for service. The owner of the rig was given dispensation after dispensation. Eventually it had received three dispensations. It was because it was costly to do it. Henrik Ibsen was meant to take over for Kielland, but it was delayed.

We didn't think about the dispensations back then. I always felt safe on Kielland. We were used to the rig shaking. But after the accident I became distrustful to what humans can make. I have mellowed, but I'm still critical. In particular, Oddbjørn is sceptical of airlines. Especially the foreign ones. I also resigned from the state church after the accident.

It is horrible what we accept on the roads. It has gotten better with the EU controls. But I would like to see stricter requirements for lights, tires, and brakes.

### COMPENSATION

A few months after the accident: the insurance company, Gard, offered all survivors NOK 25.000 as compensation. I declined the offer. I had begun to resent Philips. I suffered a bit, mostly psychologically and my bitterness grew. I was only in contact with them through my lawyer.

Birger Mork from the Seafarers' Union wanted to open a compensation case 1,5 years after the

accident. We got offered NOK 100-150.000. The lawyer wanted us to demand more. In the end we received NOK 425.000 from Gard. It was in the autumn of 1981.

This was a lot of money back then. It amounted to many years of wages. Most people had settled for the NOK 25.000. Oddbjørn bought a tractor in Denmark with the money. He had bought out his siblings and wanted to be fully invested in the farm at Varhaug. Now, Oddbjørn is employed by Bryne upper secondary school, TIP (engineering and industrial production), at the department for Åna district prison. They are ten teachers there, general subjects, TIP, and music which gives the inmates general upper secondary education. He drove there in his old German Hanomag R12 diesel. His father, Ole, had bought it when he came home from Sachsenhausen. Restoring the old tractor became part of the education for the inmates.

He had not yet met his wife, Bente, when the AL accident happened. Oddbjørn was 25 years old when the accident occurred. He had been working offshore for three years. When his daughter, Solfrid was going offshore, thirty years later, he did not feel anxious. There had not been any accidents of that scale for thirty years.

Oddbjørn was present at the commemoration in Atlantic Hall in 1986. The crown prince couple was also there.

#### THE RESCUE

I was climbing down the B-leg when the platform suddenly tilted. I was caught by a wave and dragged under water. I didn't know what was up and what was down. I lost consciousness. When I woke up, I was floating in the sea, all alone. I couldn't see anything. There was no platform, no people. Only ocean. I was completely on my own.

We never believed that the platform could overturn. It shouldn't have been possible. The twenty people who came behind him down the ladder in the B-leg did not make it down. The wire broke and swept away the others hanging there. They fell into the water.

A wrecked boat came adrift. In it sat a man wearing nothing but underpants, it was Oscar Olsen from Åkra. I managed to get on board. We found some garbage bag that we dressed in to shield ourselves from the wind. The blue colour from the inside of the bags could be seen on my skin for many weeks afterwards. A life raft from Edda drifted towards us and we collided. There were three people on board. Now, we were five. It was getting dark. We were caught in the searchlight of the supply vessel, Safe Truck, and they rescued us. One of the five people got lost in the waves during the rescue. He himself was unable to climb. I was almost suffocated by the hanging ladder which twisted around my neck. I passed out on deck and woke up in the shower. When I woke up there, I realized that I was safe.

The atmosphere in the life raft was absurd. The five who had made it on board had no concept of danger. They didn't feel fear. We tried to wave the supply boat away because we felt warm and well in the raft. My body temperature was 30 degrees, and the water temperature was 7

degrees.

Oddbjørn later was involved in the turning of the platform. He was to weld air and pipe systems. He chose to look at it this way: it was a coincidence that he got this job through the company he worked for. He did not feel it in the moment, but he felt it when he stood on the red pontoons, and he really felt it when he was inside of the platform after it had been turned back around.

30 people were never found. They only found six people on the platform. Phillips started to drill again only two days after the accident. The divers had no chance of finding deceased in the water because the drilling made it cloudy.

#### THE CAUSE

Some said it happened because of a material fatigue fracture. I don't believe that. I believe in Østlund. Something happened. A helicopter arrived the same day and welding work was done in one of the cross bracings. I think there had been a gas explosion. We saw that a gas battery was unloaded on board only one day before the accident.

I was interviewed by the commission of investigation. The leader, Nesheim just laughed at what I told him. He didn't even write it down in my explanation. They thought we had fabricated it in our heads. But I saw the flames underneath the platform by the D leg.

No one knew who the people welding at the D leg . Why did they bring gas? And what were they doing? Therefore, we do not know whether it was sabotage or an accident. I don't want to openly call it sabotage. But why was Willoch in such a hurry to sink the platform and so eager that he made it happen?

Oddbjørn met his wife Bente during a dance in Hellevik.

Vazelina Bilopphøggers played. It was in June, three months after the accident. In his rush of happiness and falling in love, Kielland did not take up much space in Oddbjørns mind. They went on holiday to Rhodes in August. I was anxious on the plane, but a few beers helped.

Bente has heard about Oddbjørns experience of the alexander Kielland accident in bits and pieces over the years. People often asked about it, and Oddbjørn always answered.

When he was going on a boat trip to Tautra with his co-workers, Oddbjørn demanded a survival suit. The others wore regular life jackets.

Solfrid remembers how she and her siblings sat in the armchair with their father when he told them about the Alexander Kielland accident, but he himself does not remember. Solfrid was born ten years after the accident. Oddbjørn still prefers showering to bathing. He does not like to get on planes or to have his head under water.

The tsunami during Christmas in 2004, brought back memories. Oddbjørn was taken 25 years back in time. There was something about the ocean. I really empathized with their experiences. I was in a daze for two weeks. I went to work, but other than that I sat in front of the TV most of the time. I watched every news broadcast and tuned out everything that happened around me. Oddbjørn has cheated death several times:

When he was 16, he was involved in the boating accident at MT Polycastle when the ship sank in the 1960s. The ship was owned by Einar Ramsussens Kristiansand Tankrederi. Seven people died. Wilnora, owned by Wilhelmsensrederiet.

1986: Oddbjørn had a welding mission on board but did not want to go down because it felt unsafe. There was an explosion. The guy who went down to do the welding instead of him, died.

His daughter, Solfrid Lerbekk (LOs youth secretary and SV-representative at the Storting) has been engaged in politics from a young age. She excelled early on. Her teachers said: there should be a Solfrid in every class. Solfrid was in a car accident. Her mother coped with it best, she got the reaction later.

OSKAR JOHAN OLSEN, ASSISTING TOOL PUSHER, STAVANGER DRILLING

By Marie Smith-Solbakken, April 1, 2016.

#### PERSONAL DETAILS

01.04.2016

Telephone 10-11am

#### IMPLEMENTATION AND USE

Phone call on April 1, 2016. Notes were sent for review and correction on the same day. Notes with corrections received on the 2<sup>nd</sup> of April 2016. The notes were corrected and sent back with a request for consent to use it as basis for the presentation of the Alexander L. Kielland accident, which includes photo narration, essays, and polyphony (compilation of different statements from several people). Consent received on the 16<sup>th</sup> of April 2016 (see email).

Consented that notes from the conversation can be made public and included in the memory collection of the Alexander L. Kielland accident, which is handed over to the Norwegian Petroleum Museum, the State's archives in Stavanger, the National library and the labour movements archive and library so posterity can take part in this history (email 10.01.2019).

#### BACKGROUND

1973: Started to work for Odeco on Ocean Viking

1976: I was let go because the rig was going to Mexico

1976: Stolt Nilsen supply vessel and diving boat

1978: Deck hand, Derrick man, Drill crew, assisting tool pusher. Started to work on the Frigg field employed by Stavanger Drilling. Drilled on Norwegian and British sector.

1980- 2005: Drill crew, assisting tool pusher in Smedvig

2005: Quit working in the North Sea.

#### ALEXANDER L. KIELLAND

Started in 1980, we were preparing Kielland for drilling. I was a derrick man, we were to run the mixing system to test it and prepare the tanks. We had received the block on board and some equipment for the drill string.

We were in the field as a residential platform and had gotten some of the equipment on board. We were going ashore (to Norway) in a few of days to get the rest of the equipment, test it and remove the housing containers. We were looking forward to start drilling. We were excited.

#### THE DAY IT HAPPENED

Really crappy weather. We had been busy in the mixing room (mudroom), flushing through pipes and the mixing system. The wind really blew up in the afternoon. We had eaten supper and were supposed to work overtime. After supper we went up to the mixing room. We were four people, including me. Edmund Mongstad and some others. We talked to some of the people who were going to the cinema. It was a provisional cinema.

We stood outside of the cinema room when we heard some bangs which we reacted to. They were more powerful than normal. We had heard bangs before, but this sounded loader than usual. It sounded like it was coming from the pontoons, and we assumed it came from the waves crashing into them.

The others went into the cinema room, and we went to the tanks to clean them. I was in the mixing room and Edmund was in one of the tanks. Then came another bang and the platform began to tilt. It may have been 10-15 minutes, maybe half an hour (difficult to guesstimate) after the first bang.

#### THE PLATFORM TILTS APPROX. 45 DEGREES

We had drilling equipment in shelves and on pallets on the floor. It all fell down; I threw myself behind an H-beam while equipment crashed by. On the other side, there were several washing machines sliding down all at once. I heard screaming and people shouting for help. It was an inferno of chaos. I was in the mixing room with a southerner, I can't remember his name. I called out to Edmund but got no reply. We had lost the electricity, so the room was completely dark.

Then my co-worker shouted that we could climb up to deck through the hatch. There was a cargo hatch that was open. We shouted at people to throw down a rope for us. No one reacted, it was chaos. When I came up on deck, I looked for him, but I never saw him again.

The rig was hanging by the anchor cables, I guess. Containers had fallen and lay on the other side by the housing units and workshop.

There were people on deck. Some were wearing survival suits, and others did not. I was only wearing a warm jacket from Helly Hansen and fleece trousers. I met a guy in his fifties on deck, he just stood there, completely paralyzed, and bruised. He looked like a statue. I dragged him with me, got him into a lifeboat. It was Johannes Mundheim.

#### THE LIFEBOAT IS STUCK

On board the lifeboat, we started the engine and told people to get inside. I saw people hanging in wires and standing on the pontoons. Some stood paralyzed along the railing. We didn't know what to do.

We lowered the lifeboat. When we were to swing away from the rig, it didn't work. The lifeboat was stuck in the stern hook. The boat slammed in under the rig and was crushed, we rolled around several times. A sailor, a German named Lothar Apostel, stuck his head out of the wheelhouse to check what was wrong and was crushed to death. He was squeezed between the rig and the wheelhouse of the lifeboat and died.

There were quite a few people in the lifeboat. I shout to them that I will jump into the sea. I saw what would happen to that lifeboat. Mundheim and the fellow I had helped into the boat were there. We had to save ourselves. I felt bad for mostly thinking about myself. I encouraged the others to jump as well. I figured that the boat would not stay afloat. I've later had nightmares about this for years. I imagine the rig falling over me. I was on other rigs afterwards and I would wake up in the middle of the night many times, feeling like I was in the same situation again. I thought about what I ought to have done, what I should have done.

Thinking about Mundheim troubled me until I learned that he had survived. We had a long conversation on the phone, it was a good conversation.

#### IN THE SEA

I look over to the Edda-platform, they have hoisted down a personnel basket with the crane. People are hanging from it. Many were inside of the basket. I decided to take a shot at the basket, but I changed my mind. I swam towards the north side of the rig. They had put down the life rafts, but they were flying in the air because of the wind. I grabbed a life ring and lay still for a while, but it was really cold. The Helly Hansen trousers were pulled of when I jumped into the sea, so I was lying there in just boxers and jacket.

I gave up on the basket. Too many people tried to get hold of it. I saw that the platform completely overturned and people jumping from it when I was floating in the sea. Wreckage and dead people were floating all around me. I pulled a line towards me; a dead man was attached to it. The waves were large. I saw the life rafts being thrown from Edda, but they didn't get all the way down, they were taken by the wind or got stuck in the ropes above sea level.

I looked up at the helicopter flying above me. They flew on after a while. They didn't have any equipment to rescue people with.

I swam over to the north end of Edda. The life rafts hung in the air. I shouted to the people on Edda that they had to cut the rope to the life rafts. Some time passed. I started to give up, I was really cold, and my fists and entire body was numb. Suddenly, a life raft landed a few meters in front of me. I managed to reach it and got into it quite quickly. There was emergency equipment there, but I didn't manage to unpack it. I didn't have any strength left in my hands. I was completely alone in the life raft for a while.

I heard shouting and screaming from the outside. Four or five people came in a pick-up boat filled with water. They got hold of the life raft and came on board to me. They also tried to release the emergency flares, but they were wrapped so well in plastic and tape that they couldn't do it either. I found some trash bags, which we rolled around our legs and body to keep warm.

#### SAFE TRUCK, SANDENS SHIPPING COMPANY RESCUED US

I do not know for how long we were in the life raft. Suddenly, a searchlight is shining towards our life raft. A supply vessel has found us. They lit up and threw a line over to us and then we pulled ourselves over to the ships' side. They put out a stick ladder from the ships side for us to climb aboard. One of us fell into the sea. When I climbed the ladder, I felt like I had tremendous strength but once I got up on deck, I collapsed.

I was put in a cabin. We were so cold. We queued up by the showers, and finally took a warm shower. The man who worked on the helipad, Lerbrekk, said, "Oscar, pinch my arm, I cannot believe we survived this". But he had survived.

#### COMES TO SHORE

We slept on board Safe Truck that night. The next day we were dropped off at the Tor platform. There, I met someone I went to school with. In the afternoon, we were transported by helicopter to Sola. Then straight to the hospital for a check-up.

I remember that Edith came to pick me up at the hospital. I wanted to go home. We went to buy new clothes. We got food and spent the night in a hotel (somewhere by the harbour).

#### AT HOME

His wife was told that he was alive the day after the accident. She lived in uncertainty before that. She was not the only one. They wanted to be completely sure before they handed over the lists with survivors.

It was lovely to come home and see the kids and wife and family and friends. I had a neighbour who worked on the same rig, but he was ashore when it happened. They had heard about the accident and knew that I was there. They were panicking. They knew lives had been lost, but not how many.



It was difficult to explain it to the kids. They were restless. We talked about it. That was where my job had been, I was unsure if I should continue. I started to work on a floating rig afterwards, in a company in Trondheim, I resigned three times.

#### QUIET

We have discussed what could have caused it. There was a commission who investigated it, they concluded that it was material fatigue. There have always been questions about what really happened. There was little information and there was silence. For me, it has been difficult to talk about.

#### AFTERMATH

I saw a psychologist after the accident. For a while, it helped, but I couldn't go there forever. I still have nightmares. I think you'll never be free from it. It's in my head. I can still feel the accident and picture the rig falling over me.

When I worked on the floating rig after the accident, I climbed up the derrick and started to shake so much that I had to hold onto something. It has been a struggle, but I've kept fighting. I have a family to take care of, after all.

10 years ago, I had a heart attack while I was working in the North Sea. Then, I had that experience in addition to the psychological stuff from before and I realized that it was time to quit.

#### FORMER COLLEAGUES

I have contact with some – I keep in touch with Edmund on Facebook.

#### MOST VIVID MEMORY

When I was lying in the sea, the entire rig overturned. I couldn't believe it; it fell towards me. When the last anchor wire snapped, it went by so quickly. It happened not far from where I was. Drowned and dead people were floating around me.

KÅRE SVENDSBØE, HMMV, HAUGESUND

Finn Våga, 18. March 2000

#### BACKGROUND

Eight men from Førresfjorden set out. Only one returned home. Kåre Svendsbøe.

#### THE DEAD WANTS ME WITH THEM

He stands quietly by the living room window. He looks at the neighbouring houses down the hill. He sees children playing, sees Bjørg Olsen getting into her car. When her husband Svein Ove died in the North Sea, she was left alone with three small children to take care of.

Every single day for the past 20 years, he has looked at the house of Svein Ove and Bjørg. He would like to forget, but he can't. Time heals no wounds.

I had known Svein Ove for nine years. Why did he never tell me that he didn't know how to swim? If I had only known, then I could have sent him in the lifeboat. But I let him go.

There were eight of them who set out. Eight husbands, most of them fathers of young children. It was Odd, Einar, Wilhelm, Lars Johan, Ivar, Rolf, Svein Ove and Kåre.

Eight men set out. Only him, Kåre, returned home.

But he did not return alone. He "brought" the dead with him.

The dead who won't let go. He often wishes that he was left out there. Because life afterwards has been hell. The fight it has been to keep living has been much harder than the dramatic hours in the North Sea.

Kåre Svendsbøe had worked at sea as a cook and steward. He had worked at Haugesund Mekaniske Verksted as Plate worker and welder for several years before he signed in as a slave in the North Sea. Although the Americans were tough leaders who sent Svendsbøe and his mates out on the helipad in such strong winds that they were almost blown into the sea, this was the best job he had ever had.

He had always been a hard worker, and the camaraderie was nice. It was a regular day at work on the Edda platform.

We were supposed to stay overnight, but then the fog lifted, and the helicopter could take us over to Alexander L. Kielland.

We finished eating and five-six of us were hanging out in the cabin. Suddenly we hear a loud bang, and then the platform starts to shake. I fall over and slide out in the corridor. A man shouts: it capsizes. We put on our life jackets and climbed out to get to the lifeboats.

You have to come, Kåre, someone shouts. But something is holding me back. If you go into the lifeboats, you are done, I thought. I tell them to go and climb up to the highest point on the platform.

40-50 people are standing on the leg. When the platform tilts, I can see them dive into the sea. A wire snapped and knocked several workers overboard.

I see a man who is cut in half. I continue to climb.

The platform is almost vertical. I see a large wave coming towards me and I realize that it is my turn to jump. I take a deep breath, the wave hits me, and I go around and under, I don't know where I am, I sink deeper, and deeper. Then the life jacket rights me, and I swim upwards. It's completely dark around me. I hold my breath for a long time, until I see green sea above my head. I can't take it anymore and I swallow a mixture of sea and yellow-green oil.

Then I reach the surface.

For a few seconds, maybe minutes, I lay breathing heavily. But when the platform overturns, I get sucked back down. But I get back to the surface.

I swim among wreckage. I see people crying for help, but there is nothing I can do to save them. I swim past a man whose face has been smashed. I see that his blood has colored the sea red.

I swim and I swim. The waves are massive. I cannot see anyone else. I find a life raft. Me and an Englishman manage to turn it around, but I don't have the strength to get on board.

The Englishman is struggling and pulling to get into the raft while I lie in the sea and push him upwards. He managed to get on board. A few minutes later, I am on board too. More people swim over. We pull eight others into the raft.

The raft is half filled with water. I scoop with one shoe. Everyone is seasick, cold and want to sleep.

But I know that if we fall asleep, we will die. I make sure that everyone stays awake. After several hours a rescue helicopter spots the raft and hoists us up.

I'm in bed around midnight, five hours after the platform capsized. I complain that I'm cold, but I'm told that there is 31 degrees inside. Out of all things, us survivors are gathered in the cinema room later in the evening to watch a horror movie with a lot of killing. I arrive in Stavanger early the next morning.

He does not know who is alive and who has died. He fears the worst. When he gets home, he will know.

Førresfjorden, 1980: a 10-minute drive east of Haugesund; a small town in Tysvær where everyone knows each other. Most of the inhabitants are families with young children, with new houses and high loans.

March 27<sup>th</sup>, 28 children in the town loses their fathers.

Beate and Arvid are the only ones who get their father back.

Everyone lost a friend, neighbour or relative.

Førresfjorden, 2000: He talks quietly about life after the accident. He does not use many words to describe the painful years. He neither wants nor can hide the pain.

He used to be a cheerful man who never held back, whether at work or at home. He liked to hunt and go fishing, and he enjoyed spending time with his friends. He was a happy family man. But that was before the accident.

#### EVERYTHING CHANGED AFTER THE ACCIDENT:

He had nightmares every single night for many, many years. He dreamt that he fell in the sea and that he was about to drown. He would wake up drenched in sweat.

Many nights he could not sleep at all.

– My bed was full of those who disappeared. They tore at me every single night.

I was all alone. I poured my heart out in letters and forms to researches who wanted to know how the survivors were coping. I was used as a research object, but no one could tell me how to get out of my personal hell.

The muscle tendons in my back were ruptured. I had great pain in my arms and legs. I attended occupational rehabilitation and tried to get back to work. I did not want to be stored away, I wanted to work. But after a few years I had to give up, the pain was too great. Disability benefits were my only option, the doctors concluded. I was 42 years old and received disability checks, me, who had never missed a day work.

He saved his life but ruined his body.

He saved his life, but life will never be good again.

He can't sleep, even when he takes sedative pills. He throws the prescription on the doctor's desk and asks: what the hell is this going to help me with? To sleep? To forget?

He wants to remember, but for many years everything that happened the day before has been erased from his memory. He can park the car in Haugesund and a few hours later he has forgotten where it is. He drives around, not knowing where he is headed. He can't remember where he dropped the gillnet. But no one can know, then the police might take his driving license.

He would like to be the person he used to be. He wants help to get there. But no one can help him.

He wants to be a good husband, but he can't. His marriage ended.

He wants to be the happy Kåre who makes people laugh.

I have a hard time being happy. I blame myself for not doing enough to help the others. I was cowardly and selfish. My life is ruined. I look like a normal guy, but no one can see the wounds inside of me.

I feel no happiness or joy in life, I'm just there. Even when I smile and laugh, there is always anxiety and longing inside of me.

He still screams some nights in anguish and pain. His memories often come back while he sleeps. His daughter Beate who would wake him from his nightmares and wipe tears and sweat while she held him closely and comforted him, is also gone. She died of cancer almost two years ago, aged 29.

His son Arve and his grandson Andreas are good supporters. So is his friend Berit Einarsen. She has seen his dark side, but she has also seen a man with great compassion for other people. She has seen parts of the man he used to be, when he comes back from grouse hunting, when he drags the mackerels into his boat, when he fixes the trout net in the living room and when he holds his grandchild close to his chest.

He was the only one to return home. The others died.

I can never forget them. They always come when I am alone or when I'm going to sleep.

The accident did not make me a better person, but I became a different man. Life became more valuable. I don't care about the small stuff anymore. I never see bad in other people. My life motto might be simple and banal, but it has helped me through some difficult times: Be good to yourself and you will be good to others.

The people in town have treated me well. The widows of my mates have been absolutely wonderful. I've never heard a bad word. I felt like life was reasonably good, but then Beate died. Her passing was almost more than I could live with. I think life is unfair. I've lost so much. I'm always anxious when people come with me in the boat. I'm afraid of losing them.

I've felt so down that life has seemed like it's not worth living. I'm not afraid of dying, but I have always clung to life.

Nevertheless, sometimes I wish I had stayed out there.

Maybe that would have been easier.

People say that I must try to forget. They call me a hero for saving peoples life that evening. Me, a hero? I did the natural thing. I would do the exact same thing today.

BUT HOW CAN I FORGET?

He stands by the window and looks down at the house next door. He is 20 years back in time:

He sees Svein Ove Olsen go to grab a survival suit. He sees the lifeboat. He feels the wind. He hears the screaming. He sees the wave. He feels the platform tilting. He sees the back of his friend.

– WHY DID I NOT STOP HIM?

If I only had known, he would still be here today.

When I wake up during the night, the bed is filled with the people who died. Odd, Rolf, Svein Ove.

They want me with them.

## Kåre Svendsbøe, sheet metal worker, HVM Haugesund

Haugesund 13.01.24

Written by: Olav Holmane

Kåre Svendsbøe has given consent that his story is published in the Memory Bank. Consent can be withdrawn at any time, also after publishing. The minutes have been read and approved by Svendsbøe prior to being published in the Memory Bank.

### BACKGROUND:

Sheet metal worker on the Kielland for HVM, 42 years old at the time of the accident.

Born in 1938.

From Vikebygd, but lives in Førresfjorden.

I am uncertain how long I had been out. We didn't keep track of the time, we just went to work, ate and slept. Maybe 3-4 years. We worked all around the North Sea on the platforms, wherever there was work. I worked for Haugesund Mekaniske Verksted (HVM), where I was a sheet metal worker.

Before I was a sheet metal worker, I was a steward and a cook. Sailed with the Knutsen shipping company. Went on whaling expeditions for four years in the Southern Ocean. I sailed abroad. I liked hunting and fishing. Since I wanted to be home more often, I quit. That's how I ended up at HVM.

### WHERE WERE YOU DURING THE ACCIDENT?

I was in my cabin, and then there was a horrible bang. The rig shook, and then it tipped over. I was sitting by the window mending a eel trap, and then I fell out into the hallway. I stood up and walked towards the emergency door leading out to the deck. I looked up at the tower and saw it coming down. I turned around and shouted to my friends inside that they had to come out immediately because the rig was going to fall over. We went down to the deck and up to the lifeboat. We had to line up to get in. When I got up there, I put on my life jacket and handed more out to my friends. Then we discussed what to do. I stood next to my best friend, named Olsen. He said it was cold and that he wanted to go in and get a survival suit. I told him not to, Kielland would tip over before he would be back. When I looked around to check on him, he was gone. I haven't seen him since. He went into the stateroom, and the rig tipped over in the meantime.

I was standing on the platform when it tipped over, and a huge wave threw me into the sea. While waiting for the wave, I had pulled the life jacket over my head, and I held onto it. Then the sea hit me, and I went down with the platform. I got thrown around in all directions at a terrible

speed. Suddenly it became quiet. That's when the tower hit the bottom. I didn't know which way was up or down, but I felt the life jacket pulling me in one direction. I swam towards it, upwards. I swam and swam and swam and swam. It was pitch black. I saw a green light above me. Automatically, I took a breath, but it was only sea water. My lungs were filled with sea water, and it was extremely uncomfortable. When I reached the surface, there was a terrible bubble. It was yellow and red, and all kinds of colours. And there, I started vomiting and thinking about all those who had been killed before we went down. I saw a man who was cut down by the wire. The wire stood like a violin string, holding the platform afloat, and then the cords started breaking. It snapped. It came across the deck at a terrible speed, hit a man, splitting him in half. His torso went one way, and his legs went another.

When I got to the surface, there was a raft ready with the tent set up and everything. Ready to crawl into. A voice said, "You're not supposed to use that one; you're supposed to use the one far away." A tiny dot way down there. Alright, I started swimming towards it. I swam and swam and swam endlessly. Finally, I reached it but got stuck to the sea anchor. Around my foot, so I had to dive down to loosen it. I got loose and swam over to the raft. It was upside down. An Englishman came alongside me. I held onto the sea anchor. He got one piece, and I held onto one. Then we started raising it. A tremendous waterfall formed around it. It became a mainsail, and we sailed down the sea at full speed with the raft up. We tried to flip it over us, and eventually, we succeeded.

I swam towards the opening and tried to get in. I couldn't get in because I was stuck with the life jacket under my chest. I got halfway up, but my feet were hanging in the loose air. I couldn't get them in. I couldn't turn around— there was nothing inside to hold onto. I fell back into the sea. The Englishman was next to me, breathing heavily. I asked him to try, saying I would try to help him. When he jumped into the raft, I grabbed his thigh and managed to push him so that he fell into the raft. It became completely quiet. Utterly quiet. I thought, "Damn, now he's dead." I finally heard him mumbling. He came out on the edge and grabbed both of my hands. He couldn't get me inside because I was stuck on the raft. As I laid there, I figured that I should push myself away from the raft with one hand, and that he could pull me in with the other. He got one foot up; he had white sneakers on. His other foot came up, and he stood with bent knees and managed to get me into the raft. Then we fell. The raft was half-filled with water, and we lay there struggling for a while. There were people outside who had swum after us. We started pulling people on board, and then there were ten of us in the raft. Two Englishmen, the rest Norwegians. The Englishman was named Sylvester.

I had low shoes on and took one off, starting to bail water. I bailed and bailed and bailed. Eventually, another man took the shoe when I got tired. He started bailing too. He bailed over his head and couldn't get the water out. I took the shoe back and bailed. Then I told the people to move a bit because the water was running down to the lowest point. They moved, and the water moved too. Then I couldn't bail anymore.



We saw and heard boats and helicopters, but they didn't see us. A helicopter was hovering over us. I talked to someone later because we were invited to England—the whole group in the raft. The rescuer was in the helicopter. He said he was doing something somewhere else in the helicopter, and when he was about to sit down, he looked out the window and saw a little light down on the sea. It was the raft. He informed the pilot about the position. The pilot took the position, and they flew so low that they were able to see the raft. Then they threw down a line, and we pulled it in. Straps and everything we needed to fasten it onto ourselves and be hoisted up. No one understood how to put it on. The others on the raft said, "Throw it back into the sea! We're freezing to death! Close it!" So, I gathered everything in a pile and threw it into the sea. The people in the helicopter began to wonder if we didn't want to be rescued. Finally, a rescuer descended. It was windy. The helicopter swayed, and the wind tossed. The rescuer sailed back and forth, and eventually, he hit the column where the light was mounted on the raft. There, he broke his radio and damaged his foot. If he had gone up again, he would have hit the propeller with the rope because it was swaying so much. He sailed back and forth. He then let himself down into the sea. He sailed down on a ball with a rope, and jumped in. He swam to the raft and got up to us. We helped him get up. While we sat there getting ready, those in the helicopter had to loosen and loosen the line to avoid it touching the wire. The wire sank into the sea. When he got the first man strapped in, he made it clear. He had no radio, but he started waving. The wire went into the sea, and when it was taut, the first person jumped into the sea. He disappeared under the water with the wire. We sat and watched him, and far, far away on the sea, he came back up. Water was running off him, and they pulled him up into the helicopter. The rescuer came down next time, and then it quickly worked to get into the helicopter. They got everyone into the helicopter, and we flew to Ekofisk.

There, we were placed in the sick bay, which was warm and good. Nevertheless, I was so cold that I demanded more and more heat. Finally, he said, "You won't get more, or we'll kill you. It's too hot." We were sent down to the cinema and watched a nasty horror movie. In the morning, we arrived in Stavanger. I just wore a boiler suit. No underwear, no shoes, no socks—all wet. Walked barefoot in the city streets to buy clothes we could wear. We were freezing to death; it was March. That was the end of the trip.

#### IN RETROSPECT:

The next day, I learned that they found the raft I was not supposed to climb into. There, they found a man dead. He had frozen to death.

Afterwards, I've had it awful. I've had nightmares for 40 years. Nightmares, fucking terrible nightmares. The ones who disappeared, they come to me at night and grab my face.

I had no follow-up. Not a damn word. No one came and asked how we were. It was awful too. It was terrible. It was no way to live.

I've been on disability since I couldn't sleep at night at all. I only slept half the nights and was half awake. You work the whole night. In addition, I had a lot of back pain after this, and I still do.

Of the eleven who left Tysvær, I was the only one who came home alive.

## KÅRE SVENDSBØE, OSCAR OLSEN, OLA GAUSDAL ON HOW THEY SURVIVED

By Finn E. Våga,

First published in Stavanger Aftenblad March 26<sup>th</sup>, 1980.

**Between the experienced fingers** of Kåre Svendsbøe from Førresfjorden a new eel catcher emerged. He sat in the worn out four-people cabin with his three colleagues and friends while his hands worked almost automatically with the knots.

He was supposed to be at work on the Foxtrot platform but after 1 pm the weather had gotten so bad that the helicopter transport on the Ekofisk field had been cancelled. It was not uncommon to have these extra days off in the North Sea; it was wise to use them for something sensible.

Oscar Olsen, a 28-year-old from Åkrehamn, was one of the few who both lived and worked on board Alexander Kielland. The rig's days as a hotel platform were numbered.

In Stavanger, Henrik Ibsen were being prepared to take over for Alexander Kielland when it would be towed over to the British sector to start drilling.

Oscar Olsen worked long shifts to prepare all the drilling equipment, so he spent some extra time in the crew mess that day. A quarter past six in the evening, he was back in the mixing room with two colleagues, ready to work a few hours overtime. Inside, they barely noticed how the wind built up to hurricane force.

Alexander Kielland was a pentagon platform. Five pillars carried the weight of the deck and the many housing units with berths and living space for 348 people. Far down on the D-pillar a line went through the steel; it was not supposed to be there.

A hydrophone was installed in a small opening in the D-6 bracing. The weld around this device had never been quite as it should be. Already before the installation of the platform, a fracture had occurred, which increased the strain at several points.

No one had noticed the fractures, which had expanded through the thick steel and now ran two-thirds of the entire circumference. The pulling force of the anchor cables and the pressure from the sea were about to tear the bracing to pieces.

On this day, the 27<sup>th</sup> of mars 1980, the weather had been strange. The storms often hit close to each other at this time of year. Fog was not uncommon. But storm and fog at the same time was highly unusual.

**But it only affected people** because the flights were cancelled. Kielland was sturdy in the sea even though the waves got larger, from three meters in the morning to six and eight meters in the afternoon. The wind picked up to 20 seconds per second, and around 5 pm, it was decided that Kielland had to be winched further away from the Edda platform.

Everyone on board Edda, who were staying on Kielland was asked to walk across the gangway that connected the two platforms. Then the gangway was retracted and Kielland was hauled away by slackening the anchor wires for the B and D pillars, while they tightened at the A and E pillars. Everything was routine.

**Ola Gaustad sat** in his cabin with four of his workmates and played poker. He had stayed on the Alexander Kielland platform three or four times previously.

The electrician from Trondheim enjoyed working in the North Sea. He appreciated the camaraderie and the periods off when he could spend time with his wife and two children. They usually played cards in the evenings after supper. Sometimes the pot could get quite big. One of his workmates had already lost NOK 1600 this evening but the atmosphere around the table was still good. They laughed when the cards were dealt. Then they heard a load bang.

### **The table tips over**

Cards and money fell to the floor. Chairs tipped. The lights went out. The emergency lights came on, but it disappeared after a few seconds. Inside the dark cabin, Ola Gaustad heard his workmates shouting that they had to get their life jackets. He felt the platform tilt. The colleagues each grabbed a life jacket before they ran out the door. He found a survival suit and quickly put it on. Then he ran out into the corridor.

Otto Grinde was in the barracks on deck. He had just finished eating in the crew mess. He was not supposed to be at work this evening, but worked as a replacement for a colleague from Huagesund Mekaniske Verksted who was sick.

In this building, the workers spent their time off and slept. He came out of the toilet when he heard a bang, a few seconds later another load bang. The corridor got dark. Then he felt the platform tip over.

**He could hear screams,** barrels and boxes thundering down the deck, containers crushing into iron structures. He ran to the exit and pushed the handle. The door was stuck. He put his shoulder against it and pushed as hard as he could. It didn't budge. He eventually managed to open the door by kicking it hard.

The boat coordinator Baste Fanebust was on board the massive Ekofisk tank this evening. He was responsible for managing the complicated boat traffic between and around the many installations on this large Norwegian gold mine in the sea. On his way from the dining hall to the watch tower, the walkie-talkie he always carries crackles. He turns up the volume and hears the words "Mayday, Kielland is caps...", then it gets terribly quiet.

The words are uttered by Harry Vike, and it is the only thing he manages to say before he slides down the floor and away from the radio. The 31-year-old radio operator from Tau is on his

last stay in the North Sea. He wants to work on land. When the platform starts to tilt, he throws himself over to the VHF transmitter, turns on channel 9, to which the entire Ekofisk field is listening and shouts a despairing “mayday, mayday, Kielland is capsizing”. Then he half slides, half runs out on the tilting deck. The time is 18:33.

**Seven minutes later**, the main rescue center asks Sola Rogaland Radio to broadcast “mayday” with a request to all ships in the vicinity to proceed towards Alexander Kielland for immediate assistance.

Everyone in the North Sea, oil workers and sailors, realize that something bad is about to happen. The catastrophe alarm goes off at the central hospital in Rogaland, at the 330-squadron at Sola, in the rescue centers in Aberdeen, Edinburgh, Karup and Glücksburg.

Jet planes are transporting extra helicopter crew from Eastern Norway to Stavanger, Orion, and Hercules- aircrafts are being prepared at Ørland and at Gardemoen. Helicopters and surveillance planes are taking off. Ships throughout the North Sea are changing course to help if they can.

Kåre Svendsbøe considered two alternatives; he knew that it was a matter of life and death. When the platform tilted, all four mates in cabin 312 fell out into the corridor. From there, they managed to get down to the lifeboat deck.

Svendsbøe put on a life jacket but did not dare to enter the lifeboat. The first boat to be launched was crushed against the platform leg by the massive waves. Everyone on board was thrown into the foaming sea. Some lay there, face down.

**The panic increased around him.** Some jumped into the sea, others tried desperately to get into one of the remaining lifeboats. People ran on the platform leg, which lay more and more tilted in the sea. Some were blown into the sea, others turned around and came running back.

Eventually, Kåre Svendsbøe jumped into the sea. He felt the icy water close around him. Although the air was only four degrees, the six-seven degrees in the sea felt like a hard pinch.

Just when Svendsbøe jumped, Alexander Kielland overturned. Svendsbøe held his hands above his head as if to catch the falling platform. As the decks and containers came under water, he was dragged down and tossed around by the suction it created.

The pressure under water injured his ears, he couldn’t see anything, and he didn’t know up or down. Then the life jacket pulled him up, he opened his mouth, swallowed large gulps of the sea before his head broke the surface. Before he could catch his breath, he was pulled under once more.

**Oscar Olsen watched in despair** as his German colleague tried to release the rear hook on the lifeboat. He himself had loosened the wire in front before entering the lifeboat after a dramatic evacuation from the mixing room through the roof hatch.

They were 13 people in the lifeboat, the engine was running, and they had managed to lower the lifeboat without tipping over. But they were stuck in the rear hook and couldn’t move.

Above them was the tower, the enormous and crooked construction against the black evening sky. It could fall over them at any moment.

**The German** reached out of the pilothouse and pulled and struggled with the hook. Just then a wave hit the boat and threw it with tremendous force against a protruding steel beam. The German was hit in his head and died instantly. The wave rolled on while the boat fell into the sea, tipped around and was left upside down, taking in water.

The 12 who remained on board screamed at the top of their lungs, but this evening no one heard anything but their own fear. The water rose around them. Then another wave threw them against Alexander Kielland, but this time the boat was left on the right keel. In this moment, Oscar Olsen realized that the stubborn hook was attaching them to the platform. He did not ask the others for advice but jumped into the sea.

**On board Edda** the alarm rang through the corridors. People ran out on deck and was met by a terrible sight. Only a few tens of meters away, Alexander Kielland lay completely tilted in the sea. People were jumping and falling from the steep decks, lifeboats were crushed against the platform.

For a while, the last anchor cable was taut like a violin string. Then it snapped with a bang. It hit people who had climbed out on one of the pillars and cut them in half. Then the platform completely overturned. The enormous structure fell on top of the people in the sea and sucked them deep under water.

Ola Gaustad was sure he would be rescued and that the help would get there quickly. He had managed to get inside one of the lifeboats. But when they couldn't release it from the hook, he climbed through the roof hatch and jumped into the sea. He turned around and saw other colleagues jump into the sea, many were only wearing underwear.

The survival suit took in water. He found that it was easier to swim on his back. He could no longer see the platform. Where was it?

Gaustad consoled himself with all the boats and helicopters searching for people in the sea. Someone would soon spot him, and the nightmare would be over. He swam slowly towards the basket that hoisted people up from the sea. He got hold of the ropes twice. Two times he managed to hold on to the basket until he was 10-12 meters above sea-level, then he fell. The water in his survival suit had made him 40-50 kilos heavier.

He swam towards Edda but found that the rope ladders were swinging too much in the wind so it would be impossible to get hold of them. Together with two others, he swam towards a supply boat. But his fingers were numb, and he was unable to hold on to the net that hung along the ship's side. He sank down. When he came back to the surface, the boat had disappeared into the darkness. The two others were also gone.

**The waves carried him** further away from Alexander Kielland, the helicopters, and the boats. He passed a lifeboat that was lying upside down. Five people clung to it. A huge wave washed

over the lifeboat. Three people disappeared into the sea. He saw many dead people floating in the raging sea. Then, he was alone in the dark, the only thing he could hear were the waves. He thought about his children and had almost lost all hope when a big piece of wood came drifting towards him. He grabbed it and pulled himself up.

One hour after the platform started to tilt, he saw the searchlights of a boat coming straight towards him. It was the supply boat “Tender Power». The crew spotted him and threw him a life buoy. Chief mate Sven Eirik Pedersen jumped into the sea with a rope around his waist. He pulled Gaustad towards him and they were hoisted on board. He had no energy left. He was laid on deck and his survival suit was cut open with a knife.

### **Then Ola Gaustad passed out.**

As he was carried into a cabin, he saw another survivor: Otto Grinde was lying half dead in the bunk. He probably won't live long, Gaustad thought before sinking into his bed.

A man had shown Otto Grinde where the lifebelts were. Together they handed out life jackets to those who didn't wear one. When he gets back to the deck, the platform is even more tilted. Grinde fell into an opening between the bar and one of the shafts. While he lay in the sea, he was hit by the bar and pushed under water.

He was sure he would die. But thanks to the lifebelt, he quickly came back the surface. The sea was full of dead colleagues. One, who was still alive, was singing loudly to himself in the waves.

When he was 300–400 meters from Alexander Kielland, he saw the platform capsize. He saw a dead man and swam towards him, clung to him for a few minutes. He wondered if he should take the dead man's life jacket but decided to swim on. He managed to hold on to the rudder of a lifeboat that was lying upside down for 20 minutes.

**A man clung to his back.** Seven or eight people clung to the keel. No one wore survival suits. Several of them were almost naked. They shivered in the icy wind. He was wearing a thick jacked and velvet trousers and chose to stay in the sea because he thought it was the warmest option. Almost everyone who sat on top of the lifeboat died. The guy who clung to his back, disappeared in the waves.

Otto Grinde swam towards a supply boat. He saw a man on deck who lifted a life buoy. Then he passed out. Once again, chief mate Svein Erik Pedersen jumped into the sea and managed to drag Grinde to the boat. Then he lost grip and Otto Grinde went under. But Pedersen got hold of his hair and did not let go until they both were on deck.

– Do not bloody give up. You're going home! Oscar Olsen lies in the sea and talks loudly to himself. He is coughing seawater and is unbelievably cold. He is tossed around in the waves like a cork. Around him, people disappear into the depths.

**After jumping out of the** lifeboat he had managed to swim to a lifebuoy tied to the Edda platform. He had been lying there for fifteen minutes, holding on to the ropes. He had screamed to the helicopter that hovered above the chaos, even though he knew it had no rescue equipment on board.

He realized that he would freeze to death if he didn't do anything. But the strings in the lifebelt had entangled themselves around the ropes in the buoy. He was stuck. He desperately pushed his feet against the buoy, forced it under water and pushed against it with all his might.

Suddenly, the strings in his life jacket snapped. He wrenched out of it and swam towards a rubber raft which tossed and turned around in the waves. With his last energy, he managed to pull himself into the lifeboat. There he sat in undershirt and knickers, in four degrees and hurricane, swearing that he would survive.

### **The lifejacket pulled**

Kåre Svendsbøe came back to the surface for the second time. He finally filled his lungs with air and coughed up some seawater. He realized that he had to swim towards Edda. His plan was to find a ladder and climb to safety. But by looking at the waves crashing into the platform legs and the dead bodies floating in the sea around him, he soon figured that it wouldn't be possible. Then he caught the sight of a life raft that had been thrown out from Edda. He swam desperately towards it, it drifted away, he followed.

When he finally reached the raft, he saw that it was floating upside down. He got his foot caught in a rope underneath the raft and had to dive under to get loose. When he came back up, there was another person there. Soon, two more people arrived. Frozen and totally exhausted, they managed to turn the raft around, before pushing and pulling each other on board. Then they had no energy left. The time was not yet 7 pm. One hour later, at 8:01 pm, the NTP reported via an emergency message to the country's editors that the "semi-subversive platform Alexander Kielland had capsized in the North Sea at 6:30 pm that Thursday. The 208 workers on board the platform have been evacuated».

But no one was evacuated. Some were trapped in the housing modules that hung upside down underwater, many floated lifeless in the sea, some lay dead on the bottom of the ocean, others were still fighting for their lives in the waves. Many lay powerless on rafts and in half-broken lifeboats, frozen to the core.

**Planes and helicopters** were in the air, boats flocked, the people on Edda did everything in their power. It was still possible to save lives. But everyone who saw the scene, realized that this was a disaster of a scale that Norway had hardly experienced before.

Svein Arne Hapnes was on his first mission as a military doctor on board the second Sea King helicopter that arrived to Alexander Kielland. As they flew low above the platform and saw the pontoons sticking up from the waves, he thought that no accident could be worse than this.



### **They searched for hours.**

The search was difficult. High waves, dense fog and strong winds greatly reduced visibility. The helicopter descended as low as it could. They scouted for lives until the next morning but found only deceased. For most of the dead, it had only been a matter of minutes.

But there were people inside the lifeboats. Cold, terrified, and seasick. While rescuer Wilfred Ramstad was fixing the lifeline around one of them, the lifeboat was tossed in the air by a wave and the wire from the rescue lift came underneath the boat.

Ramstad didn't even think about it, he plunged into the sea, ducked under the boat, and got the wire loose. Then he was caught by another wave and thrown onto the lifeboat, where he immediately continued the rescue assistance. In total, the two Sea King helicopters from the 330-squadron picked up 43 survivors from the lifeboats.

Deceased and survivors were flown to Sola. Those who were alive were transported to a hotel or the hospital. The diseased were carried to an old hangar. There, the police started the identification.

At six thirty in the morning on the 28<sup>th</sup> of March, the phone rang at Gunn Berit Olsen's home in Åkrehamn. Family and friends had been calling her all night. This time it was an unknown voice. She got the message she had longed for: Oscar had been rescued and was sleeping on board one of the boats that had taken part in the search.

Several other homes received no such calls. After some confusion about how many had actually been on board Alexander Kielland, it was finally agreed that there had been 212 people on board the platform when the crack in D-6 became so big that the bracing broke. 89 people were rescued from the sea. 123 were dead or still missing.

**Occasionally** Ola Gaustad thinks about the Alexander Kielland-accident. He is 30 years back in time: he is in the sea. He feels the hand pulling in his survival suit, he sees the terrified eyes. He has often wondered if he didn't do enough to help others.

– But I had to get rid of him. I had to focus on saving myself. If I hadn't swam away from him, I would have died too.

The duvet hangs in the bedroom window for airing. This morning, Kåre Svendsbøe woke up drenched in sweat, as usual. He had screamed in anguish and despair earlier in the night.

The nightmare is not over. He did not return to work after the accident. His body was ruined. His memory was greatly reduced: when he ate dinner, he had no idea what had been on his plate sometime later. He could look for his car for hours after having parked it in the center of Haugesund.

**They were eight men** from the small village of Førresfjorden in Tysvær who set out. He was

the only one who returned home. Since then, he has thought a lot about those who died. He has thought about Svein Ove Olsen. They worked together at Haugesund Mekaniske Verksted, they went fishing and grouse hunting together. But when they stood on deck and the platform is about to overturn, he asks if he has time to run inside and get his survival suit.

– No, you won't get back out, Svendsbøe yelled. Then his friend is gone. – He never told me that he did not know how to swim. If I had known, I would have sent him to one of the lifeboats. Then he would perhaps be alive today.

Kåre Svendsbøe fills the cup with coffee and rolls himself a cigarette. From his living room window, he can look down on the house where his friend's widow lives.

-I often think about my friends. They visit me at night. I still live with them. Life after Kielland has been hell.

**Monday 31<sup>st</sup> of March**, three days after the accident, Norway stopped for five minutes. Under flags that hung heavy on half-mast, people from the inlands, clerks, farmers, teachers, fishermen and sailors expressed their participation in the national mourning. The nation's prosperity had suddenly come at a much higher price.

## OLA GAUSTAD, SKILLED WORKER, SIEMENS

By Ellen Kongsnes, 14.1.2016. Trondheim.

Consent given 17.1.19.

### PERSONAL DETAILS

Email: olagaustad@hotmail.com

Survivor - Trondheim – employed by Siemens - Wife: Turid. Married for the second time. Two children each.

Ola started as an apprentice in Siemens before working at Trondheim Mekainske Verksted (TMV) from 1967.

From 1973-75 he was in Narvik for two years.

### BACKGROUND

In 1975 he was back at Siemens. Siemens and some other Trondheim companies worked with building a new dairy in Warszawa in Poland. He spent one year and three months there and met his first wife. She came back to Norway with him, and they moved to Tjømø in 1976. Ola was hired by his brother in a company which sold concrete mixers. In Tjømo they welcomed their first daughter. But his wife didn't like it there and they moved to Trondheim in 1977. Ola started to work in Siemens again, first in construction. Then things started to happen in the North Sea.

In the beginning, Siemens collaborated with Saker Verdal on the construction of the H3 and H4 rigs. Siemens joined Aker Verdal offshore. The next job was Aker Stord and the Statfjord development.

Ola began to work offshore for Siemens in 1979 and worked offshore for 8-10 months before he moved over to the Ekofisk field. There, the Siemens operators were to carry out maintenance and they lived on board Alexander Kielland during the time they worked on Ekofisk Alpha (2/4A). They shuttled daily to Ekofisk and the Alpha platform. Among other things, they were to replace the entire control panel on board Alpha.

Ekofisk is profitable down to an oil price of 6 USD a barrel.

### THE ACCIDENT:

The living quarters on Eko Alpha were to be replaced. We were in the process of preparing the maps of cables and decide where they could be cut. Siemens worked for Oil Industry Services in Kristiansand. The shuttling started at 6 am, but this morning there was fog and the transport was postponed.

We only wore shirts. No one wore a uniform in the helicopter during the shuttle.

The shuttle was postponed several times during the day. It was boring to walk around on the old Kielland. There was not much to do there.

After lunch, we were five men who decided to play poker. They often played cards. We went to a cabin on the fourth floor.

#### THE POKER TEAM:

The housing unit on Alexander Kielland was temporary because it was a converted drilling platform. The 'hotel' was built of several containers stacked on top of each other.

The poker team in the cabin consisted of two scaffolders, Åge lund from Siemens, a young boy who worked as a cook, and me.

The game took off at they bet some money. The bets were raised.

Åge had four jacks. The scaffolder had three aces. The two began bidding against each other. The pot grew to around NOK 3,000, which was a lot of money at the time.

The cook had to write a check, which is what we did back then. Åge put the check in his breast pocket with a zipper. Then we heard a hell of a bang. Then the platform tilted.

While we were playing poker, the fog had turned into a storm without any of us noticing.

The anchor chain to the Edda platform had been removed. We hadn't noticed that either.

I think it was the force of the anchor chain that tore the leg off the platform. I think that's why we heard a bang.

#### THE RESCUE:

We made our way out of the cabin. The helipad was almost under water. All lights, including the emergency light went off. It was completely dark. People panicked a little.

Åge said "nå er det bare å pakke snippeska», an expression from Trondheim meaning that it is over.

Ola was sitting in the back during the poker game and when the platform tilted, the table fell on top of him. Cards and money came crashing in a chaos. It took some time to untangle from all of it. Ola was therefore the last person to leave the cabin. The others had grabbed the life jackets from the cupboard when they left. Once he is out in the corridor, Ola thinks: I should probably grab a survival suit. This can go very wrong – that I understood.

The corridor was slanted because of the tilting platform. They walked on the corner strip in the

corridor on their way out. The stairs were full of panicking people. That's when I put on the survival suit, but I did not wear the hood. When I got to deck, several people saw me.

Many others ran to get their survival suits. Someone I knew asked me where lifeboat three was. During training he had learned that it was the lifeboat he was assigned to. Ola told him that this was serious, he could enter any lifeboat. Don't think about it, go to the nearest lifeboat, Ola said. Later, Ola learned that the man died.

Ola's plan was to walk towards Edda. That's when he noticed that the gangway had been retracted.

Ola was invited on board a lifeboat about to be lowered. One of the men inside was only wearing underwear. There were 15-20 people inside of the lifeboat, it was thus half full. They managed to lower the lifeboat into the water but when they were to release the lifeboat from the platform, it was stuck. The "davits" could not be released. I later learned that the davits were stuck because they were full of concrete dust from Edda. That's why they didn't come off.

The engines were running, but they could not drive forward because it was still attached. The driver of the boat was thrown backwards and injured. They tried once more, without success. People panicked and jumped into the sea, including the guy in underwear. Some wore jeans and fleece, like most people did back then.

I thought that I too needed to get out. I climbed to the roof of the lifeboat. It was quite heavy in 11-meter waves. At this point, Kielland had not yet overturned. But the lifeboat I was in was still attached to Kielland. I knew that I had to jump. But in my panic, I forgot to put on the hood of the life suit. This was a mistake.

Once I was in the sea, my survival suit slowly filled with water. I managed to turn on my back and swam away from Kielland. That's when I saw that Kielland was gone. At first, I couldn't understand what had happened. I looked around in every direction. But when I saw Edda, I realized that Kielland was gone. Then I saw the four platform legs, the pontoons, coming out of the water. All around me in the sea, there were dead people lying face down in the water.

A man in a checkered shirt tried to hang onto me. I had to shake him off. That's something I remember. I could only look after myself. It was not a conscious choice, it was chaos, but I guess it was me or him.

I knew that there was a basket on Edda. They had already started to hoist people up in it. I managed to get over to it and got hold of the net underneath the basket. I tried to hold on, but when it was about 10 meters up in the air, I lost my grip. I fell and hit the water like a bullet, I went deep down. I had to fight my way back up, the survival suit was heavy although it also had buoyancy in it. The basket did not come back down. I later heard that the captain on Edda was afraid of a blowout from Kielland and ordered a full evacuation of Edda. I saw helicopters and supply boats all around me. We're being rescued, I thought.

I aimed for the ladder that hung along the platform leg on Edda, which was 50 meters away from the basket. But the storm made it impossible to get hold of, it did not hang straight down but was out like a flag.

I swam out and saw that a supply boat had arrived with a net hanging from its side. I got hold of the net. But a man came and grabbed my shoulder and both of us fell into the water. When I came back to the surface, the supply boat was already out of reach. The waves were seven meters high, and the supply boat was on the other side of the wave. I had to give up on the supply boat too.

Then, a lifeboat came drifting. There were five people sitting on top of it. Then a massive wave came. When I could see the lifeboat again, there were only two people left on it.

A raft from Edda came floating. But it wouldn't release when I pulled the rope and I had to give it up.

My hands were cold and stiff. I got more and more out of breath. The waves kept crashing over my head.

I had been diving for many years. I think that prevented me from panicking. I could see the surface far above me and knew that I could swim to it.

It was heavy to swim so I lay in the water, but I drifted with the waves further away. Eventually I could no longer see Edda. I didn't see anything around me, neither helicopters nor boats. For the first time I thought: this is going to hell.

Then a massive piece of wood came drifting. I managed to get half of my body onto it and lay there for a while. It was cold. I started to think about my kids. I was not sure that I would survive.

Then, out of nothing, the Wilhelmsen boat "Tender Power" arrived. It was an anchor management vessel. They didn't have a net, so they threw a life buoy in the sea. It was actually better than a net. I cannot recall if I put it around my waist or if I just held onto it. They tried to drag me on board, but it didn't work. Eventually, they lowered a man down to help me and he managed to hoist me on board. I can't remember exactly how everything went down. I remember being carried to a cabin. Then I passed out. My survival suit was cut open. They put my clothes in the washing machine and dryer. I lay in bed shaking from shock and cold. I asked for some cognac. They didn't have any. They asked if there was anything else I wanted. Yes, a pear, I replied. I got a pear. I ate. I vomited. Finally, I managed to take a few bites, this reduced my shaking.

After a while, I could stand up. I was handed my dry clothes. I saw a man who was completely blue in another cabin. I didn't think he had made it. But I later read in the newspaper that he spent two weeks in the hospital and was doing fine.

Until this point, I hadn't really understood the seriousness of the accident. I could hear morning music on the radio in the Wilhelmsen boat. I slowly realized that they played morning music

because of the accident on Kielland.

I handed the crew my business card, and they called my wife. But she was Polish and didn't understand much of what they told her. She was probably as scared as she was reassured but eventually, she understood that I was alive.

I spent the night on the boat. The following day, I was transferred to Ekofisk in the basket.

I only had some bruises on my forehead. I had to wait until the evening at the center because the most urgent patients had to be transported ashore first.

We were handed blankets when the helicopter landed. A nurse asked me how I was doing, and I started to cry. The seriousness of the situation dawned on me.

From there, we were transported to the hospital and sent home by the doctor. Caught a taxi to Alstor hotel where I met Åge Lund. He had made it to a pickup boat, an open rowing boat. They were four in the boat. Two of them managed to climb on board a supply boat from there, two fell between the net and the boat and drowned.

At Alstor, we also met a painter from OiS. A fight almost broke out when the night personnel refused to put an extra mattress in the painter's room. The manager had to come and sort things out.

I think my anger was a reaction to the accident.

The atmosphere at Alstor was strange.

Then we travelled home.

#### AFTERWARDS:

15 men from Siemens set out. Five men returned home.

He was asked to go offshore again after five days. They were lacking in people. Two or three weeks later, he set out. He wasn't sure he would manage it, but the sea was calm, and he stayed on the sister platform of Alexander Kielland – Henrik Ibsen.

-I've never had nightmares about Alexander Kielland. But I had a dream afterwards, I dreamt that my room filled with water.

He also remembers when he sat in the cinema room on Henrik Ibsen. A wave crashed into the platform, and it tilts a little, he is thrown forward in his seat. His heart jumped. It was uncomfortable.

Ola had two young girls, aged two and three when the AL accident occurred. He got divorced right after the accident. It was tough.

Half a year before the accident, Ola's mother passed away. They were close and it was difficult when she passed. The Alexander Kielland accident felt more like driving the car in a ditch. I recognized that I was unharmed, got up and moved on. Other things in my life were worse at this particular time.

Now, his daughters are grown and live in the East of Norway. They are both doing well, one is a doctor and the other has a decent job in Moods of Norway. They both have two children each.

For many years, I was fed up with the Alexander Kielland accident. There was so much about it on TV and in speeches. I was done with the whole accident. People talked about it as if it were the Kennedy-murder.

People asked me about the accident but the version I told them got shorter and shorter.

I kept my cool and I was lucky. In addition, I was a young and strong man of 31 years old.

Something good came from the accident too:

- I came out of it well. After the accident, I became chairman of Siemens. The previous chairman died in the accident. I continued to work offshore for another ten years.

In 1984, he was involved in preparing the gas platform, Odin. The housing unit was lifted into place and Siemens was responsible for the electrical things. Ola spent one year on Odin. On one of his last stays, a nurse was there. Turid became part of the group who played poker and betted together.

One day, nurse Turid was handed a form to be filled in by workers who had experienced the Alexander Kielland accident. The nurse called those who had experienced it 4-5 years earlier in to fill out the form. Ola was the only one on board Odin. He was called in to Turid and told her that he had coped well, but that he was divorced, and that it had been tough. All in all, he was doing fine.

Later, he traveled back to the Ekofisk field. On his birthday in February, Turid called. She remembered the date from the form they had filled in at Odin. Ola had made an impression on her, and now she was calling. Turid introduced herself as the nurse from Odin. Ola had his children, sister, and neighbor there to celebrate his birthday. He had found peace after the divorce and felt that life was okay again.

Turid and Ola agreed to meet in Stavanger the next time he came ashore. We met later that month and we have been together since. He eventually brought her with him to Trondheim. Turid also had two children from a previous marriage. They have a daughter together, Ragna who is now 28 years old.



Ola received the standard compensation that most survivors received. He used it to buy an oak kitchen. He brought the kitchen when they built a new house. The kitchen is still there.

Ola did not like Bjørn Nilsen. He was just looking for negatives. In a TV interview he kept all the negative things Ola said and cut out the positive, which was 90 per cent of the conversation.

The only criticism Ola has to say of the Alexander Kielland accident is that they should have brought all the survivors together. That way they could have met and seen each other again instead of going around wondering who had made it.

Additionally, he thinks Edda started drilling again too soon. This caused the sea to be cloudy and it became impossible to find more survivors due to the poor visibility.

ROLF OLAUSSEN, RIGGER, UGLAND, OIS

By Marie Smith-Solbakken, 26. January 2016, Arendal.

#### PERSONAL DETAILS

Born 1947

[Rolf.Olaussen@online.no](mailto:Rolf.Olaussen@online.no)

Sandvigveien 197, 4816 Arendal, 26. January 2016

#### USE AND IMPLEMENTATION

Notes from the conversation was sent on the 1<sup>st</sup> of February 2016, and reviewed and corrected on the 3<sup>rd</sup> of February 2016. Corrected via phone 14.01.2019.

Consented that notes from the conversation can be made public and be included in the memory collection about the Alexander Kielland accident which is handed over to the Norwegian Petroleum Museum, the National library and the Labour movements archives and library so that posterity can take part in this history (Email 14.01.2019).

#### BACKGROUND

Trained captain

1976-1988: rigger, safety inspector in Ugland, OIS

1988-2015: Safety technician, Inspector, and safety manager at Gullfaks for Statoil

#### MY JOB ON KIELLAND

We were in the training phase for work in the offshore industry. I was employed by Ugland in OIS. I stayed on Kielland.

Brownaker lost the contract on Ekofisk and OIS took over the contract, a maintenance contract. Unlike the others in maintenance, I did not have a background in mechanics. I was originally a first mate. Initially, I worked with various tasks until I was hired by Phillips as a safety officer offshore.

#### PROFESSIONAL BACKGROUND

1962: Seafarer, Jørgen P. Jensen shipping company, started as a deck boy and worked my way up through the ranks, sailed. Switched between Jørgen P Jensen and Sørensens shipping

company here in Arendal. The navy in the military. Seafarer school

Restructuring in the maritime transport, docked ships, difficult to get a job, transferred to the oil industry. Walked around waiting to board a pipe laying vessel.

Got an offer in 1977/78 to work in the North Sea for OIS and stayed there for 10 years.

#### BEGAN WORKING IN THE NORTH SEA

Was one of the first there, had employee number 57 in OIS, and worked there for 10 years.

After some time in the North Sea, I was hired by Phillips as a safety inspector.

I was involved in most of OIS' projects. Was on Odin, Statfjord and all the installations on Ekofisk.

We stayed on Kielland in connection with maintenance routines on the Ekofisk field.

We were a group of people from OIS who stayed on Kielland and worked on the Ekofisk center. Ekofisk center consists of several platforms, including Edda, to which we had a connecting bridge.

#### ALEXANDER KIELLAND, MARCH 27, 1980

That day, the weather was bad. There was no shuttling, so we weren't at work.

Bad weather, large waves, grey sky, and poor visibility. We spent the day relaxing. We knew that we wouldn't get to work that day.

I went to bed after supper, I remember reading a book. It might have been a MC Lean book?

I remember that I overheard a conversation between the maritime crew on the rig that "we pull it further out like this". The gangway was there, slipping and jerking, so they retracted it and hauled Kielland away from Edda. I didn't think more of it and went to my bed.

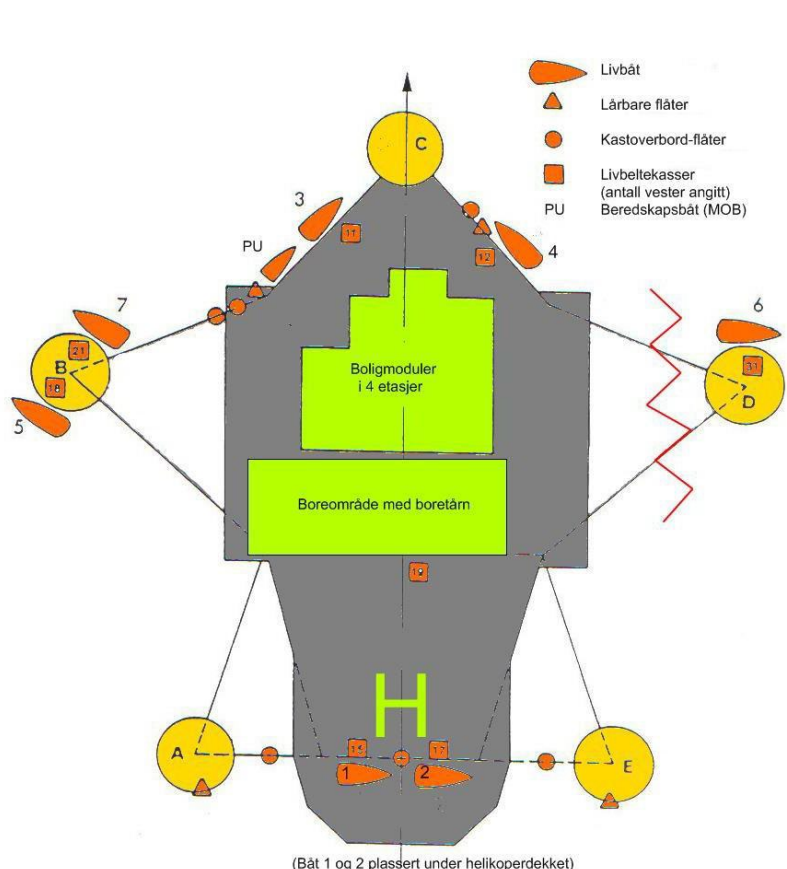
I hadn't been there for long when I heard some noises, and the rig started to tilt. The alarm went off. But suddenly it stopped, and it got dark and quiet. The machinery, fans, and everything electric stopped. And I thought "what is going on?". Are the housing containers crashing onto the deck, or is the entire rig tipping over? When the rig is at a certain listed angle, the engine and the auxiliary engines stop.

#### FROM THE CABIN TO THE HIGHEST POINT

I had to go out and see what it was. I found my personal suit in a bag on the floor. I only wore safety boots, boxershorts and a shirt. I held the suit in my arms and got up. I had to go through an iron door. The floor was tilted, and the iron door was almost where the roof usually was. It was difficult to open it and pitch black around me. I eventually managed to open the door and got out into the light. Then I saw that it was the rig that stood with the helipad in the sea. The entire rig was tilted.

I figured that there was no point in going to the lifeboats, everything came crashing down. There was a staircase down to the common area, crew mess, and cinema room below deck. Those who came up from there were hit by the objects crashing down over the deck.

I knew I had to get over to the highest point. It was the point furthest away from Edda. I stood there, holding on to the survival suit, which I didn't dare to let go of. There was a heavy wire that hung on the railing attached by some thin ropes. I didn't dare to put my suit on there because I was afraid the ropes would snap, and the wire hit me. I stood there, thinking and expected it to snap. Then I could feel what was probably the second mooring at the bottom break. The rig capsized. I stood there next to a guy from Kristiansand (*Svein Arild Tversland*. (He died)



ROLF OALUSSEN EXPLAINS:

Lifeboats 4 and 6 hung under the rig between the legs, they would not release, impossible to use.

Lifeboats 1 and 2 were almost in the water.

I could not see lifeboats 3 and 7, nor could I see 1 and 2, I think they had been launched already.

Rolf stands on the corner between the D and C bracings together with Tversland. They hope that the rig will remain in this position. Above them, a helicopter illuminates the rig with spotlights. The helicopter came with new crew, it flew above Kielland but did not have a rescue winch. It hovered over them with spotlights, but they could not pick people up.

JUMPS INTO THE SEA

Then the rig started to make a lot of noise, something gave it, then it capsized. There were already helicopters and boats on the field.

I can't remember hitting the surface when I jumped. I remember that I stood under water and had a terrible buoyancy, it was like standing inside of a waterfall. All the water passed by me; it was going downwards. There was so much buoyancy in the survival suit I was holding that it felt like I stood still, but suddenly I reached the surface. Everything was completely quiet. I'd lost my hearing. I could see the lights from the helicopters and boats, but I could not see Kielland. I thought that I had come up somewhere else. Then, a mushroom came up from the sea. It was the leg that broke off that came up first. It was a few hundred meters from where I was, at least 100 meters. Then I clung to some wreckage and managed to put on my survival suit in the sea. The water was cold. I knew that I had to, so I climbed on top of a lifeboat which lay upside down, emptied the suit of water and pulled up the zipper. I thought that if someone spots me, I will be ok.

I thought about swimming towards Edda, but it was impossible in this weather. Then I saw something I wish I hadn't seen; I saw the backs of people without survival suits, those who had drowned.

Then the legs of the rig came up. They came up one by one, just like a taboret. I looked over to Edda. I saw that they threw life rafts from Edda, but they were caught by the wind. There were people around me, about 5 or 10. I realized that there was nothing I could do for them. They were helpless, completely helpless, and frozen without survival suits or life jackets. They must have evacuated straight from the cabin. The English and the Scots stood out because they were so pale. They did not have survival suits, or even shirts and they were frozen blue. They would not make it.

We were two who managed to get onto the boat. The others drifted away. There was a hole in the bottom of the lifeboat. I stuffed it with my fingers and lay there like a pendulum. The waves knocked me back and forth.

For a while, I held someone. But I couldn't hold him any longer and he couldn't keep himself up. I had to release him. He was shirtless and not wearing a suit.

#### PICKED UP BY A SUPPLY BOAT

While I was lying there, a supply vessel arrived. We were two people, the other was a guy from Risør (I can't remember his name). They had a net hanging from the ship's side. Then the vessel came over to us. I could only see the big propellers whipping the sea. It backed up and disappeared. It backed up so it could get on the right course, and we could jump into the net timing the jump with a wave. We clung to the lifeboat and when the next wave came, we jumped into the net. When I felt someone grab my next and lift me over the edge, I passed out.

I woke up in the shower, they had showered me in lukewarm water and wrapped me in woollen blankets. They asked me if I was well enough to help look for the lifeboat. I was on the bridge and looked for it. We searched all night. The next morning, we were informed that the lifeboat had been spotted (I do not remember the name of the skipper or boat that saved me, it was one of the old well-known supply boats on the Ekofisk field).

I was told to go to the Ekofisk centre. I was hoisted over there, marked, and numbered because I was going to Stavanger hospital. It was late at night.

#### THE HOSPITAL

They examined me. I was so full of adrenaline; I could not remember that I was in pain. I was then accommodated in a hotel. A representative from OiS arrived and lent me some clothes. None of the shops were open. I only had the Phillips coverall that I was sent ashore in. I wore it when I arrived at the hotel (which was located a little outside of Stavanger). I was very well received there.

#### MOST VIVID MEMORY

I have more or less repressed the whole incident. It almost feels like I wasn't there. It's like I've read about it in a book or watched it on film.

Psychologically, I've never had any problems from it afterwards. I went back to work shortly after. Everyone had to be on sick leave for 14 days.

#### AT HOME

At the time I only had my father, and I was not married to Turid yet. It happened in 1980. I was 33 years old and married to Wenche back then. We didn't have any children. We got divorced afterwards (we remained friends).

Those at home did not react. My father understood that they were talking about Kielland. He was an old war sailor and seafarer. He knew that I stayed on Kielland, but he did not know that Kielland had anything to do with Ekofisk. He was completely calm. Wenche did not call my father. They didn't link me to the accident. I called them from Ekofisk the following day and told them I was ok.

#### THE CAUSE

In bad weather, the routine was to haul the rig away from Edda to protect the bridge between them from being damaged by big swells. That evening, they hauled Kielland away from Edda, in this process it is necessary to loosen the anchor cables correspondingly to on the opposite side of the shaft that is being tightened, to compensate for the swell. If you haul without releasing, the rig will not go up and then something has to give in, in this case it was the leg. They didn't loosen it enough on the opposite side when they winched the rig away, so they tore off the leg on Kielland.

The procedures for hauling were not followed by the maritime personnel on Kielland. I overheard their conversations and saw that they did not slack it enough. I noticed it, but I didn't think more of it. There was not much extra and would thus be very exposed in large waves.

They didn't release on the opposite side; they just pulled it. They pulled too much. Nothing can take that! By the book, you are supposed to release first and then pull. They only pulled on one side.

The cause was that the hauling resulted in the shifting of the leg, the bracings break, and the leg is torn off.

Hauling >the leg is overloaded > the weakened point breaks >the leg is torn off.

The rig was to be sunk at all costs, no one was allowed to go through why. It was not properly investigated. If they had investigated it, they would have realized where it began, what happened for the rig to collapse and capsize.

#### THE LESSON

What did we learn from Kielland? I stayed on Henrik Ibsen a month after it was placed on the Ekofisk field. During Christmas 1980, Ibsen functioned as a flotel on Ekofisk. The weather was

terrible, and we hung to the moorings. The pressure on the winch was high above the maximum limit it was designed for. They have a big margin, but if something had snapped in that moment, it would have capsized. It was a tall platform and there was a real windbreak.

Then the wind calmed down and the pressure eased. We returned to normal. That's when the phones started ringing and no one wanted to stay there anymore. Trade unions and clever personnel handled it, and Henrik Ibsen was towed ashore.

It was about money. If you could get an old rig and install a massive housing unit on it, you could make a lot of money. That was the reason behind it.

#### SAFETY TRAINING

What came out of Kielland was that everyone had to go through safety training and Leiro was implemented (Leiro 1,2,3). Everyone was trained in emergency mustering, and everyone got better survival suits. Still, some companies had more they could do to ensure safety.

#### STATOIL

I began working in Statoil in 1988. I have worked in Statoil for 30 years. I worked as a security technician and inspector. Now, I am retired.

Ever since Kielland, I've worked with safety. It has been interesting and very important.

#### WHAT IS THE MOST IMPORTANT THING ?

That people understand their tasks. People need to be properly trained to be qualified to perform their tasks.

If you look at previous accidents, you cannot blame the technical things. It is faulty operations and inadequate maintenance. You cannot blame anything other than the people who operate the machinery.



## SVEIN INGE JENSEN, SKILLED WORKER, HMM HAUGESUND

By Ellen Kongsnes

### CONNECTION

Svein Inge Jensen has worked in HMM since 1971, for 44 years. Interview 2016.

Consent to publish in the memory collection, January 2019.

He now has seven grandchildren.

He has worked offshore since 1979. Often on Alexander Kielland.

This day he was supposed to be on Foxtrot but had to stay on Kielland because of the storm.

He now works as the installation manager at Aibel and is preparing the contract work for the workshops.

Hall 2: Nordsjøhallen, built in the 1970s.

His son works offshore. When he set out on his first trip, he was received by his father. The safety is much better now.

But it felt safe back in 1980 too.  
We hadn't experienced anything else.

Six-people-cabins and the showers were far away in a corridor. Now they have single rooms and live on the same rigs as they work.

Oseberg. Son. 10-12 years. For Aibel.

Was there when the fatal accident happened. Utterly tragic.

There was a fatal accident on Aibel too, a couple of years ago. But it is safe.

Is a bit worried about the future because of the cuts in maintenance.

Jensen has four children. His children are 41, 39, 36, 26 and 19 years old.

His wife was informed of the accident on the news. She was at home with the children.

They did not have a telephone. He was offshore for ten days at the time back then.

She did not know that her husband was on AL. He was meant to be on another platform.

At 05 am, his wife was informed that he was alive.

Their neighbor had a telephone and had been informed. Their neighbor was contacted as their next of kin.

Someone from the workshop brought them to the city center of Stavanger. They got new clothes. Then he caught the Westamara home.

ALK-accident:

Was picked up by a supply boat. Stayed on board there until approx. 12 pm the next day. Then he was transported to Ekofisk and then to Sola.

He entered a lifeboat on board Kielland. On the upper side of the deck when the platform tilted.

Many were too afraid to enter.

Lowered the lifeboat. Then we collided with the platform leg. Then Kielland capsized and pulled the lifeboat under. The lifeboat was left upside down.

Breathed through a small gap in the keel. I had to get out of the boat and in order to do that, I had to take off my life jacket. I managed to swim out and climb on top of the lifeboat. We were 5 or 6 people. Someone chose to swim to the other platform.

We were thrown off the lifeboat several times because of the large waves and had to swim back to it.

A supply boat put out a net, but he couldn't get into it. His muscles had stiffened, he had no strength left in his body.

The supply boat did not lay still by the lifeboat because of the massive waves.

He eventually entangled himself in the net and was hoisted on board.

The difference between surviving and not was tiny. Being young helped.

Jensen has always liked swimming. He believes that this is what saved him. He saw many who had to give up, they were floating in the sea around him. He thought: this must be what it was like to be torpedoed during the war.

The survival suits were still hanging in the cabins.

He fell out into the corridor from his friend's cabin on the third floor. They were four people in that cabin, three of them survived.

On deck, they impulsively chose to walk in different directions. He himself aimed for the highest point.

Home:

The wife of his friend picked them up at Kopervik quay and drove them home.

The first thing his wife remembers is that he was wearing new clothes.

He only had a small cut in his forehead.

But he acknowledges that his long-term memory has never been quite the same after the accident.

It was traumatic. But I got back to work shortly after the accident. It was good, it helped a lot.

At work, he met his colleagues, and they could talk about it.

After a couple of years in the workshop, he went offshore again. This time, to Statfjord.

-Jumpier. Anxious (?)

It was different. He had become sensitive to large waves and noises and cracking.

His wife was ok with him going offshore.

But she did not like the extra news broadcasts.

Why has he coped with it so well?

Stable and good job. Various tasks both in and outside of the workshop.

He has been busy and doing well – at the home front too.

28 people set out, 22 never returned home.

Many who returned home were not doing very well after the accident.

One never got back to work. Two or three others tried but had to give it up.

Twins, both survived.

Has not felt guilty or been troubled by bad conscience afterwards.

We did what we had to do to survive.

None of his close friends died.

Did not attend many funerals. Did not want to bother anyone.

There was no crisis team.

The safety is definitely marked by the accident. It was before and after. Compensation: NOK 25,000.

Spent the money on building a garage. He spends a lot of time in it.

The passenger list.

Did not talk about it much at home.

Did not talk much with the children about it.

The youngest came home from school and was a bit offended because her teacher had told her that her father was on board AL, but she had never heard about it.

I think it is important to talk about it.

There is always someone who asks about it.

LESSON – AFFECTED:

I don't take anything for granted. I see

things in a new perspective.

I have maybe become a bit more careful.

His children:

Siv Anita 41

Ole Ingvald 39

Jan Ove Skaten 36

Marit Therese Skaten Utvik 26

Foster daughter and grandchild: Hanne Marte 19.

Seven grandchildren (including foster daughter): 4 girls and three boys.

## CONVERSATION WITH KARL ERIKSEN, SURVIVOR OF THE ALEXANDER L. KIELLAND DISASTER

Kragerø, April 19th, 2024. Written by Else M. Tungland.

KARL (KALLE) ERIKSEN

Karl was 23 years old when the accident occurred. He wasn't supposed to be on the Kielland that day. After only 2-3 days at home following a trip to the North Sea, he was told to go back because his replacement didn't show up. He was stuck in Forus for a day before being sent directly to Kielland. The next day, the rig capsized.

### SEQUENCE OF EVENTS

The day it happened, he was sitting with a finn, playing chess.

*While we were sitting there, we heard a terrible bang, and the entire platform shook. 'There must be something wrong,' I said. Right after, the rig tipped over about 30-40 degrees. The alarm went off but stopped after a few minutes.*

*We ran and were thrown out of the cabin with chairs and tables following us and ran out between the living quarters. An emergency exit sign was lit, but the door was blocked by the gangway to Edda. We had to go through the living quarters again and out the other side. The rig was lying very skewed.*

*I thought I had to get up into a lifeboat and aimed for one that was hanging there, but it started lowering and just hung there. I continued down to the helicopter deck, but the entire platform was following me. The rig was spinning around rather quickly. I jumped into the sea, and the helicopter deck followed me. There was a net to prevent the helicopter from rolling. I managed to get stuck in it and was dragged far down. It felt almost like I went to the bottom, but I probably didn't. I got loose when the helicopter deck came off and was blown away by the pressure. I felt the air bubbles and held my hand over my head because many things were falling from the platform. Although they weren't falling fast, they kept hitting me. I surfaced and gasped for air but was dragged under again. I surfaced once more but was pulled down again. The third time I came up, the entire platform was gone. I only saw the pontoons.*

*It was very cold, and the worst was in the throat. I was wearing thermal pants and a t-shirt, so it wasn't too bad on my body. I curled up and thought I had to stay calm to avoid losing too much heat. I had dived a lot and knew that if you fall into the water, you have to stay afloat and curl up to stay warm.*



*While I was there, a compressor hose with couplings came up. I swam over to it and thought I could cross my arms under the rope, so if I froze to death, they would at least find me. Another person came up, and we both held on to the ring.*

*Suddenly, someone came up from the depths. He was clearly injured and couldn't hold on, so he lost his grip and disappeared. Every time a wave came, we were washed under. We also saw them lift a person up in a basket from the crane on Edda. He was only wearing white underpants. He fell off when he was almost up and ended up in the sea again.*

#### NORDMAND INGENIØR

A while later, the supply ship Nordmand Ingeniør arrived (Kalle has a model of this boat in his garage).

*They didn't dare come too close, so they threw out a heaving line with a ring. I swam over, threaded the ring over myself, and was hoisted up with the sea washing over the deck. They dragged me into the cabin at the front.*

Kalle says it didn't go so well when they tried to pick up the next person because he was wearing a survival suit that wasn't fastened, so it was full of water. Kalle thinks they pulled him halfway up the side, but he couldn't hold on. They didn't get him into the boat - but another person was saved:

*When I came into the wheelhouse, the guy in the white underpants was there - the one who fell from the basket on Edda. He had been picked up by the supply boat before me.*

#### HOSPITAL AND JOURNEY HOME

After the accident, Kalle was examined and spent one day at Rogaland Hospital. He couldn't call home because the phone network was overloaded, and he couldn't get through. The second day, a nurse said he could go home. "Easy for you to say," he replied, "my watch is full of water, I have no money, and the clothes I'm wearing belong to the hospital." He borrowed a phone to try calling home, but all the lines were still busy.

*Then a coordinator from work, Heier, who had taken out his savings, came. He drove me to a clothing store in Sandnes that had late hours. I got a t-shirt, shirt, tie, terylene pants, and a Catalina jacket. It was summer clothes, but it was the only thing that fit me. They didn't have shoes, but I got a pair of canvas shoes that were on a display mannequin there. I got a plane ticket to Kjevik and 500 kroner. Then Heier was broke.*

I flew from Sola to Kristiansand and took the bus to Arendal. From there, I walked from the center to the train station. I had a plastic bag with my Phillips suit, an orange suit that I had gotten at the Ekofisk center before the helicopter trip to Stavanger. The plan was to take the

*night train to Oslo and get off at Neslandsvatn station. But they forgot to stop the train. I went forward and got the train to stop at Drangedal station and jumped off there.*

*It was freezing in Drangedal, almost a meter of snow and high snow banks. The station there was closed because the station master was sick. I found a phone booth and sat inside it. I only had bills and couldn't make a call. The smallest I had was a fifty. It was 3 am, and no one was around. There I sat with my legs crossed on top of the phone books in crepe socks, canvas shoes, and a t-shirt.*

*Then a man who had been at one of the pubs up there came, half-drunk and fine. I got some change from him, 20-30 kroner. He got the fifty from me, so he made a profit.*

*Then I finally got to call home. It was completely silent on the phone at first because they had been told I was missing and possibly dead. My father and father-in-law came and picked me up after about an hour. It was quite a drive.*

#### LIFE AFTER THE ACCIDENT

When the accident happened, Karl had recently signed a 2-year contract for the job in the North Sea. He tried to go out again a few times, but it didn't go well. He couldn't sleep and was on deck fully dressed at the slightest noise.

About six months after the accident, the alarm went off during a lifeboat drill. Kalle experienced full panic, thinking the situation was real. He was sent to the medical department and then taken by helicopter to land. That was his last trip to the North Sea.

His employer didn't want to change his contract since they needed people in the North Sea. The doctor refused to sign Karl off sick, arguing that the company should be able to find him a land-based job. Caught between a rock and a hard place, Karl ended up resigning and finding another job.

About a year later, it became clear that the survivors of the accident had different reactions and injuries. Kalle was granted 100% disability pension, but due to an administrative error, he never received the letter confirming this. As a result, he continued working for various companies in the following years, unaware that he was entitled to a disability pension.

*The accident lingered for a long time. I was anxious about accidents and what could go wrong. I also had a psychiatric evaluation that concluded I was okay as long as I was on the ground. If I got to any height or heard alarms, I got scared. I was sent to Stavanger and worked on platforms that were docked (Gullfaks) and had many different jobs in the following years. Eventually, I bought a sheet metal workshop in Kragerø and became a sheet metal worker. I worked for myself and struggled until I couldn't take it anymore.*

Then I went down to the social security office to submit a sick note. The caseworker asked if we should send an application for a disability pension. "Yes, apply for 150% from yesterday," I said.

"We can start with 100% from tomorrow," he said.

*The application was sent, but the caseworker thought it might take a long time before we got an answer. Then it only took a week before I received a letter from the County Insurance Office in Telemark. They were baffled because I was registered with an occupational injury and could have received a disability pension immediately if I wanted, but no one had told me. I had been struggling for 29 years without knowing this.*

#### THE COMPENSATION

After the accident, Kalle received a compensation offer of 25,000 kroner from Phillips Petroleum. He threw the letter away and ignored a reminder that followed after a while. About six months later, lawyer Nadrup Dahl, hired by LO to represent union workers, contacted him. He informed Kalle that he would take their case at no cost and expressed optimism about securing a higher compensation than the original offer. Kalle met with him in Oslo, and it was decided that he would take the case.

About 8-10 months later, Dahl called and offered a settlement of 400,000 kroner. To formalize the agreement, Kalle traveled to Stavanger, signed the necessary papers, and received a check for 400,000 kroner. He then bought a house with the money.

Today, Kalle is retired. He and his wife still live in the house that was purchased with the compensation from the accident.



## Carl Peter Wiig

**Born:** November 10, 1957

**From:** Sandnes

**Residence:** Ålgård

**Date of interview:** June 11, 2025

**Interview approved:** June 12, 2025, via phone

**Interviewed by:** Tor Gunnar Tollaksen

**Background:** Carl Peter Wiig survived the "Kielland" accident. He continued to work for several years after the accident and suffered long-term injuries. He has never previously spoken to others about his experiences from the "Kielland" accident and has not been part of the community that some of the survivors have been part of. Over the years, he has maintained contact with his former colleague, Bjarne Kapstad, from the Ekofisk field. Kapstad has been involved in the case for compensation to the chemically injured oil pioneers. It was Kapstad who told Wiig about the documentation work being done after the "Kielland" accident and facilitated contact between UiS and Carl Peter Wiig.

Carl Peter Wiig was informed about the documentation work that the University of Stavanger is doing and the work with the memory bank. Wiig was not aware that there was a memory bank where survivors, bereaved, and others connected to the accident could share their stories. Wiig wanted to share his story in the memory bank.

**Other:** Member of the LO union Nopef, enrolling as member number 19.

I went to sea when I was 15 years old. I was in North Sea shipping to England, a bit in Sweden and Northern Norway. I also had some trips abroad. I had heard about Ekofisk and what was happening there with oil activities. I found it exciting and had wanted to start there for a while.

I started on the quay in Sandnes in a company called Wagley Offshore. Later, the company changed its name to Unitor and had some work related to the installation of welding centers around the platform in the North Sea, including on "Alexander L. Kielland". I started in the North Sea the year I turned 18 in 1975. The first two trips I was a messman because they required North Sea experience before I could start working "properly" out there. As I then gained North Sea experience, I got a job out there afterwards. I was in a Sandnes company called Wagley Offshore.

I was around several different platforms in the Ekofisk field and the Eldfisk field. My work consisted of being a jack-of-all-trades. I was a rigger, scaffolder, flagman, or signalman, and more. Mostly, I did the tasks that were needed. This was a time when a lot of construction work was going on. You did what you were told, otherwise, the way home was short. It was the Yankees who ruled. Completely cowboy times. I remember someone asking when we would get

to go home, the answer was short: "When the job is done!"

On one of the trips, I didn't get a bed on Eldfisk. I had to sleep in the laundry room. There was no control over anything, no one had any idea how many people were out there. But there were thousands of Spaniards. The work shift was 16 days on, but only three-four days off. The Yankees asked what you were going home to do. There was nothing to do there. So, it was quickly back out again.

For a while, I commuted between Ekofisk and the Frigg field. I checked out at Phillips Petroleum one day and checked in at Elf the next. Mom was ready at the helicopter terminal at Forus when I came in with the helicopter. I got a bag with clean clothes, and I gave her the dirty ones. Mom said: "You are completely crazy for doing this." "I know," I replied. And it was madness. But I was young and strong. Needed a job and money. There was no HSE. If we mentioned the word HSE, the answer often came back asking who that person was, because they hadn't heard of him.

*How was the training and safety courses?*

Nothing. I visited the seaman's doctor and got the green light. That was it. It was the "hey-how-it-goes" method. Or "if-it-goes-it-goes". From when I started in the North Sea until the "Kielland" accident, there was never any talk of safety training.

I came to "Kielland" for the first time in 1978. Then it was at the Eldfisk field. We just called it "Devil's Island" because of the episode where workers on the platform couldn't get ashore. Rogaland Avis described this in 1977 (author's note: newspaper pages have been found and placed at the bottom of the text). "Kielland" was a hellhole of another world. In the containers where we lived, the cabinets were on one side and the beds on the other. Four beds. At a small Formica table with chairs around, people sat and played cards and smoked. I remember well the lifeboat drills. Those who came, came, those who didn't want to, could just sleep. The food on "Kielland" I remember, it was T-bone steak, fries, and peas. Up on the plate and next, please.

I remember when it blew on "Kielland", and the waves came, there were problems with the gangway. The wave lifted the rig and the gangway lifted up. When we had to go to or from "Kielland" when the weather was bad, ten men at a time had to run up the gangway when it was at its highest. When the wave tops went down and the gangway lowered, no one could go over. When a new wave came, it was "run", "run", "run" and then ten new men could run over when the waves caused the gangway to lift up. HSE and such were not talked about, it was completely insane.

*How did you experience the working environment in the North Sea?*

Thanks to good camaraderie and a "hey-how-it-goes" attitude, it went well. We had to manage ourselves as best we could. But it was the Yankees who ruled. They walked with "flight cards" in

their breast pockets, and it was a short way home for those who didn't do as they said. But I also remember chocolate in the pocket. Kvikk Lunsj, chocolate flowed everywhere. It was free.

At the helicopter terminal at Forus, there was an agent who checked off names on the list when we went out. If you weren't on the list, he just wrote down your name and you could go out anyway. He wrote down new names and took off names that didn't show up. Everything seemed random.

Winter 1980, I lived on "Kielland", and at that time I was in the company Brownaker. The company had most of the construction work out on the Ekofisk field at that time. I also lived in other places, such as on the large Spanish pipeline barges. We were sent everywhere: Eldfisk Bravo, Eldfisk Alpha, and the Ekofisk complex – Ekofisk tank and riser. We also had work on the Gulf (2/4 Gulf). But this winter, I worked mostly on Albuskjell Fox (Albuskjell 2/4 F). The job we did was administered by De Groot.

THURSDAY, MARCH 27

We had come home from work, it blew up and we couldn't go anywhere. The wind and sea became very intense. We were told to stay in our container. Everyone sat and smoked and played cards. I didn't smoke, so it was impossible for me to be inside. I went out on deck. When you are on a rig, you recognize the sounds that are common on the rig. But when there are unfamiliar sounds, you become very alert: "What was that now?"

I was out on deck, it became a bit heavy, and "Kielland" shook violently. There were unfamiliar sounds. I noticed that I became very alert to what this was. I noticed that the block in the drill tower was up, it should always be down. The block weighed 50 tons. I had on a rain jacket. I was about to go back in. But then I heard these unusual sounds, there were bangs and other things. When you hear that out in the North Sea, you automatically become more alert. I changed my mind and didn't go in. I stood a bit sheltered from the wind out on deck. Suddenly there was a hell of a racket. The platform started to tilt to the side.

They had forgotten to slacken the chain. If you forget to slacken, it stands like a bowstring. They tore off the entire platform foot. This has been argued about for 45 years. They blame a bad weld, but no, I stood there on deck. I heard all the sounds. They tore off the foot, it banged violently. Some terrible bangs. Then it stopped, and the foot was off.

It was full panic. People came storming out. When the platform tilted, I considered it impossible to use the lifeboats. I found a vest and jumped into the sea. Whether I jumped 30 or 40 meters, I don't know. This was about saving lives. The sea was ice-cold and terrible. I hurt myself badly when I hit the sea. I saw six men standing by the railing on "Kielland", they were getting ready to jump. But then a container came sailing and swept them into the sea. The same had happened

with the cinema hall. There was a large truck there. In the temporary cinema, there was only a light wall. The truck took the entire cinema hall with it.

I don't remember much after I got into the sea. It was as if I came and went. I was gone for a moment, then came back again. I still hear the screams, the people calling for help. No, no, no. My God, what sounds they were. There was no rescue or anything. We had to manage ourselves.

After a while, "Normand Engineer" or was it "Skipper"? I think it was "Engineer" that picked me up. I was blue and green, and someone grabbed my life jacket and pulled me on board. It was painful afterward to think about the electrician foreman. He vomited blood and diesel out there in the sea. He wasn't rescued. He had four children. No, it was terrible. There weren't enough suits for everyone. But who had time to put on a suit when the rig was tilting and containers were crashing towards you?

*How did "Kielland" look in the time before the accident?*

There were people on board who were there and converted it into a drilling rig. A mess of another world. All doors that should have been closed in case of a disaster were open. Air hoses, compressor hoses, sandblasting hoses went through the doors, which therefore couldn't be closed. In some places, the hoses were bundled together. We reacted to what we saw, of course we did. This was madness. But we were just guests on board. It didn't matter what we said, and we were aware of that. The attitude was: "Shut up and work." We had nothing to do with the crew on "Kielland". They had their own department. There was no room for the drill pipes where they were supposed to be. There were housing containers built up, so the pipes were lying around in other places.

AFTER THE "KIELLAND" ACCIDENT

I have not previously spoken to other "Kielland" survivors. I have attended memorial services in Stavanger Cathedral, but we have just looked at each other. We say nothing.

*Did you receive any follow-up afterward?*

No, nothing at all.

*Did you receive any compensation?*

No, nothing. I never received the 25,000 kroner, which was the minimum amount the companies paid out to survivors. I had to write a loss report for a Hitachi travel radio that I had bought in Sweden, plus some clothes. I got a deduction on the radio because I hadn't declared it. Imagine that!

After the accident, I was summoned to the Rogaland police station in Sandnes. It was probably a form of explanation they wanted from me, but it was I who was reprimanded. The police officer said, as I remember it today, not word for word, but the content was as follows: "Carl Wiig, what you have experienced should not be in the media or talked about in cafes. This is about Norway's security and wealth. It affects our national security if you talk about this. If you talk, we will ensure that you never go out to the North Sea again."

I did as he said. Didn't talk about it to anyone. That's how I've continued until today. I have a daughter and some relationships behind me. I have never told them anything about "Kielland". Life was never the same after "Kielland". But I was determined to work. After a year on land at Kårstø, I was out in the North Sea again. I worked and kept quiet. It was best that way. I had an apartment to pay for. I was hard on myself. I was a young man. At that time, no one was unemployed unless they were on the fringes of society or among the city's loose birds and had a place at Ruten in Sandnes (Sandnes Bus Station).

I worked until 1992 when I couldn't take it anymore, the first operation on my back. Ruined my health. Managed to retrain to be a crane operator for a period. I feel like I've operated on almost everything in my body. My back three times, both knees, and so on. "Kielland" came back. I had hard battles with myself every single day. Sweat poured at night. I didn't drink anything. I was completely abstinent. If I had started with alcohol, I would have completely gone to ruin.

When I began to fall apart and had to quit work, I contacted Samvirke insurance. I had paid dues to the Ekofisk committee (union). I was told by Samvirke to submit my papers and medical certificate to apply for "loss of license". I heard nothing, but Samvirke wanted a receipt for paid membership dues. Fortunately, I had a pay slip where the payment was listed. Samvirke understood nothing. They didn't have me in the register. We had paid thousands of kroner, but the company had taken the money for themselves.

I want justice. All these bosses who have been out there for many years have received their good severance packages, they are promoted. But the "Kielland" victims...? No, it's too bad. Now people need to get a little compensation as a band-aid. 45 years after the accident and the question of blame still rains down. The platform was torn apart. I know that. I was there, out on deck and heard the sounds and bangs.

## THOSE WHO HAD SOMEONE IN THE NORTH SEA THAT NIGHT AND GOT THEM HOME

ANNE MARGRETHE FALK AND TORUNN FALK FROM LILLESAND

By Marie Smith-Solbakken

### IMPLEMENTATION AND USAGE

Meeting between the Falk sisters, Tord, and Marie in Lillesand in the autumn of 2015. Notes from the conversation sent for review on June 12, 2016. The notes have been corrected. Sisters Anne Margrethe and Torunn Falk have given consent for the notes to be used in presentations regarding the Alexander L. Kielland accident via email on June 16, 2016, to Marie Smith-Solbakken. They are aware that the notes will be handed over and kept at the Norwegian Oil Museum.

**BACKGROUND** Torunn and Anne Margrethe Falk are sisters and daughters of Gunvald Falk, who worked on the Kielland and survived the accident. Anne Margrethe, born on August 25, 1966, is a child and youth worker at Lillesand Junior High School. Torunn Falk, born on August 26, 1968, is an offshore purchaser at MacGregor.

**GUNVALD FALK (1944-2007)** Plumber

Worked as a plumber in the North Sea, received his journeyman's certificate concurrently. Employed at Nymo AS ? and began in the North Sea as a subcontractor in OiS. Employed by Statoil as a mechanic on Statfjord C and caretaker.

**What We Remember from March 27, 1980**

He was a subcontractor in OiS, we didn't know which platform he was on. We saw it on the news, mom desperately tried to find out which platform he was on, calling around, making calls late at night. If he was there.

At half past six in the morning, we found out he had survived, but we didn't know in what condition. Mom didn't sleep. She told us to go to bed. We were 11 and 13 years old. Some friends came to us. We followed the news broadcasts. We still hear that jargon. Everything else disappeared on TV. It was just news on TV.

**WENT TO SCHOOL**

Anne Margrethe: I had a gut feeling that he was alive all the way, otherwise we would have been more panicked. I told mom in the morning. I felt like I had known that he was alive.

Took the bus at half past ten, arrived at school. In the message book, it said "Torunn is late for school due to the circumstances last night." It would be completely different today.

At school, they sat and watched the news broadcast. Got a lot of attention that I didn't need. It

was special. Had friends at school whose fathers didn't survive. He came and comforted me and didn't know then that he had lost his father. They didn't know he was on that platform.

Anne Margrethe: Torunn was in class with Johnny. I (Anne Margrethe) spent time with Kenneth during free time. We've never talked to them about the accident. It's been so long, we got him back. They didn't. We haven't talked about it at all.

#### FRIENDS WITH ARNE AND MARIANNE THOMASSEN

Arne Thomassen was a friend of dad. They were good friends with Marianne and eventually her new husband, Terje. They were together a lot. The four of them traveled to Stavanger and laid wreaths. Gunvald and Marianne participated in the memorial ceremony, while Terje and mom participated in something else, so they could be alone.

ABOUT COPING WITH THE ALEXANDER KIELLAND ACCIDENT He didn't tell us much; he told journalists about what happened on his 36th birthday. He was saved on his birthday. We all have newspaper clippings. Our perception is that he brushed it off, tried to make it seem like there wasn't much to talk about.

When the Scandinavian Star incident happened, we almost couldn't get into the living room. He didn't want psychologists. After a while, he did. He became seriously ill - then he talked to a psychologist. He used journalists and talked to people. He told others about what happened but not much to us. He wanted to protect us. We didn't think about it then. He talked to our men about it. They had an evening together where he told them what had happened. He wanted to spare us. We understood how he felt; we didn't know all the details. He died with secrets. We wanted to know what happened; he wanted to protect us. He saw comrades mutilated; that's all we knew about how bad it had been. Dad ran up, he tried to take someone else up. There were oil drums sliding down; he tried in vain to take someone up with him.

My note: Marita and Raymond Thomassen have recounted that their father tried to get their father to follow him, but their father Arne ran downhill and was crushed by a container. They have also shared that their mother, Marianne, was very grateful that their father told her what happened to her husband. It gave her peace of mind to know.

He used to say: "I kept my head cool; it saved me. I plunged from 36 meters; I knew I couldn't jump."

Dad said that he crawled upward. He reached the lifeboats and was handed a life jacket and asked to board the lifeboat. He wouldn't, for he saw how the lifeboats were crushed against the platform and believed that those who were there had no chance. He mentioned trying to keep a cool head and figured that the greatest chance of survival was to enter the sea and hope to be picked up. When the wire broke, and the platform tilted, he plunged straight into the waves. He said he had to dive. There was no other way to survive from that height with the life jacket on. He would have broken his neck if he jumped. Instead, he broke several ribs and punctured a

lung. He also told the others standing there that they had to dive, but they refused, and some jumped while others didn't dare. They never saw him again. Dad used to say, "I kept my head cool. It saved me." He knew what he was doing.

After a while, there were a few in the water who managed to overturn a lifeboat and get in. He never ate fårikål (Norwegian dish) after this. They had eaten fårikål just before, and everyone vomited. Fårikål reminded him of the accident.

He returned to work shortly afterward – physically in good shape. But he stated that he always knew where the nearest emergency exit was.

#### OUR CHILDREN

Our boys have always known about it. We've chosen to be open with our children. MARRIAGE They were married until they died. They both got cancer, and when Mom died at 63, he gave up a little. He had a lot of pain and gradually weakened health, dying 11 months after her. We've never heard that they received any help after the accident. She was patient. Things were toned down a bit at home. Laila and Jan, who were good friends of our parents, probably knew much more than us.

#### CONSEQUENCES OF THE ACCIDENT

A lot of positive changes have occurred regarding safety. The Alexander Kielland accident is an accident everyone knows about. A big accident that struck little Norway.

#### COPING WITH THE ACCIDENT WITH JOURNALISTS

There were no crisis teams. Dad coped with his story through journalists and friends. He chose who he wanted to speak to. Turned away some journalists at the door. Spent many hours with others. Was involved in a TV program, CNN, a film crew. Grandma, who lived in NY, clipped everything from American newspapers. Torunn and Anne Margrethe Falk also gave us their collection of clippings about the accident.



ANNE SIRI BRØVIG FROM VENNESLA

By Marie Smith-Solbakken, November 24, 2015.

AFFILIATION Sister to Per Mangseth

#### EXECUTION AND USAGE

Conversation held at Anne Siri's home on November 24, 2015. Anne Siri is the sister of Per Mangseth who survived the accident. Present during the interview were Marie Smith-Solbakken, Hans-Jørgen Wallin Weihe, and Tord F. Paulsen. Anne Siri understood that her experiences and opinions regarding how the Kielland accident affected her, her family, and especially her brother Per, can be shared if Per consents, which he has. Anne Siri has agreed that the notes can be used in a photo story, compilation of quotes, and essays, provided her brother Per Mangseth agrees to a safe use. Consent has been given for the notes to be handed over to the Norwegian Oil Museum. Consent has been given for the notes to be publicized and handed over to the Norwegian Oil Museum, the State Archives in Stavanger, the National Library, and the Labour Movement's Archives and Library so that future generations can access the information. (email dated 13.12.2018)

#### THE FAMILY

We were five brothers and I was the only girl. We lost our parents when they were 50 years old. It has affected all of us that he was involved in the accident; it was just luck that he survived. We were on a winter holiday in Valle. Then I said to Jarle, I think Per has been here. Mum said, "I'm so glad he's so good at swimming."

Then we met a brother on the way, and we found out he had survived. The plane had landed with those who survived, without anyone having told us. There had been chaos with journalists in Stavanger. People were calling us continuously.

ILLNESS AND INJURIES We need to take him to the doctor, Mum said. He had hurt himself badly, in his face and in the groin. Got him to the doctor. Then he left again. He couldn't sleep. Per didn't want to shower, bathe, or go to the cinema. He just stopped working, wasn't on sick leave. He worked for two years after the accident in Bergen. They had said just go on disability. He didn't sign anything. He had a vintage car and sold it and lived on that. That's when we realized he must have earned good money. He used up his entire fortune. He drove down (Europe on a motorcycle), used the money he had, he just had to do it. Mum called and said, "now he's really ill." He (Per) didn't say anything to us.

Mum noticed it when he was in Bergen. He lived with a nice girl named Lotte. She had informed us. He became silent. It ended between them. PROFESSIONAL HELP Heard on television that there was someone specialized in accidents. I called NRK, then Arne Holen called back. Probably I contacted them in 1983/84. I gave Per a note, then he called Arne Holen, and he went there for

four to five years. If I hadn't heard that program on TV, it could have gone downhill. Per attended the Oslo Data College; he was always reading, thick books everywhere. He always read. He read about data. Met Hilde whom he married.

#### WHAT WAS HE LIKE BEFORE THE ACCIDENT

Per was a calm boy, I would say. He attended Hornes Landsgymnas for four years. He had friends all over Norway. Per was always good in English, mathematics, physics.

## BERIT OFTE FROM ÅPTA

### AFFILIATION

Daughter of Ragnvald Ofte

Born in 1972

Kindergarten Teacher

### EXECUTION AND USAGE

phone conversation conducted simultaneously with a conversation involving her father, ragnvald ofte. also present during a joint meeting with ragnvald ofte and kåre magne kvåle on february 12, 2016.

consent has been given to use the notes as a foundational document in our presentation of the alexander l. kielland accident.

consent has been given for the notes from the conversation to be publicized and included in a memory bank, handed over to the norwegian oil museum, the state archives in stavanger, the national library, and the labour movement's archives and library for the benefit of future generations. (reference email from ragnvald ofte on december 26, 2018).

### RECOLLECTIONS

I mostly remember the atmosphere, the adults' fear, and that Mom was scared. My grandmother disappeared. I didn't find out things right away. They tried to hide it a bit, but I understood that something was wrong. Then I found out.

I learned about it (the accident) while he was missing. I supposedly said: "He was so good at swimming, and it would be okay."

I was sent to school in the morning. There were many questions there. Couldn't entirely answer what had happened. The news that he was alive came a bit later in the morning. After I had gone to school.

It was the fear of the adults. That's what stayed with me. We didn't get the information we needed as children. We wouldn't have done it like that now.

I mostly remember that when he came home, he had lots of blisters on his feet; he had burned himself. He walked barefoot on the deck. It didn't look good. It looked terrible.

ELDBJØRG HANSEN FROM KARMØY

Else M. Tungland, November 20, 2015, Karmøy.

#### AFFILIATION

Wife of Håkon Jarl Hansen from Karmøy

Consented to the publication of notes from the conversation to be included in the memorial collection on the Alexander L. Kielland accident, which will be handed over to the Norwegian Oil Museum, the State Archives in Stavanger, the National Library in Stavanger, and the Labour Movement's Archives and Library for future generations to access. (phone call on January 23, 2019)

He fell asleep. Their 14-year-old son lay down and slept on the floor next to his father. Eldbjørg remembered her 14-year-old son lying on the floor next to his father.

She was at a friend's place when she heard about the accident on TV. She knew her husband was on A.K.

The messages that came got worse throughout the night, but she always had the feeling that it would be okay and that he would be rescued.

She and the children stayed overnight at her in-laws' that night because they didn't want her to be alone. By late morning the next day, she received a call from the shipping company with the news she had hoped for. Her husband was rescued! They waited a bit to confirm, as they needed to be sure first. (There was another person with a similar name who never returned home)

From that moment, it was "just joy" – but she noticed how tense she had actually been. Suddenly, every muscle in her body ached.Else M. Tungland, 20. november 2015, Karmøy.

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## FRODE FANEUST FROM SANDNES

By Marie Smith-Solbakken, August 5, 2016.

PERSONAL DETAILS: Born in 1968

Phone: 91368800

Email: Frode.faneust@gmail.com

### USE AND CONDUCT

Frode Faneust has been informed about the project and its purpose.

Conversation and photos conducted in July 2015. Tord F Paulsen participated in a trip to Bolivia in the fall of 2015 with Frode Faneust. Follow-up conversation with Frode Faneust conducted on August 5, 2016, via telephone.

The notes from the conversation are sent for review and correction on August 5, 2016. Permission is sought to use the notes as a foundational document in our portrayal of the Alexander L Kielland accident, including photo stories, essays, and polyphony—a compilation of various statements from different individuals.

Permission granted to publicly disclose the notes from the conversation and to contribute to the memory collection about the Alexander L. Kielland accident. They will be passed on to the Norwegian Oil Museum, the National Library, and the Labor Movement's archive and library for future generations to access. (Telephone, January 2019)

### BACKGROUND

Son of Baste Faneust, who led the rescue work at the Ekofisk complex in the first few hours. Specifically tasked with directing the vessel traffic where he believed there was the greatest possibility of finding, locating, and rescuing survivors.

### STRONGEST MEMORY

When my father talked about the man who was almost rescued but fell back into the sea. One of the supply boats found a survivor; when they attempted to hoist him aboard, he couldn't hold on to the net and fell into the sea. He disappeared, and they couldn't find him.

He didn't share this story immediately after the accident. It was a narrative he repeatedly returned to whenever we spoke. The incident of the man falling back into the sea haunted him for the rest of his life.

He never talked about those they managed to save but focused more on those they couldn't.

### HANDLING AND CONSEQUENCES

He had alcohol problems before, and after the Kielland accident, it got worse. He didn't function well when he was home during breaks and had access to alcohol. He drank. His job became a sanctuary. It was unthinkable for him to quit the North Sea job. Work became freedom, while everyday life and free periods became more challenging.

After Kielland, he decided to visit his sponsored children. It became meaningful for him. He began searching for meaning after the Kielland disaster. He had three sponsored children and decided to visit two of them. One in Rwanda was killed, but he managed to visit the other two, from Austria and Naida in Bolivia, whom he had adopted through the Nordic Children's Fund in

Bolivia.

There was much criticism in the newspapers about funds not reaching the Nordic Children's Fund. So, he initiated a project to find his sponsored children and check on their status. He discovered that the funds had arrived until the newspapers started reporting negatively. People stopped giving. The leader of the Nordic Children's Fund was imprisoned and later acquitted, but by then, his life's work had been ruined.

To compensate for the lost funds, he started something in Bolivia, tied to a specific orphanage. That was the beginning and the reason. He got 40 sponsors, most of whom were connected to Phillips and Ekofisk. That was the start. And he continued.

#### BOLIVIA FAMILIES

When the Bolivia families came into the picture, it became essential for him during his free periods. He found a lot of meaning in it. It eased things for him and those around him at home. By 2005, when he passed away, there were 650 children from the initial 40 in 1982. He was in Bolivia in 1991.

#### US

After my father passed away, we inherited 17 orphanages and day centers and 650 children. It's a lot of work and organization. We've continued building upon his legacy. We're now managing 24 child and day centers and have 100 children.

#### MEANING TO ME?

The Kielland accident and the Bolivia family mean a lot in relation to my father. It significantly influenced his life when he was alive. The continuous thread with the Bolivia family, which I engage with daily, has been meaningful. I don't use the grave to remember him; I live with the Bolivia family every day, and that's how I remember him.

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GERDA KVAALA FROM SANDNES

By Marie Smith-Solbakken, November 30, 2015, Sandnes.

## BACKGROUND

Sister of Kåre Magne Kvåle

Nadabergstubben 8

4315 Sandnes

## THE EVENING AND NIGHT

I was preparing schoolwork when Kari on NRK suddenly mentioned towards the end of the broadcast that there had been news of the Alexander Kielland capsizing. There was some uncertainty in the news report about what this was. It was during the Dagsrevy broadcast.

Coincidentally, I had been down south on winter vacation. I had met him, and I had seen his name on the calendar, so I knew he was out there. It was just a coincidence.

I had just moved and didn't have a telephone, so I had to use a phone booth. I called Stavanger Drilling where he worked, but no one answered. Then I looked in the telephone directory and found a name under Stavanger Drilling. I called that name. I reached a wife. She said that there were people at the office. Her husband had apparently gone out there. She kindly said that if I couldn't reach anyone, I could call again.

In such a situation, you grasp at every straw. There was someone on the radio guiding people through. Everything was about Kielland.

That's when I knew what this was because I knew the reporter had a brother who had gone missing at sea; his wife had told me. I knew the wife because, like me, we were both teachers who had taken further education together.

This brother who went missing had a daughter, and I was 99% sure that this daughter had been taken on a trip and had laid a wreath on the sea.

It was a long night. They started discussing on TV whether there should be oil drilling further north, so I switched to the radio. I was on a waiting list on the phone. I drove around and found a phone booth. I also called my childhood home, where my parents were elderly. My second youngest brother had told his wife. She went home with the youngest brother.

I have a secure Christian faith that I've had since childhood, and I told myself, "Whether I live or die, I belong to the Lord." That's what I had in my head. If he was alive, it meant he had more years to live. At home, I listened to the radio.

After three or four o'clock, I went to the phone booth again to check if there was any new information. That's when I reached the office at Stavanger Drilling. An Englishman answered the phone. I introduced myself and asked for Kåre Magne Kvaale. He replied, "Magne Vaale and his wife's name is Tove. You can tell her he is alive and well." I was very happy, and instead of asking more, I hung up and dialed my brother's number at home.

It was my brother Torleif who answered the phone. There wasn't much chitchat; it was just "Kåre is alive, he's okay." That was the message I got. "He is well." Torleif immediately understood from my voice that I was calling to say Kåre Magne was alive, and his wife (Tove) could hear from his voice that it was good news.

It surprises me that it's so emotional. It's been 35 years. It's still very close. It feels exactly the same as it did.

#### THE NEXT DAY

I went to school; it was a cold, gray day. I hoped the children would be okay; everything was quiet. I had a great class. I taught my subjects. During lunch break, I told them about it.

Some of the students said their fathers were supposed to go but didn't in the end. Some knew someone who was out there. Many knew someone, and there were many who had close relatives and friends out there. It was a quiet day.

On Saturday, it was the news at 6 in the evening. I had gone home to Hægebostad.

That's when the first ten deceased were announced. Kåre mentioned that a group had stood on deck wondering what to do, whether to get into the lifeboat or not. He mentioned the name of a guy (someone whose father had been a principal in Farsund). I think it must have been Svenn Harald Moseid. Kåre saw him on the deck and pondered whether they should get into the lifeboat or not, and Kåre and the others chose to go.

Kåre mentioned that they pulled the trigger for their lives..



GRETE VIKE FROM JØRPELAND

By Else M. Tungland, June 17, 2014.

#### PERSONAL DETAILS ASSOCIATED WITH THE ACCIDENT

Age: 20-30 years in 1980

Relative. Her husband was a survivor, a radio operator on A.K. She was at home in Tau with her son Steinar (3 months old) when the accident occurred. She traveled to her parents in Stavanger to better follow the accident.

Consent given for the notes from the conversation to be made public and included in a memorial collection to be handed over to the Norwegian Oil Museum, the Regional State Archives in Stavanger, the National Library, and the Labor Movement Archives and Library for future generations to access. (Telephone 24.01.2019)

#### WHAT HAPPENED

I heard about the accident on the radio around 7 in the evening. We didn't have a telephone or TV, so I ran to the neighbor's to make a call. I knew well that Harry was on A.K. It was his workplace. One of the things I remember most is the funeral music they played on the radio that night. ...they informed as they got people out of the sea and identified them. As the hours passed, I was somewhat doubtful if he would be found.

It took quite a long time before they confirmed he was in that lifeboat, it was probably early in the morning sometime.

I remember Philips' boiler suit he came in with, it smelled like oil. The whole corridor at the hospital where they came in smelled like oil, or maybe it was helicopter exhaust?

This isn't a topic in our family. We don't feel the need to talk about it. I can't recall us sitting and telling our children about this.

Iselin Kleppestø Thorsen from Stavanger

By Else M. Tungland, 2017. Approved.

#### AFFILIATION

Daughter of Ingvild and Tor Arne Thorsen, Stavanger, 7 years old in 1980. Approved on March 6, 2019.

I was sitting on the floor in front of the TV when my mother started to scream. I was told to go to my room because some buildings in Oslo had collapsed. I sat in there and heard crying, voices, and activity."der inneog hørte gråt, stemmer og aktivitet.

## INGVILD AND THOR ARNE THORSEN FROM STAVANGER

By Else M. Tungland, November 16, 2015, Olav Duunsgt 10 d.

Approved March 6, 2019.

### AFFILIATION

Thor Arne Thorsen was on Safe Concordia - Eldfisk the day Alexander Kielland capsized. Safe Concordia was located on Phillips' site, a few kilometers away from Alexander L. Kielland. He didn't typically work in the North Sea but went on assignments occasionally and was employed by Ivar Sørreime AS. His offshore work involved field surveys at the Ekofisk center. He was at the cinema, in the middle of 'The China Syndrome,' when the film screening was stopped. They were informed about a major accident on Edda. (There was a film on a reel with a projector and a screen. Thor Arne thinks that what they saw wasn't 'The China Syndrome' concerning Kielland because the films shown there rotated between platforms.

They immediately began planning evacuation. He believes that around 250 Concordia employees were sent home during the evening and night.

Visibility was poor. A helicopter took 18 people per trip. He's unsure if they had survival suits at that time or if that came later? He remembers, at least, that on his first trip to the North Sea, he wore jeans, sneakers, and a duffel coat.

They were flown directly to Forus by helicopter. He arrived home in a taxi at 2:45 in the morning.

### WIFE, INGVILD:

Ingvild knew very little about her husband's job in the North Sea. She knew where he was but had no idea what it was like out there. When she heard about the accident, she was at home with their 3 children. She was preparing for the middle one's birthday party, who turned 3 the next day. The youngest was only 6 months old. The eldest daughter, Iselin, 8 years old, was watching TV when an extra news bulletin came on.

A platform in the North Sea had capsized, where her husband was! At that moment, she imagined herself as a widow with three small children. She asked her eldest daughter to go to her room because she felt panic taking over. She was afraid of panicking in front of the children. Iselin was only told that something terrible had happened: I told her that some big buildings in Oslo had collapsed.

When she put the youngest to bed, she thought that he wouldn't even remember his father. This was the first time Vegar went to bed without fuss.

They didn't have a telephone at home. In 1980, you had to wait for 3 years to get a phone in a new house."

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MARIT HEGLE FROM SANDNES

Born in 1944

Wife of Knut Hegle

Conversation conducted following Knut Hegle's conversation.

I came home at 0400, didn't realize he was there. People were calling. I didn't know where all the platforms were. Families and friends in Denmark were calling. I went to bed. When he came home, he went straight to bed with all his flying gear on, lay down on the bed with the survival suit on, and fell asleep.

Consented to the publication of the conversation notes as part of a collection delivered to the Norwegian Oil Museum and the National Library for future generations to access. (email dated 18.12.2018)"

## STEINAR VIKE FROM JØRPELAND

By Else M. Tungland, June 20, 2016

Consented to the publication of the conversation notes as part of a collection about the Alexander L. Kielland accident and to be delivered to the Norwegian Oil Museum, the Regional State Archives in Stavanger, the National Library, and the Workers' Movement Archive and Library. (SMS, January 24, 2019)

### AFFILIATION

Around 3 months old when the accident occurred. Son of Grete and Harry Vike.

### WHAT HAS THE ACCIDENT MEANT FOR ME?

I was just born when this happened.

I didn't know much about the accident until I watched the TV series that came out 3-4 years ago.

It's not something my parents have hidden, but it hasn't been a topic in the family either.

I've thought about how lucky I've been to have parents who have handled this so well –

because it could have been something completely different if they hadn't coped psychologically.

I've occasionally thought about what would have happened if dad hadn't survived, without being traumatized by that – of course, I would have lived, but I wouldn't have had the siblings I do.

One of the few times I brought it up as a topic with mom and dad was when I applied for a job offshore on a boat – I said if they had problems with it, I could do something else, but it was perfectly fine.

ROBIN ABRAHAMSEN FROM LILLESAND

To Marie Smith-Solbakken, 23rd February 2016, on Facetime/Messenger, Bohol, Philippines.  
Consent was given for the statement to be used and referenced (23.02.2016).

#### CONNECTION TO THE ACCIDENT

F: 1968 Son of Leif Wiig Abrahamsen, Driller at Maersk

#### BACKGROUND

Worked at Falcon Bridge 1996-2007: Mærsk Guarden jackup 2007: Mærsk, overseas Singapore (4 weeks on, 4 weeks off). Currently working as a driller in Egypt for Maersk.

27th-28th MARCH 1980

We had heard about it in the news at home. Went to school without knowing if my father was alive. Torunn, Johnny, and I had fathers on the Kielland. All teaching was shut down because there were three of us whose fathers were out there. We had the news on at school and were following it. We didn't talk much to each other. We were uneasy on our own. Johnny and I were playmates; we didn't talk much about it, even after it had happened. Johnny's dad never came home; he perished. I think it was the attitudes of that time. It's been a long time. Back then, it wasn't okay to be emotional. You were supposed to be tough, even if you were small and young; we didn't talk about such things. Sat at our desks as usual. The teacher explained what had happened. Everyone knew that the three of us had fathers who were there. When we got home from school, they had called from Håkon Magnus and said there was good hope, but they couldn't say more. Later, they called and said he was alive.

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## SOLFRID LERBREKK FROM VARHAUG

By Ellen Kongsnes, 2015

Solfrid is 24 years old, from a defunct farm in Varhaug, Jæren. A good and calm upbringing. She is the eldest and has a younger sister and brother. She is the most outgoing. The brother is most like her among the three.

A motorcycle accident and her dad's experience in the Alexander Kielland accident have forever shaped Solfrid Lerbrekk's perspective on safety in the North Sea and the need for unions. If Solfrid's dad hadn't survived the Alexander Kielland accident, Solfrid and her siblings would never have been born.

Solfrid Lerbrekk wasn't even born when her father fought for his life in the high waves of the North Sea after the Alexander Kielland platform capsized on a stormy night in March 1980. Solfrid was born eleven years later. Nevertheless, the accident has influenced her views on safety and working life.

She remembers sitting in her dad's armchair, all three children, when Dad told them what he had experienced on that stormy night in March 1980 when the Alexander Kielland platform capsized.

When the tsunami hit Thailand and India in 2004, her father was fixated on the window. There was something about the water.

...

Parents were spontaneous and set expectations. Started working as a substitute at age 13. Dad had sheep before they had kids.

It was the culture on Jæren: you weren't cool in secondary school if you weren't a substitute. Adolescence also involved a lot of sports: gymnastics, football, skiing, and handball.

At 17, Solfrid had a serious motorcycle accident. She liked speed and fun. She became calmer afterward. It was an awakening.

Her sister has a hairdressing certificate. Her brother has a construction certificate. Solfrid has a certificate as an NDT (non-destructive testing) instructor – ultrasound, x-ray, industrial structure, and welding.

"If it's true, I don't think it could happen today. Not with the control routines we have now. They say I'm like my father.

Solfrid bought a house in Kverneland with a friend. The house is big and expensive and run as a

collective. Three people live there, including one who joined when they bought the house. They have a dog and a cat, and a child stays with their father 30 percent of the time. A large kitchen and they enjoy cooking. They eat at a gigantic oak table her father made. Likes to create a good atmosphere and social meeting place.

The friend is a union man. They've known each other for two years. Both of us are focused on creating well-being around us.

Solfrid became a youth secretary in the union two years ago.

Originally started pre-course for engineering, mechanical line. At the same time, she was a part-time employee at Enermech in Tananger as a mechanic and inspector. Became a main representative at 21. It was challenging. Did it for 10 months. Then she applied for the job in the union. Had been thinking about it for three months. Knew I would get it if I applied. She became active in the union during her apprenticeship and has been involved up to the central level in IE.

When I'm 28-29, I'll probably get a hint in the lunchroom that I should seek other things. Still with IE. Employed in the union. Handel og Kontor is her trade union, based on her role in the union.

Solfrid wasn't born in 1980. The first thing she remembers about her father and the AL accident is all three siblings sitting on Dad's lap in an armchair, and Dad telling the story. The younger siblings were small.

I remember it very well. It made a big impression. But I didn't get shocked; I was probably too young for that. He explained in detail. He told what happened, how he was saved. I would believe it has influenced me a lot. We are an open family. And we talk very openly about things. It's become a natural part of my upbringing. I probably had an almost traumatic relationship with the accident. I am very close to Dad and really fond of him. It was intense. 2004: tsunami. I didn't see it then, but later understand why he reacted so strongly. He just sat in a chair for five days and watched TV. He was completely disconnected from us others. Subdued.

Mother met Dad about three months after the accident. Thus, Solfrid in principle couldn't have been born. Solfrid believes she understands her father and interprets him with what he has lived with.

He has probably suffered some lasting effects. He has a fear of flying and water. Went to Spain when Solfrid was 14. I remember he drank himself to be able to join. He handles it okay. He flies when he has to.

He doesn't like to have his head underwater, but he does it. He's very brave. I was about 10 years old when I understood that he didn't like to submerge underwater.



I was about six years old when he told the story in the armchair. He told how he was dragged down by the platform's suction and almost drowned. That it was very bad weather. He managed to get to something that floated. Some wanted to try to save him, but they couldn't, otherwise, they would have died themselves.

He was hoisted up when he was rescued. Got the wire around his neck and was almost strangled. Remember well from the first two-three times he told.

Also remembers all the meetings at our home – with hour-long meetings with reporters and researchers. One of Mum's favorite stories is such a meeting when he tipped on the chair and fell backward.

That she's where she is, is not accidental. I've walked in his footsteps. Been an apprentice in the North Sea. But union involvement is probably my own.

Offshore: knew the moment I got an apprenticeship offshore that I thought: what should I tell Dad.

Thought I had to tell him in a way where I got understanding and acceptance. I knew he would let me do it. And he did.

When she worked offshore, she was on the Ekofisk field. We sat and looked over at Edda during lunch breaks. Thought about it. Told colleagues. But I never remember being scared. Experienced great respect among colleagues that there's a great understanding for fear and concern. There's a good HSE culture. The North Sea might be the place offshore with the best HSE culture. At least on Ekofisk where I've been. I think it's more relaxed at Ekofisk than on Statoil's platforms. There's a softer atmosphere at Ekofisk. Tighter schedules elsewhere.

Strong club in ConocoPhillips. Ekofisk Committee for 18 years. Active club for new employees/apprentices. I find that great. They took good care of me and pushed me forward. I've always been interested in social issues and justice. That's from home, even if my parents have a different political view than me.

One year after starting as an apprentice, a colleague from the club got her into a youth conference and from there into a central position as a youth representative. I found it scary and had to be persuaded. Stian Kollnes persuaded her. Drove to Sauda to convince.

Work life.

Tripartite collaboration.

We have a solid system that explains how we've gotten to where we are. Collaboration. Few conflicts. I've always been interested in HSE and work culture. Leadership types and psychology. Corporate culture.

Think the AL has influenced her interest in HSE. There's a lot of different cultures even within the unions.

Many friends have consciously taken a left-wing stance. But like to talk about other things too.

The friend works at Fjordkjøkken.

The third person has a background in the graphic union.

In general, think there's low awareness around knowledge and understanding of trade unions and organization.

Teachers know little.

There's little talk about it in school.

Often meet youngsters who don't know what LO is. At the same time, we hear that youngsters are more socially engaged than ever. But there are many ways to be engaged.

Youth see Norwegian working life as a given. That's negative. Because there are few who have the will to be advocates when it comes to new things to fight for. We're not a united team anymore.

Migrant workers are far removed from our trade union culture. Many professional groups have low membership.

Harder to stand united. Trade unions in oil and gas have high membership rates. You'd have to search long to find an unorganized person. Probably 97-98 percent.  
It's very productive that trade unions are so strong. It's a relatively dangerous work environment. It's crucial that cooperation with employees is so strong.

Not so worried about an oil crisis and safety and union strength. More worried about temporary employees. There are large groups.

Contracts are won with HSE statistics. Temporary employees have less ownership of this security. Fewer accidents among temporary hires.

Solution: unite the team. Work toward bigger goals.

AL: Don't think it could happen again. Think my profession would have been more involved. Classification, controls.

That companies have their own inspectors is a good model, I think. CP – not Statoil. Can't rule

out that it's more or less consciously related to AL.

It's a challenge to get young people to understand what community means. The collective team's importance for results in working life. The apprenticeship scheme, for example.

Challenge that young people don't see the value of joining a trade union. Easy to shop between solutions today. What is in it for me. Less collective motivation.

Weakest: IT industry and staffing industry.

Big gap for foreign labor on ships in Norwegian harbors; work life, work methods, HSE, work culture.

Challenging with the globalized working life and the oil industry.

ANDREA YOUNG, DAUGHTER OF SURVIVOR RONALD N. JACKSON

NOTES FROM MEETING IN LONDON 6<sup>TH</sup> OF JUNE 2022.

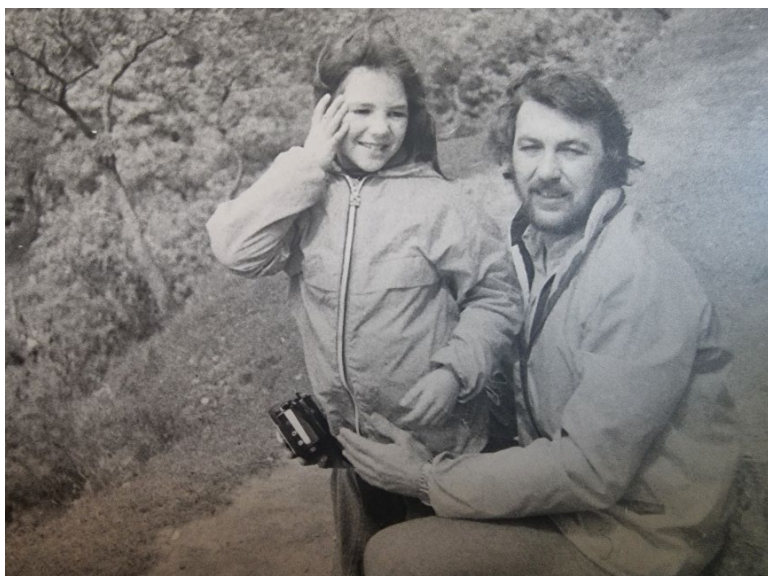
Andrea Young in conversation with: Kian Reme and Else M. Tungland (ref).

Accepted for publication (e-mail 17.06.2022)

*How nice to meet and be able to create some new memories about my father!*

Andrea meets us in London. She has a flat in London, close to our meeting point. In her youth she lived a period in Norway. She speaks and understands some Norwegian, but our conversation is in English.

*I was always a daddy's girl. I still miss him dearly.*



Andrea and her father Ronald N. Jackson.

Andrea's father, Ronald N. Jackson was one of the 10 men from UK who survived the Alexander L. Kielland accident, 27<sup>th</sup> of March 1980.

He got cancer almost straight after the rig accident and died in 2006 from throat cancer, after many operations. He couldn't talk in the end.

When the accident occurred, Andrea lived in England with her mother. Her parents were divorced. She was 13 years old.

*My father had a new wife and a daughter, Vickie who was 7 months old. They were living in Antwerp.*

*I remember I had a Judo lesson the night before. I did not hear anything about the accident on the news. Nobody said anything. The following day they talked about it at school.*

*Then my mother came and picked me up, for the dentist, they said. I knew I didn't have an*

*appointment for the dentist.*

*"Your father was in an accident, but he is fine." They didn't want to tell me before they knew. She told me this and left me with all this questions.*

The relation between Andreas' divorced parents was not the best. Living with her mother, she was never allowed to talk about her father at home. Her father didn't say much either.

*I think he had some survivor guilt.*

*He never talked much about the disaster, but he was at the door in the cinema when the rig tipped. It was a rush to get out of the. Many wires fell down. Everyone turned out to animals. The survival instinct.*

*He went to the cabin to get his lifevest. Tried to get to the lifeboat. Got stuck under a tank a while. When the rig capsized the tank got off him in the sea. He found a lifeboat. It was upside-down, but they turned it around. A big Viking man pulled him inside. Was in the end rescued by a helicopter.*



Clip from recording of interview with Ronald in bed (BBC) after being rescued. He had hypothermia<sup>4</sup> and got treatment at the hospital in Stavanger.

*Afterward Dad went back to work on the rigs. He had the 'courage of a lion' in doing so. When he got ill, the doctors said the cancer maybe was caused by the stress after Kielland.*

Losing her father that early was a heartbreaking tragedy for Andrea.

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<sup>4</sup> Hypothermia is decreased body temperature. A person is hypothermic, or chilled, when the body's core temperature is lower than 35 ° C.

According to Andrea's stepmother, Ronald never got any compensation at all after the accident.

*Dad now has 7 grandchildren and one great grandson (Andrea 2022).*

Andrea's half sister Vickie Jackson is now living in France.



JACQUELINE JACKSON, WIFE OF SURVIVOR RONALD N. JACKSON

ALEXANDER KIELLAND

RON'S STORY AS HE TOLD IT TO ME:

Ron told me he was in the cinema when it happened.

There was a crush to get out of the cinema, and up the stairs / ladder? people stepping on each other to get upstairs.

Next, he had to go to his cabin to get his life vest. I think by this time the platform was on its side or at an angle, he tried to get out through the window (but I don't remember how he got out). However, it was, he found himself on deck – but got pinned underwater by a tank so he couldn't breathe. After a bit the platform rolled further, and the tank rolled off him.

Then he found himself in the sea. I don't know how long it was, but he found a life raft – which was upside down. He clung to the rope that runs along the side of the life raft, and when the men inside it managed to upright it, he was flung over the top of it. He yelled and eventually got pulled inside.

But either there were not enough safety blankets, or the men refused to let him have one, so he was suffering from hypothermia throughout the night.

In the morning they were spotted by a boat, but each time it got close to them it threatened to crash or overthrow them so they told the boat to desist. I believe they were helitroyed out by helicopter.

MY STORY:

I was living in Antwerp.

That evening I went to a drawing-class. When I got home, either my neighbour or my baby-sitter, told me they had heard of the accident.

I tried to get hold of someone in the Brussels office, that being the main office of Ron's contractors. But no-one answered.

As I did not want to be alone with my 9-month-old daughter in case I got bad news, I asked my brother to come and spend the night with me, which he did until he had to get back to work in the morning at which point, I asked a friend to come.

The Brussels office called me around 9 or 10 am. They said they had gathered at a staff-member's home and hadn't wanted to alert me unnecessarily but had waited until they could tell me Ron was alive if suffering from hypothermia and was on his way by helicopter to Stavanger hospital.

After that I and my daughter were flown first-class to Stavanger, I saw Ron and was put up by a friend of him.

## ELI MUNDHEIM - A MAJOR CHANGE THAT AFFECTED THE WHOLE FAMILY

By Esin Tollefsen & Hanne Kvía

### BACKGROUND, AFFILIATION & CONSENT

Eli Mundheim is the eldest child out of four. She was 14 years old when the accident happened and remembers well what dad was like and what dad became. This is a heartbreaking story that shows how and to what extent families around the country were affected by the Kielland disaster.

Contents: Interview by Eli Mundheim 01.02.2024.

Relation: daughter of survivor Johannes Mundheim.

Eli Mundheim has consented to her story being published in the Memory Bank. This consent can be withdrawn at any time, even after publication. These minutes have been read, revised, and approved by Eli before publication in the Memory Bank.

### THE DAD HE WAS BEFORE THE ACCIDENT

Both my mum and dad were from Strandebarrow, so we lived there. We had grandparents from both sides close by. Before the accident, my dad had various jobs and I remember him commuting to some of these jobs. Eventually he started working in the North Sea, I don't remember the exact year.

His job in the North Sea meant that he had long periods at home. When he came home, he took on the role of house husband. When he wasn't travelling, he was with us. He cooked great dinners and such, and we do have some stories about that. Once my dad was making a fish gratin, and because he was a person who was a bit hasty and had to do things efficiently, he made a mistake - he managed to put aniseed, in other words liquorice, in the fish gratin.

As a person, Dad was generous, spacious, and caring for those in the community who were struggling. "The doors were always open at home; they were never locked. People came and went. I even remember book salesmen being all the way in the living room. I learnt a lot from my dad about tolerating different people. Dad had already travelled at sea as a 14–15-year-old and had seen and experienced a lot with the crew on the boat. This gave him a kind of understanding that other people in the village might not have had.

Dad was also very proud of us kids and showed us off in a way. He was still a very direct person. Maybe a bit strict, in the sense that he was the adult among us. At least that's what I experienced in terms of setting boundaries. I remember when I was in my teens and going through puberty, I might have let things get a bit out of hand with my mum, but then my dad would break into the conversation and say "it's enough now, Eli". I had so much respect for my dad that I then knew enough was enough. He didn't need to say anything else.

I remember when I had to put on tights at various times. They were often a bit too long. I remember how my dad helped me hoist them up higher. A kind of jumping movement.

Dad was never one to yell at us, but he was there to raise us. We were four children close in age, coming over the course of six years. When Lars, our youngest sibling, was born, we had to take a



taxi to bring him home because we didn't have a car. It was great to travel into town and bring Lars and mum home. I remember sitting in the back with open arms because I was expecting the nurse who carried him to hand him over to me - something we've laughed about a lot since then.

As the eldest sibling, I felt like I had to take my younger siblings with me. We're friends, my siblings and I - we grew up with each other. But I felt I had to take them with me. It became a kind of duty thing for me as the oldest - for better or worse. That's how it was in those days. We had grandparents close to us even then, and they were very down-to-earth and homely, so we visited each other quite a lot. It was very safe and good to grow up, we grew up in a great place.

Otherwise, I was part of a group of four girls. We say that we girls grew up with each other, we spent a lot of time playing together.

"My dad travelled a lot for work, so it was always my mum who was at home. When my dad was home, he was at home in a way. He liked to fish. He had a boat and was out fishing, setting nets, taking us with him when he could. He was a man who stood in the boat when he drove because he wasn't going to hit anything.

When I went to my mum's house last time and approached Børsheim, I saw a boat heading out, and the man driving the boat was standing in the same way my dad used to stand in the boat. I had the feeling that I was seeing my dad, but it wasn't him. It was a special and emotional experience.

I have many good memories from my childhood, and these memories are what we have brought up again in recent times, in the hope of understanding him, his situation, ourselves, our siblings and mum.

27 MARCH 1980

I was in eighth grade at the time. I was at the youth club in Bru with some friends. One of the adults in the village came by car and said that there was a storm forecast, so it was probably best to simply shut down the club for the day. So we got in the car to go home, when it was almost 6.30 pm, and then the radio announced that there had been an accident in the North Sea. I remember thinking "as long as he's not there".

When I finally got home and saw that my mum was watching the news, I knew that my dad was where the accident had happened. I don't remember much of the rest of the evening. I was probably tired. As a child, I was very tired in the evenings. I remember waking up during the night, around 02:30 or so, and I went down to the living room. The transmitter had fallen out, so we didn't get any more information until the next day.

Around 07:10 the next morning, there was a knock at the door. I remember that either my mum or my aunt asked if I could open the door. It was probably because she was absolutely sure it was the priest, but it was my aunt and cousin who were standing outside. They had received a phone call from the company where my dad worked and had been told that he had been rescued.

It was a joy, of course, but I don't remember much of what I felt at the time. He had been rescued, and everything was supposed to be OK. This day, 28 March 1980, was the Friday before

Easter, so when we arrived at school the headmaster was going to have an assembly with the whole school. When I saw all the people at the school, I just went home again.

On my way home I met a neighbour who was driving his truck. He stopped and asked if my dad was on the North Sea. I remember not being able to answer. When I got home again, I think I just went to sleep, I was probably completely exhausted. Mum came and woke me up after a while, by which time Dad had called from Ekofisk and said he was on his way to the hospital. He stayed in the pulmonary ward until he came home on Saturday. Palm Saturday.

"It made a strong impression to see my dad when he came home. He was injured and bruised. A brutal sight. My aunt was also there when he came home, so I went to my grandmother's house before going home again in the evening. I guess the idea was that mum and dad would get some time together and that we kids would be taken care of.

Dad was a man who talked a lot, which was really good. He talked and talked and talked. Told us about the night in the lifeboat, told us about the sea.

#### AFTER THE ACCIDENT

At this time, in the middle of my youth, I was soon to be confirmed. I was confirmed on the 4th of May. He came to my confirmation and attended the church. At that time, the confirmation candidates had to stand in the aisle while the priest walked between them, and when the priest reached me, he said "you were lucky to get your dad back home".

Dad was badly injured. He underwent several operations and was probably also struggling psychologically. He had jumped from the cabin window onto the deck. He had a fractured skull and was badly bruised in his fight for survival when he was in the sea. Several of the vertebrae in his back were damaged. So, in that sense, it was primarily his head, neck and back that were injured. I remember that he wore a collar for a long time and that he travelled to and from treatments. I think a lot was probably done during the first period when he was at home.

I don't remember exactly when, but my dad went out on the North Sea again. He came back home quickly. It was probably a big setback in terms of being able to work and provide for the family. He was only 44 years old when this happened, while our mum was 37, so they were young people.

My uncle, my dad's brother, ran a farm. As my dad became physically better, he probably spent a lot of time helping out on that farm. Farm labour and taking care of the animals. He probably used a lot of physical strength to take care of himself and build himself up again. When Dad wasn't on the farm, he was at home, going to the shops, doing housework. Medication, painkillers and alcohol also took their place.

As an adult, I now realise that he created his own pattern of days that made the days go by. He was in treatment for many years, so he had a programme that made the time go by anyway.

Dad went on holidays and such, bus trips and boat trips. So they went on trips like that, our parents. We kids weren't involved, but we hadn't been before the accident either. As a family we went hiking and things like that. I didn't go abroad until I was in the 9th grade when we went to Denmark for a school trip.

#### THE DAD HE BECAME

Eventually there were some behavioural changes. But not when I think about the very end of his life and the conversations we had then, Dad and me. As an adult today, I think that he was the same man all the time, but a lot of things had happened that prevented him from being that man.

I was the one who yelled at him. I gave him a clear message that I wouldn't come home if he didn't get his act together. I felt guilty towards my siblings who still lived at home, I always had the feeling that I had to go home. When I was 15 or 16, I moved into student housing, which was the year after the Kielland accident. At weekends I always went home to help out and to be present and all that. Eventually I moved further away, to Stavanger, and then those things became harder, travelling home that is. The distances were longer, and it wasn't that tempting to go home anymore.

Too much alcohol and things like that eventually meant that I couldn't bear to go home again. He didn't want help either. He was supposed to manage everything himself, but we realised that wasn't possible.

When I was in 9th grade, I had a physical at school, as was customary at the time. The doctor asked me how things were really going with my dad. I remember saying that he wasn't doing well, and that there was a lot of alcohol and other things going on. Not too long after my appointment, Dad had a doctor's appointment himself. When he came home from that doctor's appointment, I realised that what I had said at my check-up at school had been brought up with him. But he wasn't at a point where he was able to admit that he was at a stage where he needed help.

In a way, I think he lost himself in the North Sea that day. I've chosen some words that say it was a big change that did something to the whole family. Especially him, but the whole family, as well as those around him, in terms of being together and doing good and nice things together. All those things just got harder and harder.

I think a bit about my dad's siblings. There were six siblings at the time. They also saw what happened. But then there's the question of how close you dare to get when someone is struggling. That's usually what happens when members of families become addicted. You protect yourself and walk away.

Even now, I can't talk to my mum about this. It makes her very anxious. Mum is the gentle and kind one, who stood by him right up until death. She didn't put her foot down, maybe she tried in her own way. She said that she had made a promise that through thick and thin, they would stand together.

At the same time, mum created her own life that he didn't take part in. She was very creative and emphasised the creative side of creating her own life alongside what they had together.

They had good friends, I have to mention that. Friends who were like family, people who lived close by in the village. They were at least three couples who did a lot of things together. For me, it meant that I always had adult support in a way. At least that's been a comfort now in recent times.

TODAY

Dad was left with an undignified life. He lost himself. I tried many times, but substance abuse was not a topic we talked about at that time. It was just shame, and at the same time, there was clear why substance abuse became a part of his life.

It's shameful that they didn't get help. I'm angry about that. They still have the opportunity to do something about it then. Put some dignified words to what happened, take full responsibility for it. There are many families that have been destroyed.

A dignity for those who survived would be nice. A kind of apology. In a way, we lost our family, our family unity. I was talking to my brother last night, and as a family we haven't done anything for many, many years - until our mum got sick or needed help. Not because we're not friends, but because each other's presence is such a strong reminder of all the difficult things that happened. Also, we're probably just like our dad, we'll manage fine on our own.

Dad died the year he would have turned 68. He died in 2004. So in a way, we lived in mourning for 24 years. When he died, I had an enormous reaction, and that led me to seek help in terms of being able to talk about it. Before, we couldn't grieve because he was alive. Even though he was alive, we lost him before he died.

We lost him along the way before he died.

I'm not angry with my dad at all. When I was younger, I used to think "get a grip, pull yourself together, I'll come home if you stay sober" etc. When I had children, I said I wouldn't come home until he was sober, so he stayed sober for short periods. Because that's what he wanted, for me to visit with my children.

Dad and I had a good conversation before he died, about a month before. He probably had a need to make amends, so I don't have any unfinished business with him, but I have a lot of unfinished business with the system that didn't work.

I need the authorities to take responsibility, plain and simple. More than they have done so far. I know why things went wrong based on the stories and my father's history. Doors were blocked. Things were not properly in place on the platform. Lifeboats that didn't work. Poor routines. Nothing was really in place.

I've been lucky, I've managed my life, I have a family, education and good people surrounding me. But there are many who continue to struggle and who have struggled.

Financial compensation is one thing, but just having dignity and making amends is really important in the face of something this bad. I remember that our father was very involved with the Kielland-Fund. He was very active and followed the work and so on.

I never lost the respect for my dad, but I lost faith in his ability to sort out the challenges he had on his own. He couldn't be who he wanted to be for us in a way. The fact that he lost his position, lost himself and how he felt in life in relation to who he could be. I didn't want an alcoholic father, I didn't respect that at all. In the aftermath of my dad's death, I've had to paint a new picture of him in my head, to remember him as the person he really was, deep down.

I've lived as good a life as I could, based on the conditions I was given. But it's clear that the Kielland accident changed and characterised it a lot, life became different compared to the conditions we had before the accident. My dad came home, so the expectation was that my family and I would be happy. But then we lost the closeness in our nuclear family.

I think he did his best based on the conditions he was given. So I've done the best I can for my life, based on the conditions I was given.

## WHEN DAD (DIDN'T) COME HOME

by Esin Tollefsen & Hanne Kvaa  
Written summary by Esin Tollefsen

### BACKGROUND, CONNECTION & PERMISSION

This is the story of how the lives of the four Mundheim children and their family was affected by the Kielland accident. The informant in this summary, Lars Mundheim, is the youngest of the siblings.

Content: Interview of Lars Mundheim 31 January 2024.

Relationship: Son of surviving Johannes Mundheim.

Lars Mundheim has given his consent to his story being published in the Memory Bank. He has been informed that his consent is not perpetual and that he can withdraw it at any time, even after publication in the Memory Bank. These minutes have been read, revised and approved by Lars before publication.

### LIFE BEFORE THE ACCIDENT

Mum was a stay-at-home mum until 1978. In 1978, Dad had his first trip to the North Sea, and during the same period Mum started working at the post office.

Before Dad had children, he had worked at sea on a freighter, before he came ashore and got an education and got a job in an electrical company, where he travelled around the country installing telephone exchanges. When I, Lars, the youngest of the family, was born, my dad started working at Fjellstrand, a shipyard in the village, so he could spend more time at home. He worked at the shipyard for a few years before going to the North Sea in 1978 for the electrical company Stelco.

Dad never had his driver's licence, but he drove around on a moped, so excursions and activities outside the home were limited. I have memories and photos from when we went on trips to the mountains as a family, including to the Klepp cottage. A typical Norwegian family.

Our family had a close and intimate relationship with our grandparents. Dad came from a farming family, and in keeping with tradition, we lived in the same area as his family. It was about 100 metres from our home to our grandparents. The place we lived was called Strandebarm, about 30 minutes from where I live today. In addition, my dad had several siblings, three brothers and two sisters. We were a nuclear family of six, but we also had a lot of family outside the core.

I have an education in aquaculture. I have a partner, with whom I have been together since my teenage years and together we have a daughter, who today (2024) is 31 years old. Recently, just two months ago, I welcomed my first grandchild. My daughter, her partner and my grandson live near, right up the hill here.

### THE DAY OF THE ACCIDENT, 27 MARCH 1980

I remember the day very well. I was sitting at home watching the Children's TV, which was on at 18:00, when an extra news programme came on. Everyone in the family was at home.

Throughout the evening there was a lot of news coverage. The day after the accident, my siblings and I had to go to school, so we went to bed at our usual time that night.

Despite the fact that my dad was on board the Alexander Kielland and that we had no information about how he was doing, the focus was not taken away from everyday life. I probably didn't realise the extent of what was happening in the North Sea when I went to bed on the 27th of March 1980.

When I got up the next day, my family had been informed that my father, Johannes, had been rescued from the accident.

The accident was discussed at school, and I remember discussions about whether my dad might have made it to the Edda as a result of actually surviving the accident.

#### AFTER THE DISASTER

Dad came home two days after the accident, on Saturday 29 March. In the meantime, he had been at Haukeland Hospital. As Dad had jumped from a height of 3-4 metres, he had suffered a large cut on his forehead and a fractured skull, amongst other injuries. I remember it very well, the day he came home.

Dad came home and got out of the taxi with blue plastic bags on his feet. He also had a big patch on his head because he'd suffered a deep cut. On the outside, Dad seemed okay.

The family welcomed him at the door. Most likely, I was very happy when my dad came home, but then again, I was only eight years old, and the extent of the accident hadn't quite sunk in yet. Dad was a tough person, so hugs and the like were not part of his return.

In retrospect, my sister has told me that my dad had to go into the house to find money so that he could pay the taxi. There was no one who paid for it or organized anything. The taxi he took home from the hospital, without his belongings, he had to pay for himself.

Dad was keen to tell his story straight away when he got home. He told in detail, to everyone he met, several times. The story of his escape from the stateroom was a recurring one.

Dad was in his stateroom working on a crossword puzzle when the accident happened. Objects blocked the door, making it difficult for him to get out via the door. Dad jumped out of the cabin window and landed on the deck, which is when he suffered a fractured skull and the deep cut on his forehead. He received help from Oskar Olsen, and together they got into a lifeboat, but during the immersion process the lifeboat was crushed against the platform structure.

Dad then ended up in the water, where he said he remained for around 20 minutes. He hadn't been able to fasten his lifejacket properly, so he had to hold it in place with one hand and swim with the other. The waves were 8-10 metres high, and objects were flying through the air due to the strong wind and high waves.

After a while, a lifeboat came by. It was already full of people, but Dad managed to hang on to another man's belt and finally got on board. Dad was the last to be rescued when a helicopter pulled him out of the lifeboat at around 5-6am the following morning, around 10-11 hours after the Kielland capsized.

Dad went back out on the North Sea. I'm not sure when, but I think it was about a year after the accident, in 1981. It was on Valhall. That was my dad's very last trip on the North Sea.

After his last trip on the North Sea, Dad went on sick leave. He went into treatment. Alcohol took on a new role in his life. I can't deny that alcohol became my dad's way of dealing with the strong emotions.

There was a gradual change in my dad's behaviour. He became more agitated. He had a great need for peace and quiet. The midday rest was an important part of the day for him, and it meant that we as the children in the home had to go out to give him the peace and quiet he needed. The drinking situation was gradual/periodic. It started with beer, and at times switched to spirits.

Perhaps dad didn't get the chance to talk enough about the accident. It was probably also a setback that his return to the North Sea didn't go well. Perhaps it was these things that made him turn more and more to alcohol as time went on.

Dad also had some older friends who died after a while, which probably didn't help the situation either.

It's difficult to say anything about how the dynamic between mum and dad developed/changed. Mum is a reserved person when it comes to such things. I did hear them arguing from time to time after we kids had gone to bed. But it's hard for me to say anything specific about it, as I don't remember much about what their relationship was like before the accident either. They stayed together until my dad passed away. But it's clear that the relationship was affected, and I think mum at one point considered leaving him.

All of us kids moved away from home relatively early, when we were in our teens. I stayed at home the longest and was probably the one who witnessed the most change in my dad's behaviour and drinking patterns. The drinking gradually became more and more frequent. An attempt was made to get Dad back to work, but it was not successful.

Dad eventually received disability benefit. Mum still worked at the post office. We always had food on the table, but there probably wasn't much more than that to live on. In 1981, mum got her drivers' licence. In 1982, the family went on a trip without dad. Dad didn't want to go.

Dad has never done anything to me. We've actually had a good relationship. I had respect for my dad. We kind of walked around on pins and needles in his presence. Life became limited.

Life was restricted in several areas. For example, we kids avoided bringing friends home. If one of our friends rang the doorbell, we went out with them to play. We didn't want to disturb dad.

I remember an incident where I brought my flatmate, Linda, home with me. It ended up with my dad coming round and shouting at us, we couldn't make any noise.



Football was a central part of my life and I played until I was over the age of 30. I can't remember my dad being at any of my football matches, apart from once when I was about 20. But my dad had never really been interested in football for that matter. The longing for participation was there, for my dad to be a part of and contribute to my life.

I never doubted that my dad loved me. It's probably not me who has had the worst time. I'm left with the feeling that I was sheltered by my older siblings.

3 years after the accident, my grandfather, my dad's dad, also died. Dad also witnessed a little boy being hit by a trailer 6 years after the accident. He was the one who had to go to the boy's parents to tell them about what had happened. That probably didn't help the situation. Dad passed away in 2004. He died in the bathroom at home. It's a rather special date. He died on 1 April 2004, the Thursday before Palm Sunday. The Kielland accident also took place on the Thursday before Palm Sunday in 1980.

Dad's death was unexpected. He was ill, but it was still sudden. Mum called me to break the news, and it came as a shock. We had a good relationship, my dad and I. He was interested in what I was doing. It was my dad's idea that I should work in fish farming, and he was probably a bit proud that he was the one who suggested it.

TODAY

I don't know if I'm bitter. What should I be bitter about? Maybe a little bitter, but not at my dad. I'm rather bitter at the system that failed us. We were never offered any help.

I wish the authorities would take responsibility for what happened that day. What actually happened that day? I don't feel like I know. Was it a weakness in the construction? A handling error? I wish I knew. We've never since received an apology. It's unthinkable, really. The way it was handled at the time would never happen today.

Of course, it's hard not to know what happened that day. Why my family's life turned out the way it did. Our life and my childhood were affected by this, I never celebrated a single birthday at home after the accident. My dad didn't attend graduations at school.

Dad was at home, and he took up all the space at home, but at the same time he didn't take up space in my life.

As an adult today, I drink very little. I don't really need to. It's hard to say, but maybe my dad's relationship with alcohol has subconsciously been a reason for that.

Dad came home, but he came home as a different person, I would say. At one point, Dad himself said that it might have been better if he had just died on 27 March 1980. That was painful for me to hear, and all I could really say was that I was glad he didn't die that day.

In other words, in a way, my dad didn't come home from the Alexander L. Kielland rig.



Dad Johannes Mundheim, youngest son Lars Mundheim and wife Borgny Mundheim about a week after the accident.

## NOTES FROM A CONVERSATION WITH IREN HABBESTAD HØILAND

Written by: Else M. Tungland

*Iren Habbestad has consented to her story being published in the Memory Bank. This consent can be withdrawn at any time, even after publication. This summary has been read, revised and approved by Iren Habbestad prior to its publication in the Memory Bank.*

### CONNECTION TO THE ACCIDENT

Iren (b. 1983) is from Sandnes and the daughter of Olav Habbestad (b. 1948) who was a steward on the Seaway Falcon during the Alexander L. Kielland accident.

Olav Habbestad was born on Bømlo and was the second oldest of seven siblings. His father was a carpenter and his mother a cook. He was already working at sea at the age of 15. He later followed in his mother's footsteps and trained as a chef. Throughout his working life, he worked as a steward on rigs and boats.

He mostly worked in the North Sea. He was out for 14 days at a time and home for 16 days. Iren remembers his Seaway Falcon bag and his orange survival suit that hung in the garage when he was home. Sometimes he was away for longer periods, like the time he was at the South Pole for three months.



Photo: Unknown/Norwegian Petroleum Museum



Olav Habbestad with his chef's certificate.

Photo: Unknown/Norwegian Petroleum Museum

Iren is the youngest of four siblings and was not born when the Alexander L. Kielland accident occurred, but her older siblings have said that their father changed after the accident. When he returned home after the accident, the otherwise lively man was quiet. What he experienced probably characterised him for the rest of his life.

From information available in the Digital Archive, we know that five diving vessels were involved in the clean-up and search for casualties on the Ekofisk field after the accident. The work started

immediately after the accident on the 27th of March 1980 and continued until May the same year. The Seaway Falcon was one of the first vessels to arrive on site after the accident. The first fatality was taken on board the Seaway Falcon the day after the accident, and there were more later. On the 31st of March, nine people died on the same day. At times it was so busy that even the steward Olav Habbestad had to go out on deck to help.

Iren remembered her father telling her about the dead that were brought up after the accident. Her father also liked to talk to his son-in-law about his experiences. He also worked in the North Sea and was in a better position to understand what it's like out there and how absurd the whole experience of the Kielland disaster was.

Receiving dead bodies was far beyond the tasks the chef was prepared for. Iren remembers her father talking about how some of them had starfish in their eyes. This made an impression. Afterwards, it felt absurd to go back to the daily tasks such as washing hands and peeling potatoes. Then it was home to a wife, two small children and a newborn baby, without any kind of debrief.



One of Olav Habbestad's festive tables.  
Photo: Unknown/Norwegian Petroleum  
Museum.

Iren's father's life was eventually characterised by alcohol abuse and the marriage ended. Iren thinks that the experiences during the Kielland accident may have influenced this. He died of cancer at the age of 70.

Iren also has many fond memories of her father:

*There was always proper food when he was at home. The breakfasts were fantastic! I can never remember us eating fast food, and at confirmations and parties we never had to order anything. My father organised this. When he had time off, he liked travelling to places overlooking the sea where he could watch boats. He loved the sea and boats.*



Olav Habbestad on the Seaway Falcon. The man on the right in front in a light blue shirt.  
Photo: Per A. Jakobsen/Norwegian Petroleum Museum. NOMF-02750.047



Note from conversation with

## ARILD JOHAN NILSSEN, THE SON OF JOHN ARILD NILSSEN, WHO SURVIVED THE ALK ACCIDENT

June 10, 2024. Written by Else M. Tungland

John Arild Nilssen, from Bøstad in Vesterålen, was one of the survivors of the Alexander L. Kielland accident.

At the time of the accident, he was working as a welder at HMM and lived in Nordheim, outside Haugesund. He lived there with his wife, Gerd Elisabeth Nilssen, and their two children, Arild Johan (13) and Ann Kristin (10).



John Arild Nilssen passed away in 2022, at the age of 79.

His son, Arild Johan, vividly remembers what happened on the evening of March 27, 1980:

"I was sitting inside watching TV when an extra news broadcast came on about an accident on the Alexander Kielland. I told my mother that something had happened in the North Sea. She was busy with something else, so there wasn't much reaction. A little later, another broadcast came on TV, stating that a certain number of survivors had been registered. I again informed my mother that this was serious, and then things started happening.

Uncle Nils and Aunt Margrethe gathered with us. There was a nervous atmosphere at home because we didn't know if Dad had survived. After some difficult hours, we received the phone call we had hoped for, confirming that Dad had survived. Dad called us as soon as he could and said, 'I'm alive and I'm okay.' I remember that phone call well."

Arild Johan doesn't remember exactly where his father called from, but he was likely at the hospital because he was injured during the rescue. John Arild Nilssen was one of the seven people rescued by the crane operator on Edda, Roger Marcussen. He lowered a personnel basket from the crane and picked up people from the sea:

"Dad told us that he was with a man named Gerry, who managed to get into the basket before him. Dad was hanging on the outside, but Gerry reached through the basket's net and held onto Dad's belt so he wouldn't fall into the sea. He was lifted to safety on Edda but injured his legs somewhat."

He came home two days after the accident because he wanted to get back to us as soon as possible. We drove down to Haugesund to meet him when he arrived. There were quite a few people at the quay staring at us. Dad came home on crutches, without shoes, and only thick wool socks. It made a strong impression. Then we drove to Nordheim and were able to relax a bit. The whole family was gathered with us.

One of those who perished in the accident was Arne Lie from Sveio. This had a profound impact on Arild Johan:

“Arne was a bachelor and fiddler and a dear family friend. He was a very lively and cheerful guy who often dropped by with chocolate and cakes from Ivar’s bakery for my sister and me. I found it unbelievable that he was dead and would never come back to us. Arne was very popular in our family and also visited others in Nordheim.

I attended Norheim School and was told that the teacher informed the class that I wasn’t at school the day after the accident because my father had been in an accident. What the teacher didn’t know was that there were others at the school who lost their fathers in the accident.”

In the first fourteen days after the accident, his father had nightmares and often woke up, but he quickly returned to work in the North Sea.

“The first night out there, he had another nightmare, but a colleague said, ‘Relax, John, you’re not on Kielland now.’

After that, it got better. Arild Johan says it was important for his father to visit all the widows he knew since he was one of the last to see their husbands alive. He told them what he had seen and experienced. Arild Johan believes that his father handled the accident well, although he probably kept a lot inside.”

“Dad had a background in the navy and at sea and always thought about health, safety, and the environment (HSE). He was always concerned about what could happen, much like myself, who can’t walk into a café without assessing the situation. I have worked as an industrial worker, sandblaster, and painter. I’ve been at HMM, the same workplace as Dad, and have worked on platforms, but only onshore.



Arild Johan Nilssen,  
son of Arild Nilssen

## INTERVIEW WITH BERGFRID NORHEIM, 55

Strandebarm, June 6, 2024



Her father, Johannes Mundheim, survived the Kielland disaster but was severely injured and hospitalized for a few days. He was 44 years old and had his wife Borgny and children Eli (almost 15), Hermod (12), Bergfrid (10 ½), and Lars (almost 8).

### - Bergfrid, what is the first thing you remember about Kielland?

I was sitting in the living room; I had just come home from band practice, where I played tenor. The news was on, and that's when I heard it: the Alexander Kielland platform, where my dad was, had capsized. I yelled to my mom, who was in the kitchen.

During a special news broadcast at 9 PM, we knew for sure. My mom tried calling the company Stelko, where he worked, but got no answer. Still, I remember that my mom remained calm, as she always has.

The next morning, when we came downstairs, my uncle was in the kitchen. He was my dad's brother. My uncle told us that my dad had survived. My mom told us to go to school, and everyone there had already heard. It's a small community, and many people had questions. My mom went to work. She was the postmaster and had attended the postal school in Oslo before we children were born. And in 1981, she got her driver's license; before that, she biked everywhere. My mom has always been a resourceful and sensible woman.

My dad was in the hospital in Stavanger for a few days before coming home on April 1. He had injured his head, neck, and back. But he was impatient and wanted to come home as soon as possible.

He went back out to the North Sea twice—once for an eight-day trip and once for six days. But both times, he had to ask to be sent back to land; it was too painful to move around. He was an electrician, after all.

He eventually underwent surgery and had parts of his neck and back fused. After that, he sat in a recliner for a year and was in a terrible mood.

Gradually, he started cooking, mostly fish in all its varieties! My mom continued to work, so he had to find something to fill his days with. But he also went out more often and met other men. It wasn't uncommon for him to have a few beers and other drinks.

My dad had gone to sea at the age of 15. He mostly talked to war sailors, and we suspect that alcohol was already involved back then.



Now, he spent a lot of time in the basement room drinking. When we came home from school, we could tell by his voice how long he had been in the basement.

We had a different dad than the one we knew before the Kielland disaster.

**- Did he talk much about Kielland?**

In the beginning, yes; he talked a lot when asked. But as the interest waned, he mostly sat lost in his own thoughts. He mostly stayed home and drank more and more. He often had to go for physical therapy; he was probably in a lot of pain.

**- Was he strict with you during your teenage years?**

He was very focused on me thinking for myself! And he was a bit on my side when I had to explain to my mom why I came home way too late after parties.

But he only protested when I, at 17, met the man who would become my husband and got married early. I worked as a sheet metal worker in Stord, and later in retail and hospitality. The two children came quite early, and today I have five grandchildren!

Bergfrid notes an interesting coincidence of dates and numbers:

Kielland capsized on the Thursday before Easter in 1980. My dad was 44 years old then. He died on the Thursday before Easter in 2004.

It was only 44 years after the disaster that we felt someone cared about us. It was at a gathering of the Kielland Network. All four siblings were there, and we were able to talk about the pain with professionals in a group with other Kielland children. There were many tears but also laughter and a newfound sense of community!

**- Have you had a good life despite Kielland?**

Yes, I must say that I've had a good life regardless. But I am constantly reminded of the disaster and feel it in my body whenever other major accidents happen. Or when someone has tried to take their own life. Then I think: I hope they are followed up on! That they receive help automatically, without having to ask for it.

At the same time, it has probably toughened me in a way; I am quite capable of handling situations like arriving first at a car accident, providing first aid, performing chest compressions, and so on. Maybe I've grown from it, or maybe I'm tougher when it comes to others. But I'm quite vulnerable when it comes to myself; it's not as easy to talk about myself.

**- But did you receive any follow-up from the municipality or your doctor?**

No, no one reached out.

## INTERVIEW WITH HERMOD MUNDHEIM, 56

Strandebarm, June 6, 2024



His father, Johannes Mundheim, survived the Kielland disaster but was quite injured and spent a few days in the hospital. He was 44 years old and had a wife, Borgny, and children: Eli (almost 15), Hermod (12), Bergfrid (10 ½), and Lars (almost 8).

### - Hermod, what's the first thing you remember about Kielland?

I had just come home from band practice with my sister Bergfrid. I played the drums. The news was on in the living room, and then I can pretty much copy Bergfrid's story until the next day. That's when we knew that dad had survived.

### - Did you visit him in the hospital in Stavanger?

No, and he came home already after four days.

### - How was the father that came home?

At first, he was eager to talk, and people who visited wanted to know everything. But then the interest faded, and after he was operated on and became bedridden at home, things went downhill. Also with my relationship with dad, even though I still loved him as much as always. He started drinking more and more, and I understood why. I hated what made him drunk, and I developed a strong aversion to the alcohol that I realized someone was supplying him with.

### - Where did you go to school?

I went to high school in Nordheimsund and Odda and lived in a rented room. After school, I moved back home and started an apprenticeship as a machine operator. I lived at home then. Eventually, I worked as a machine operator in Stord, got my trade certificate, and lived in a dormitory there. There was one time when I was home that I felt I had to take responsibility: I managed to trick dad into telling me where he was getting the alcohol from. So I confronted those who were supplying our father with bad moonshine, told them that if they delivered more, I would involve the police. My sister Bergfrid was with me on this. But I felt like I took the hit for our whole family. It led to a full-blown conflict; dad chased me out of the house. But by then, I had already moved out.

Later, I often went home to visit mom, but my relationship with dad continued to be difficult. Hermod has to pause and wipe away some tears; it's painful for him to talk about this. Then I eventually attended Kongsberg Technical School (formerly Fagskolen Tinius Olsen) in the mechanical engineering program, and today I work as a senior piping engineer at the company Aibel.

**- Have you started your own family?**

It was dad's concern that I hadn't gotten a wife and children. But today, I have both a wife and a 12-year-old daughter, and I've bought my childhood home, where we live now, so everything has worked out for me too!

**- Have you worked offshore yourself?**

Yes, I had my first trip to Troll B in 1997 and was there for three years. I've also been on Troll C and many other rigs.

When I visited mom, I had to make sure dad didn't find out I was on a floating rig (like Troll B).

**- Was he worried about you?**

He was probably worried about me, yes. After all. But things never got better between us.

**- But you took the hit on behalf of the family, and your relationship with your mom seems good and close?**

Yes, it's very good. I take care of her bills and am now her guardian. I look after her.

**- I don't need to ask if Kielland has marked your life?**

Kielland has definitely marked my life and still does. No one has ever asked if I needed help. I was the big brother, and I had to take care of the others.

## CONVERSATION WITH ROGER AND HARALD SUNDT, THE SONS OF ADOLF SUNDT WHO SURVIVED THE ALK ACCIDENT

Norwegian Petroleum Museum, June 24, 2024. Written by Else M. Tungland.

Roger and Harald Sundt are twins and the sons of Adolf Sundt, who survived the Alexander L. Kielland accident. Throughout their lives, they have mostly followed each other. Both attended business school and worked in boat interior design. For six years, they were competitors in kitchen design before ending up in the same company and later as cabinet makers. Today, they live in the same residential area in Søgne, but in separate houses.

Their father, Adolf Sundt, was a radio operator at Stavanger Drilling with a background as a sailor. He was from Byglandsfjord and worked in the 1960s as a telegraphist on a large ship that received whales brought in by the whaling vessels in Antarctica. During this time, he was away for 18 months at a stretch. The rest of the family moved north to their mother's hometown when Adolf was at sea. In 1963, when the twins were five and a half years old, the entire family moved back to Søgne, where their parents built a house.



In Adolf Sundt's life, there were dramatic events even before the Alexander L. Kielland accident. During the war, he was exposed as a resistance fighter and was imprisoned at Grini for about a year, an experience that left a lasting mark on him. He was supposed to be sent to Germany, but fortunately, the war ended before that happened. He had scars on his arms from handcuffs and a radiation stove.

Before the accident, their father was a little anxious about the helicopter ride out to the North Sea, but once he was on the Kielland, he felt as safe as if he were on land—but he wasn't. During the accident, he was in the cinema and managed to escape through a vent, eventually making his way to lifeboat 1. He helped start the engine of the lifeboat. He got the radio working and made contact with the Ekofisk Hotel and the supply ship Normand Skipper. He was rescued by helicopter at around 6-7 in the morning after the accident.

The twins, who were 22 years old in 1980, still lived at home. They first learned about the accident through the Dagsrevyen news on TV. They stayed up all night watching TV, hoping that their father's name would appear among those confirmed to have survived. They also received calls from Stavanger Drilling, updating them on what they knew. The calls started around 9 PM.

"They called regularly from Stavanger all night. At 8 in the morning, we were informed that his name had appeared on the list of those who had been rescued. We were told that he had been found in a lifeboat in the English sector, but they didn't know his condition."

When the accident occurred, the Kielland was in the process of being converted from a flotel to a drilling rig. Harald and Roger mention that their father was skeptical about how much they were loading onto the rig.

"He reacted to how many containers they placed on one side of the platform. He believed the rig was improperly ballasted. They had too much water in the columns and tightened the anchor chains too much to keep the rig level. After the accident, he found it strange that this wasn't investigated more thoroughly. When he was questioned, he was very disappointed that they weren't interested in what he had to say. He had also heard noises and similar things. He didn't get to say what he came to say, but no one was interested in his opinion about the cause of the accident."

After the accident in 1980, Adolf Sundt received a one-time compensation of 25,000 kroner in exchange for not filing a lawsuit, but there was no further follow-up. Adolf was also frustrated with the union's handling of the case. In 2003, he was advised to apply for occupational injury compensation after being tipped off by Reme and the Kielland Fund. He then received a one-time compensation of 20,390 kroner.

"Father tried working as a telegraphist on the Danish ferry, but he couldn't handle it when the weather was rough, so he had to quit. He was offered disability benefits but declined, even though he also had a painful hip injury from childhood and limped because of it. Despite this, he continued to work. In the autumn after the accident, he got a job at Glencore Nickel Plant A/S in Kristiansand. He worked there until he retired. He earned much less than he did in the North Sea, but he never talked about struggling financially, even though he must have noticed the drop in income. He never turned to alcohol or pills to dull the pain. He might have a glass of wine, but it was rare."

In 1993, he suffered a stroke just before turning 70. After this, he was confined to a wheelchair. He lived at home and was cared for by his wife Margit until he passed away in 2003.

"After the stroke, he also lost his ability to speak. Although he couldn't communicate with words, he showed a lot of anxiety when the weather was bad. Whether this was due to his imprisonment and the torture he endured at Grini or the Kielland accident is hard to say; he had a lot of baggage."



The twins Roger and Harald Sundt.

## CONVERSATION WITH THE CHILDREN AND EX-WIFE OF TOR YNGVE ALBERG OLSEN

Kristiansand, April 19th, 2024, Written by Else M. Tungland

*All mentioned parties have read and approved the content. Corrections and comments from Merethe and Kjetil have been included. Roger has also written his own account in a separate note.*

### **Present:**

- Kjetil (born 1989) - kjetil.o89@gmail.com
- Kjell Yngve (born 1985) - kjellyolsen@hotmail.com
- Merethe (born 1980) - merethe77@live.com
- Roger (born 1976) - rogerolsen@live.no
- Birgitte, stepdaughter (born 1973) - birgitteolsen73@gmail.com
- Astrid (mother and former spouse) - astridoline52@yaho.no

**Tor Yngve Alberg Olsen** was one of the survivors of the Alexander L. Kielland disaster. Before the accident, Tor worked as a welder at OiS and had spent a few months in the North Sea on various platforms. At the time of the accident, he was working on Albuskjell Alpha and living on the Kielland platform. He passed away in August 2023, leaving behind six children.

Astrid was married to Tor Yngve Alberg Olsen for 17 years, and they had four children together. Each had one child from previous relationships before meeting.

### **Before the Accident**

Astrid is from Finnmark and grew up in a Laestadian community where she had a difficult upbringing. She had her first child, Birgitte, at the age of 19. When Birgitte was 14 months old, Astrid was invited to a christening in Kristiansand. Astrid Oline packed up everything she owned and never looked back.

In Kristiansand, she met Tor. They quickly became a couple and married a few years later. They were happy together, and Tor was a kind man with a lovely family. Astrid and Birgitte were warmly welcomed by his family. Astrid found a job as a trainee, and they settled in Søgne, where they were very content.

Birgitte also has fond memories of her childhood in Søgne. She describes her stepfather as a very kind man. Roar (born 1969), Tor's stepson from a previous relationship, was well looked after by Tor's family and spent part of his childhood with his grandparents in Søm while visiting the rest of the family on weekends in Søgne.

### **The Accident and the Days After**

On the day of the accident, Astrid was heavily pregnant with Merethe.

"I noticed there had been an accident, but I didn't think it concerned us. We were planning a birthday party for Birgitte, who was turning 4 the next day," Astrid recalls.

Later that evening, a family friend, Bille, confirmed that it was the platform Tor was working on that had collapsed. The next day, they learned that Tor was one of the survivors. When Tor returned home, his father picked him up from the airport. He talked about the accident but soon became very quiet, and in the days that followed, he did not want to discuss what had happened.

Astrid says that when he came home, he told her that while he was in the water, he saw a baby's head. He prayed to God that he would survive to meet his unborn child. Roger remembers that his father wasn't even supposed to be on duty that night, but had swapped shifts due to the upcoming birth of his daughter, who was born 12 days after the accident.

Birgitte vividly recalls the accident and her birthday the next day. Her grandmother was determined that the birthday celebration should go ahead, and Birgitte was to be celebrated. "I also remember the change in him after the accident. Before the accident, I only have good memories. After that, he began drinking and became bitter and angry."

Tor only shared fragmented accounts of the accident with his children, and these confessions usually came when he wasn't completely sober. He told them that he saw people crushed by falling containers. While in the water, someone tried to push him under, but he managed to get away. He said his life flashed before his eyes, which he later recounted to his children. Tor expected to be called in for another interview regarding the tremendous ordeal they had been through, but this never happened. He also mentioned that not everything was documented during his police interview.

In his statement, Tor said he was in the bathroom when the platform tilted. He eventually managed to get onto the deck and ended up in the sea, where he was rescued by a lifeboat. (The full interview with Tor Yngve after the accident can be read here: <https://media.digitalarkivet.no/image/926cfbd6-840d-47b2-8bff-2eb13df5390b>).

### **After the Accident**

The family lived in Søgne for eight years before moving to Vågsbygd in 1980 after the accident. Tor could no longer work in the North Sea. He got a job in Flekkefjord and came home on weekends. His ex-wife says that life became difficult in the aftermath. The kind father and husband gradually changed. Alcohol was hidden all over the house.

Astrid realized how serious the problem was one day when she was cleaning and found numerous beer cans and bottles stashed in an old sofa bed. She discovered that he had even hidden bottles in the fuse box and in a knitting basket. Things steadily worsened at home, and there was no help available.

Roger recalls that when his father was home on weekends, things could start off well: "On Friday and Saturday, he would talk and make lots of promises, but then he'd get drunker and drunker, and he'd turn angry and dark."

Tor never spoke much about the accident. He developed a fear of being on boats, which Roger noticed during a fishing trip when his father became uncomfortable as waves began to form. He often had nightmares, which continued until his death, and they were related to the accident. Surprisingly, he loved watching disaster movies.

Tor also suffered from physical pain after a work injury before the Kielland disaster. As a result, he had a high intake of strong painkillers (Sobril) alongside alcohol.

Tor Yngve's alcohol problem eventually affected the whole family. The children struggled at school. Child services were involved, but little was done. Astrid recalls feeling scared and alone: "In meetings with child services, I felt completely alone. Despite knowing all that Tor had experienced when the platform collapsed, the family received no help."

In the late 1980s, Tor attempted to take his own life, which was a painful time for the family. Roger says it was a serious attempt. Merethe recalls coming home unexpectedly that evening and finding her father lying in the bathtub surrounded by pills, completely unresponsive. An ambulance arrived to take him away.

### **Merethe**

Merethe describes herself as a "daddy's girl."

"I talked a lot with Dad about the accident. I remember well sitting on his lap, eating peanuts he crushed for me while we watched Saturday night entertainment on NRK. He often stood in the kitchen during the weekends, preparing Saturday night dinner with 'bankekjøtt.'

Merethe was born right after the accident, so she doesn't know how her father was before it, but when she looks at old pictures, she can see a completely different person—a happy, lively dad with a twinkle in his eye.

She has fond memories up until she started school:

"I loved Dad, but I felt embarrassed and ashamed when he got so drunk. I rarely brought anyone home. I'd say I had homework and tried to hide how things were at home because we never knew what Dad would be like. I never let anyone visit me. When friends came to the door, I'd excuse myself, saying I had to do homework.

Even so, I found it incredibly hard when my parents got divorced. I wanted Dad to stay with us. I thought, 'Just let him drink, we can hide him in a room.' I knew that even though he would get angry in front of the TV and say horrible things, the reason for this was the brutal accident he had gone through. It wasn't something he did to hurt us on purpose. I understood why he drank. He said it so many times that he just wanted to forget. The late 80s were incredibly tough at home. Dad became angrier and angrier when he was drunk. His words would come down like a hailstorm, but he was never violent, though he showed many signs of PTSD. He also worked a lot, and it seemed like he kept himself together then. He loved traveling for work."

"It's very sad to look back and see that this could have been avoided with a little help and counseling. All of Norway watched as Alexander L. Kielland collapsed. Some children lost their father, and others got him back. Some had to endure unimaginable grief, while others had to live with a father who had to function in the life that followed. Dad was in pain until the very end, plagued by nightmares and a deep bitterness and anger directed at the government."

### **Kjetil**

The youngest children only knew their father as he was after the accident. Everyone agrees that their father got worse over the years. Kjetil believes that he had a kind and good father, but one who was ill and who failed them:



"He was in a lot of pain and poor health, so he mostly just sat in his chair, watching TV while drinking alcohol and taking sedatives, which might have helped his mood but not the pain."

"We've been to Denmark a few times, but otherwise, we haven't shared many experiences. Dad hasn't been very present in our lives, and he never received proper medical help."

"It wouldn't have taken much for things to have been much better because he almost didn't exist for me and my brother. It's like we never really had a father. I've had my own struggles in school, with little support from either school or home. The authorities came to meetings where they talked and all that, but nothing was ever done."

Merethe adds that Kjetil was completely overlooked when he was younger:

"Mom and Dad were having a rough time. I started acting out when I was 9 or 10. Roger was in trouble. Birgitte was on her way out. Kjetil was just lying there. No one talked to him."

Kjetil didn't start talking until he was three. In second grade, the school sent a letter to his mother saying that Kjetil had been moved to a new class for children with disabilities. They later concluded that he had just been a late developer.

Birgitte adds: "Kjetil is really smart. The problem was that no one stepped in to help."

### **Birgitte**

Birgitte recalls not being able to bear being at home during her teenage years because it was always full of arguments and chaos. She has struggled with anxiety but didn't act out like some of her other siblings. Instead, she found different ways to cope.

"I daydreamed. I shut myself off and traveled in my mind—but I could have also used someone to talk to."

Birgitte became a Christian at 15 when she "found Jesus." This has helped her move forward in life.

### **Roger**

Roger had a troubled adolescence:

"I changed overnight. It was because of Dad and the whole situation at home. I started partying and doing criminal things and stopped communicating with Mom and Dad."

Roger turned his life around when he got older: "I became a father at 19. That made life worth living."

Although he didn't finish school, he got an education, becoming a carpenter, and was accepted on special grounds. It took him eight years. As an adult, he has completed a degree in engineering. "I had the ability, but I struggled at school."

A year and a half ago, he started seeing a psychologist, which has helped him tremendously:

"Now I can feel things. It was a process when I was angry. Now I can get sad. Therapy has worked for me, at least."

## **Kjell Yngve**

Kjell Yngve also feels that his childhood was cut short, even though he didn't drop out of school and obtained a degree.

"Dad never took any responsibility. When he got angry, he always justified it. It's sad, but what can you expect from a traumatized person who didn't receive help? There was no help available."

"I'm very sensitive to other people's feelings, but I find it difficult to deal with my own emotions."

"I've dealt with what happened, helped Mom and Dad from a young age. If I had gone to a psychologist too, it would have surely helped. Living that way is so ingrained in me that I feel there's little connection to myself."

"I think it through. I know it happened because of this and that, and I feel it in my body."

"Dad didn't drink because he chose to; he drank because he was traumatized and didn't get help. Mom did her best, but she had her own issues."

"We were taught from a young age to lock everything away."

"At Christmas, I can sit and watch Christmas movies and get moved by a totally cheesy film, almost on the verge of tears—but I can't let it out. It's a defense mechanism I've developed to survive, but that's not how I'm supposed to be."

### **As adults, looking back at your childhood experiences, what could have been done differently, and how can children of parents affected by disasters be best supported?**

Kjetil believes that if his father had received proper compensation, he could have taken more time off work after the accident.

Roger says that if their father had received help for his trauma and addiction, life would have been much better for the whole family.

Birgitte adds: "Look at our grandparents—they were incredibly kind and caring. That's what Dad was really like. He lost himself at some point. We would have developed better if he had received help."

Merethe: "We would definitely have had a better childhood if Dad had received help. Due to the lack of support for us as a family, we might end up with anger instead of understanding. We may blame our father for our upbringing when it's actually the municipality and, in this case, the government that are fully responsible. Then, as children, we're left to understand it all. We had little understanding as children that Dad developed PTSD as the years went by. If we had been told or learned something about it, we might have had better tools to understand it all. In such disasters, there should absolutely be mandatory help over an extended period, and in our case, help for the whole family."

### **What do you need now?**

Desire for Reparation: The family wants compensation for their father.

"Before Dad died, he told us to keep an eye on what happens with the Kielland case. He didn't fight for it himself anymore. He couldn't handle it. He became angry and bitter at the government's silence over all these years."

Desire for Justice: The family wants those responsible for the accident to be held accountable. The truth must come out.

Need for Psychological Support: Roger has found therapy helpful in dealing with his emotions related to his parents' struggles, and the other siblings also wish to seek help.

### **Benefit of Attending Kielland Gatherings:**

"It was a positive experience to meet others who understand what we're talking about."

Birgitte finds it easier to forgive her father after learning more about what he went through.

"Attending the Kielland gathering was good. It was Roger who happened to discover there was a meeting. I'm so glad we went."

"Meeting others and being able to talk about the accident with people who understand was a relief. I believe Dad would have benefited from feeling the warmth there too."



## ROGER OLSEN: MY STORY

*Written by Roger Olsen (b. 1976), the son of Tor Yngve Alberg Olsen, who survived the Alexander L. Kielland disaster.*

I was around four years old when the Kielland disaster occurred. I can't remember much from that time, but today I understand that it left a mark on me as a little boy. That same year, when we moved to the block in Voiebyen, I remember that Dad was working at Andøya, either for Einar Øgrey or OIS, I'm not quite sure. In any case, he came home every day. He also sometimes travelled to the North Sea again, and I remember being very scared and not wanting him to go there. I can vaguely remember a kind of emptiness or vacuum when Dad was out in the North Sea, and I was afraid he wouldn't come back home. I felt safest when Dad was home.

The time in the block in Voiebyen was a tough time. From about the age of five, I have fleeting memories of evenings with Dad on weekends when he began drinking. At first, it was cosy; he was always cheerful and would promise the world, I remember. But later in the evenings, when he became more intoxicated, the stories of what he had experienced during the Kielland disaster would emerge. They were horrifying stories of how he had seen colleagues crushed to death. He had seen people torn in two, and the head of one of his good colleagues burst open. He used to say that the best way to die was to drown, explaining that at a certain point when you've gone through the worst of it, everything becomes peaceful. He had many nightmares about the accident. Often, the stories ended with him saying that life wasn't worth living and that the best thing would be to take his own life. For me as a child, it wasn't very uplifting to hear this. I had many nightmares myself at that time, especially about falling from heights and waking up abruptly just before hitting the ground.

I remember, as a five-year-old, having to lift my little sister out of bed and change her nappy. She just lay there crying, and no one was picking her up. Mum thankfully came into the bathroom but had to fix it as I had put it on wrong. The story became, "Roger was so good and thoughtful...", but it was probably a bit too early to be taking on that responsibility.

I have many fond memories of Dad. He was very kind when I was little, and I was his first biological son. According to my older sister, I was Dad's favourite. We moved on to Pramveien in 1986, about six years after the Kielland disaster. By then, I had started in third grade at primary school. During this time, Dad was often away on work trips and home on weekends. I remember a lot of sudden anger from Dad, which came out of nowhere. Throughout my childhood, there were many arguments between Mum and Dad, and I often cried myself to sleep in the evenings. I don't remember why. At school, I was quiet and shy, afraid of meeting new people, but I felt safe with the friends I had at home. I've never been comfortable in the school environment. I was among the weakest in most subjects and had few friends at school. Neither Mum nor Dad followed up with me or were around when I came home to talk about my day. Dad was often drunk and didn't care much, and Mum wasn't very interested in listening either. School days are a painful memory I'd rather forget.

I remember how everyone talked about their summer holidays after the break. We never travelled anywhere, and I had nothing to share, other than that I'd stayed at home. Eventually, I started telling stories about my older sister's summer holidays, as she travelled to see her biological father, who was in the military and often abroad. I began to understand that we were a bit different, that Dad drank, and that we didn't have much money. I remember stealing my

first toy from a toy shop at Glassmagasinet in Kristiansand when I was 10-11 years old. I just wanted to have the same toys as the others.

At around 13-14 years old, about 10 years after the accident, things started to get difficult at home. Dad was home a lot, either on sick leave or laid off. I only remember the smell of smoke and alcohol in the living room. When I was 14, I changed abruptly. I became very withdrawn and aggressive. I stopped talking to my family and sought out new friends. The school raised concerns about my behaviour and vandalism. I started drinking on weekends, ended up in police custody, and was brought home by child welfare services. Dad despised me and turned his back on me. I was placed in a school project, the Langenes project, which was for troubled students. A quote from my school records says, "The teacher had the impression that he was in deep pain, that he didn't know why, and that the school couldn't help him." At the same time, I began seeing a counsellor at the Child and Adolescent Psychiatry Service (BUP), and I told him that I didn't want to live anymore. I was sent to the National Centre for Child and Adolescent Psychiatry in Sogn, Oslo, for a three-month evaluation programme.

What was wrong with Roger? No one around me understood what was going on. Dad didn't want anything to do with his new son; I was no longer the quiet, obedient boy who just nodded along. A quote from the psychologist's report reads, "Roger is a very closed and withdrawn boy who strongly avoids engaging with school. He has a very poor self-image regarding school and academic performance."

After the evaluation, the psychologist made a strong recommendation for follow-up to prevent me from developing serious mental health problems. There was dialogue between the social services, child welfare, BUP, and the school, and it was recommended that measures be put in place as soon as I was discharged. An application for funding was made to the county, but it was rejected on the grounds that no treatment options were available as recommended. Child welfare/social services had to act quickly, and it all ended with me getting a job instead of finishing secondary school. Child welfare/social services chose to pay me a wage, and I remember being incredibly happy and proud to be earning my own money. I also got a support worker for 10 hours a week. In my records from that time, I only find a letter from child welfare stating that Dad was struggling with the aftermath of the Kielland disaster. Mum was granted a day-nanny to help ease her burden. That was pretty much all the help we received.

One Sunday afternoon, I came home from a weekend trip organised by the church's youth project. I went up to the kitchen, and Dad was sitting in the living room. I said hello, but he barely responded. He was clearly drunk and mumbled something incoherent. I didn't say much else, but I was tired and went to bed after having something to eat. I woke up in the evening to a lot of noise and commotion in the hallway. It went quiet for a while, and I eventually woke up completely. I went into the living room and found Mum crying with a friend. The ambulance had taken Dad away, she said. He had tried to take his own life, and they were going to pump his stomach at the hospital. Mum also told me that the day before, Dad had said to my younger brother, who was five years old at the time, "Tomorrow you won't have a dad anymore." Eventually, we were told that Dad was going to be okay. The next day, I spoke to him on the phone. It was a very strange conversation, with a distant Dad on the other end. My support worker picked me up the following day, and I, along with a close friend, stayed with them for a couple of days. Mum didn't want him back home, so Dad moved in with Granddad in Søm. I had many painful thoughts back then, like, "What a bastard you are, after all the pain you've caused me, you're just going to leave like that?" It was a terrible time.

Dad met a new woman, and I moved in with them in a flat. It was a good time. She didn't tolerate alcohol, and Dad was the kind man I remembered from when I was little. Granddad passed away in the spring of 1995, and Dad took over the house in Søm. I eventually moved in and rented a flat in the basement. At 19, on 17th September 1995, my daughter was born. She turned my life around. I got my act together and, under special circumstances, started my carpentry education. We lived in the basement of my father's house until 2006, year 11. Dad eventually broke up with his new partner and lived alone, with us in the basement. He only worked on commuting jobs from 1995 until he became disabled around 2004/05. He was often on sick leave or, as I called it, in "drinking periods." Things just got worse and worse. After he became disabled, it really took a nosedive for Dad. There's no doubt that work had kept him going to some extent. The drinking went from heavy to extreme, with both alcohol and sedatives. It really went downhill for him.

We moved out in 2007, and I cut off contact with him. After that, we only met at Christmas and had a few phone calls, until he passed away in 2023.

Today, I understand much more about where I come from, who Dad was, and how the trauma from the Kielland disaster affected both him and us as a family. Dad changed suddenly after the accident, close friends say. He isolated himself and started drinking more. He spoke little about what had happened. Mum probably changed as a result of this too. As a small child, I sensed this, which made me a very anxious boy. I also struggled a lot at school.

Dad suffered a lot from physical pain in addition to the nightmares. He was very angry with the government and waited a long time for a settlement, compensation. He always talked about compensation in the tens of millions. We children were to get 5 million each, he said, when he received the settlement. This was a constant topic throughout my childhood. I'll never forget when Dad came back from the postbox in 2007, hanging his head with a letter in his hand. The hope was over. There would be no case, or compensation, he said.

Today, I have a wonderful daughter, a grandchild, and a happy relationship. I also hold a bachelor's degree in civil engineering, despite my difficult upbringing and struggles with school.

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## ILLUSTRATIONS

Figur 1: Alexander L. Kielland kantrer i løpet av 18 minutter. Illustrasjon: Elisabeth Tungland.

Figur 2: Plantegning av Alexander L. Kielland. Illustrasjon: Elisabeth Tungland.

Tegning fra Granskingskommisjonen, Riksarkivet.

Plattformen ovenfra; søyler, stag ankringssystem. Markert spesielle belastingsområder.

Tegning av Eivind Egeli, 15. januar 2016. Gjengitt med tillatelse.