

CLAIMS

1. A grounding skeg for a landing craft configured for stern landing onto, and setting off from, a ground surface, the grounding skeg including:
 - 5 an elongate grounding body having a fore end and an aft end; and
 - a removable pulling propeller functionally connected to the fore end of the body;
 - wherein the pulling propeller is able to drive the landing craft ahead and astern; and
 - 10 the grounding body is locatable on the landing craft such that:
 - the grounding body provides contact with the ground surface during stern landing of the landing craft;
 - 15 the fore end of the grounding body faces a bow end of the landing craft; and
 - the aft end of the grounding body faces a stern end of the landing craft.
2. The grounding skeg according to claim 1, wherein the grounding body is adapted to be located on the landing craft such that the aft end of the grounding body provides the first point of contact with the ground surface during stern landing of the landing craft.
- 20 3. The grounding skeg according to any one of the preceding claims, wherein the grounding skeg includes a rudder.
- 25 4. The grounding skeg according to claim 3, wherein a rudder blade of the rudder is located at, or towards, the aft end of the grounding body.
5. The grounding skeg according to claim 4, wherein the rudder blade is at least partially housed within the body.
- 30 6. The grounding skeg according to claim 5, wherein the grounding body is adapted for protecting the rudder blade during stern landing of the landing craft.
7. The grounding skeg according to any one of claims 4 to 6, wherein the grounding body includes a tapered end and the rudder blade is housed within the tapered end of the body.
- 35 8. The grounding skeg according to claim 7, wherein the aft end of the grounding body is tapered and the rudder blade is housed within the tapered aft end of the body.
- 40 9. The grounding skeg according to claim 8, wherein a fore end of the rudder blade has substantially the same width as, or is narrower than, the tapered aft end of the grounding body that houses the fore end of the rudder blade.
- 45 10. The grounding skeg according to claim 9, wherein an aft end of the rudder blade has substantially the same width as, or is narrower than, the tapered aft end of the grounding body that houses the aft end of the rudder blade.

- 5 11. The grounding skeg according to any one of claims 5 to 10, wherein the rudder blade is tapered such that, when the rudder blade is in-line with the grounding body, an outer surface of the grounding body forms a substantially continuous surface with the rudder blade.
12. The grounding skeg according to any one of claims 5 to 11, wherein the grounding body includes a protective housing around at least the lower portion of the rudder blade, to protect the rudder blade during stern landing of the landing craft.
- 10 13. The grounding skeg according to any one of the preceding claims, wherein the pulling propeller is able to be removed from the grounding skeg independently of the rudder.
- 15 14. The grounding skeg according to any one of the preceding claims, wherein a propeller shaft connected to the pulling propeller is able to be removed from the grounding skeg independently of the rudder.
- 20 15. The grounding skeg according to any one of the preceding claims, wherein the grounding skeg houses an electric motor or a conventional combustion engine, or a part thereof, for operating the pulling propeller.
16. The grounding skeg according to any one of the preceding claims, wherein the grounding skeg is attachable to a hull of the landing craft.
- 25 17. The grounding skeg according to claim 16, wherein the grounding skeg is able to be retrofitted to the hull.
- 30 18. The grounding skeg according to any one of the preceding claims, wherein the propeller is adapted to drive the landing craft astern while aft end of the grounding body provides contact with the ground surface during stern landing of the landing craft.
- 35 19. The grounding skeg according to any one of the preceding claims, wherein the propeller is sized such that it does not exceed a lowermost extremity of the fore end of the grounding skeg.
- 40 20. The grounding skeg according to claim 19, wherein size of the propeller and its location at the fore end of the elongate grounding body enables the propeller to drive the landing craft astern while the grounding body provides contact with the ground surface during stern landing of the landing craft.
- 45 21. The grounding skeg according to any one of the preceding claims, wherein the propeller is adapted to provide an additional sternwards thrust to an extant sternwards momentum of the landing craft during stern landing, said additional thrust combining with the extant sternwards momentum to drive the stern landing vessel further into the ground surface than would be the case without said additional sternwards thrust.
22. A hull for a landing craft, the hull including at least one grounding skeg according to any one of claims 1 to 21 above.

23. A hull according to claim 22, wherein the at least one grounding skeg comprises one or more grounding skegs on each side of a hull centreline.
- 5 24. A hull according to claim 22 or claim 23, wherein two or more grounding skegs are located at an outboard location and adapted to independently control the landing or setting off of the landing craft.
- 10 25. A hull according to claim any one of claims 22 to 24, wherein the at least one grounding skeg has a draft that is substantially similar to, or slightly greater than, the hull draft.
26. A hull according to any one of claims 22 to 25, wherein the at least one grounding skeg is located proximate to the stern end of the landing craft.
- 15 27. A hull according to any one of claims 22 to 26, wherein the hull is generally V-shaped.
28. A hull for a landing craft according to any one of claims 22 to 27, wherein the hull is adapted to receive a retrofit grounding skeg according to any one of claims 1 to 21.
- 20 29. A hull according to claim 28, wherein the hull includes at least one elongate planar surface for retrofit engagement with an elongate upper surface of the ground skeg.
30. A landing craft including a skeg as described in any one of claims 1 to 21.
- 25 31. A landing craft including a hull as described in any one of claims 22 to 29.