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## Anglo-Eastern agrees 700-unit FleetBroadband deal

In a landmark deal, Anglo-Eastern Ship Management has agreed to install 700 FleetBroadband units across its fleet of vessels, the biggest satcom retrofit deal in maritime history. Capt Pradeep Chawla, Anglo-Eastern, told Digital Ship about this momentous move to broadband.

Globe Wireless has entered into an agreement to supply and install two FleetBroadband satellite terminals on each of the approximately 350 vessels operated by Anglo-Eastern Ship Management (AESM).

As a part of the agreement the ships will also be installed with the GlobeMobile GSM product, which offers voice and SMS services via FleetBroadband while at sea.

"Our vessels currently use a variety of satellite terminals including Inmarsat Mini-M, -B, and Fleet terminals today," said Captain Pradeep Chawla, director of quality assurance and training at AESM.

"By installing two FleetBroadband units with GlobeMobile we will be standardising satellite communications across our entire fleet, and providing a total solution for business and crew services, as well as for training programmes, remote IT system support, and expanded functionality."

This 700-unit deal marks the first major sale of FleetBroadband by Globe Wireless since being announced as a Distribution Partner of Inmarsat services in January of this year.



*"Our motivation is to improve ship-shore communications and look after the needs of our seafarers" –  
Capt Pradeep Chawla, Anglo-Eastern Ship Management*

Digital Ship understands that this is now the biggest satcom retrofit contract in maritime history, surpassing A.P. Møller-Maersk's agreement to fit up to 300 vessels with FleetBroadband in

2008, then claimed to be record deal.

While this is a milestone deal in the spread of broadband into the shipping industry, Capt Chawla notes that this is not a consideration for AESM, with his only concern being in improving the operations of the company.

"Our motivation is not to set records," he said. "It is to improve ship-shore communications and look after the needs of our seafarers."

Installations will be managed by Globe Wireless itself, with each vessel to receive a FleetBroadband 250 as its main antenna, and a FleetBroadband 150 which the company says will be mainly used as a back-up.

Existing satcom installations on the vessels, which include various terminals such as the Fleet 77, Mini-M and Inmarsat-B systems mentioned above, will remain in place as the new systems are implemented.

"Globe Wireless currently provides a full suite of satellite

communications, applications, and IT services to Anglo-Eastern," said Frank Coles, president and CEO of Globe Wireless.

"We are honoured and pleased to enhance and extend our strong partnership with FleetBroadband and GlobeMobile. FleetBroadband is a robust, reliable and cost effective communications system, which we believe will prove to be extremely popular and successful with our customers."

Anglo-Eastern had been trialling the system for six months prior to the agreement, and Capt Chawla says that the company will continue to monitor the performance of the FleetBroadband system as the fleetwide installations are rolled out.

Capt Chawla also notes that the company has been mindful of ensuring security on the new broadband link, with virus prevention to be managed at the hub level by Globe Wireless.

## **GSM**

This new agreement is also the first major deal for the GlobeMobile system since Globe Wireless announced its acquisition of GSM solutions company Zynetix in January of this year, only days before the announcement of its new Inmarsat partner status.

The Zynetix technology which forms the backbone of the GlobeMobile product features an onboard rack and a number of picocells placed around the ship, to create a sort of 'virtual' mobile phone cell. Crews wishing to use the system insert a GlobeMobile SIM card into their phone

handset, and can then make and receive calls and SMS while at sea.

The technology can be used to connect to any of the usual maritime satellite communications options, such as VSAT, Iridium OpenPort – or, as in this case, Inmarsat's FleetBroadband.

According to Capt Chawla administration of the system will be performed in much the same way as is already done for crew calling cards and other communications options.

"These systems are already in place and will only need minor changes," he told us.



*AESM expects that having GSM services on board will help seafarers to stay in touch with their families at a lower cost than before.*

## **New capabilities**

The background to this deal stretches back to the early part of 2009, as Anglo-Eastern became convinced of the necessity to move to a higher-speed data link and began to consider the options available.

"We have been discussing this and other options for over a year, as we see the benefits of a [broadband] system," said Capt Chawla.

"The most important reason was to free up the Master's time from communications, and to try and bring down the rates for voice calls for the crew. This being the year of the seafarer, we wanted to do something special for them."

In that sense the availability of the GSM capabilities from Globe Wireless has been an important part of this deal, with Anglo-Eastern expecting that its seafarers will be able to have a much greater level of contact with their loved ones on shore once the new systems are in place.

"We hope that with this, the crew will be freer to contact their families at anytime," Capt Chawla told us.

"First and foremost, as the voice calls will become cheaper, we hope our seafarers will like it – being in touch with families is very important for a seafarer. We have been providing free e-mail for years but voice comms make it better."

As for the business benefits of broadband, Capt Chawla is adopting a gradual approach to the adoption of the system, and will not be looking to make big changes in processes just yet.

"Let us take this step now," he told us. "We prefer to do things first than talk about them."