



Young, Yet Ambitious: ARES Shipyard

Here, on the Southern shores of Turkey's Mediterranean Coast, is the location of ARES Shipyard. A relatively young company, by most standards, but none the less, experienced and skilled. We are meeting today with the company's executive director Kerim Kalafatoğlu, incidentally a co-owner in the business.

Naile ASLAN / n.aslan@milscint.com

Firstly, we asked Mr. Kalafatoğlu about the company beginnings and his own background?

"Well the company's roots, much the same as my own, began on the shores of the Black Sea. Along with the other owners of ARES Shipyard, I come from Sürmene, a small town near Trabzon. This Black Sea region is renowned for its Centuries old, experience and expertise of boat building. It is this background of skill and experience, and a rich heritage of sea-faring vessels that ARES have brought with it, into naval shipbuilding. We started only 8 years ago but have been quite successful in that time, and are determined to really make Turkey proud with an export product to all regions of the globe."

Then, we talked about the ARES approach to business.

"We have a different approach to clients here at ARES, than is normal or previously seen in the industry. Whilst we have a catalogue to show and

demonstrate our designs and offerings, these are only indicative or representations to prospective clients. Although we have a good range of previously built, and currently in-service designs that could easily be offered to clients, we do not offer standard or off-the-shelf models for sale. In other words we will not push an existing vessel design on to a customer and we will tailor each vessel to suit the intended environment and planned use. We are always aware that the working requirements of the vessel, should dictate the specification, rather than starting with a vessel and making it fit the requirements! It might be old fashioned to say so, but a good salesman will only sell the customer what they actually need, which is not always the same as, what they think they need."

A refreshing approach, in a world of commerce that worships mass production and sales and almost any cost, but how does this seem to the customers?



"We listen very intently to our customers, both to what they say and how they say it. It is important to look beyond the obvious, and see the real requirement of a project. Listening is very important, but this is not one sided and we try to ensure that our customer also listens to us, in terms of the resources we can offer, our design solutions and the systems providers that we partner with. The whole process requires collaboration, between us and the customer, the important part being, that we are both engaged and committed to the same thing. Our previous customers have all been pleased and impressed by our help and support in guiding them through the design, development and building of their vessels. We look forward to our future customers feeling the same way."

We have heard about the customers and your approach to them, but you are a shipyard, what can you tell us about the vessels that you build?

"ARES Shipyard specialises in the construction of naval and para-military

patrol boats. Depending largely on the specification required, these can be armed vessels, from small arms, to complex target acquisition and tracking systems, even torpedoes can be supplied as integrated armaments to our solutions. Indeed our "ARES125 FAMB" Fast Attack Missile Craft, which is designed as an assault, or intercept craft is intended for all types of armed patrol and escort duties. As such this model can be supplied with a range of weaponry, including naval cannon, stabilised machine gun, surface to air, as well as surface to surface missile launchers, and torpedoes, all in the same package. In addition, this vessel and the people operating it can be surrounded by ballistic protection built into the superstructure. It's not all about armaments and our HERCULES range of patrol vessels, which are from 23 m up to 43 m in length are intended more for Coast-Guard and Naval Coastal Patrols, rather more law enforcement, than naval engagement! Even so the larger of this series is classified as an OPV, or Off-shore patrol vessel, and will comfortably carry out patrol & escort, search & rescue, surveillance or even anti-smuggling operations in the roughest of sea and weather conditions."

This must be a very serious business with armed military vessels; surely not just anyone can build these?

"Actually, we are very proud that ARES Shipyard has been awarded by the Turkish Ministry of National Defence and NATO, for Facility Security Clearance Certificates, as well as being an ISO9001 certified company. This is something we take very seriously, and as you have already seen from our earlier tour of our yard, we also have a number of very fast patrol boats currently under construction in advanced composite material. Although we do specialise in this type of vessel, this is not all that we build. At the moment we are building a 34 m aluminium Fast Crew Boat which is capable of carrying 8 crew plus 76 passengers, in addition to 50 tonnes of cargo. The design has such good performance and excellent sea-keeping characteristics that to date, 28 boats have been completed with another 11 vessels currently under construction. In our portfolio we also carry designs

for support vessels of ancillary services, such as fire-fighting, chemical incident and medical care. We have supplied vessels to a number of navies, coast guard agencies, marine police and enforcement agencies, including several harbour master offices in Turkey."

This sounds very impressive, but how can you deliver so many different types of boat? Surely these are specialist areas of Naval Architecture?



"All these different types of vessel are indeed specialised. At ARES, we focus on what we are good at, which is building ships and boats from advanced composite materials and resins, this is our specialist area, even though we will also build in aluminium and steel if the project requires. We have selected, and chosen to work with some of the best, brightest and most technically advanced designers in the world, in their own particular specialist areas of design. We work with the specialists in design of fast patrol vessels only, separately and around the globe we work with the specialists in design of fire-fighting vessels, elsewhere in the world we work with the best designers of RHIBs and smaller fast patrol craft. We believe this gives ARES and our customers the optimum, in terms of advice,



support and design, as well as a wider, global view of advances in design and technology."

So how do you manage to keep up to date with engineering, and more importantly how do you keep pace with your competition?

"Firstly, we deliver the best product, at the best price, by dealing with solid engineering and quality production and materials, more importantly we don't

pass a "brand" mark-up on to our clients. Our pricing is based on what we are selling, not the image! Secondly, we recognise that it is also important for our employees to remain knowledgeable about the latest techniques in all disciplines, from concept, through design, build and engineering fit-out. In this way, our company retains the latest equipment, tools and techniques, to deliver the best possible vessel for each client. Thirdly, we believe very strongly in R&D for the advancement of the industry. Our own design office, which is staffed by talented and experienced mechanical engineers and naval architects, work in support of our external partners to manage extensive R&D projects. Indeed, with the involvement of our design partners, ARES are currently working on several new design programs. We are hopeful to be able to announce some "striking" projects in the near future. Lastly, we are proud that we don't just build boats! We always provide the option to our clients for a full, comprehensive, integrated logistic support and training program, tailored to the individual needs of our clients, contracts and vessels."

Thank you very much for the information you gave. We wish you success in your business.