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## The Coast Guard and the American Salvage Association

BY COMMANDER ANDREW TUCCI, USCG  
Chief, Oil and Hazardous Materials Division, Office of Incident Management and Preparedness

On August 8th, 2007, the Coast Guard was honored to sign a Memorandum of Understanding and Quality Partnership Agreement with the American Salvage Association (ASA). The Coast Guard recognizes the ASA as a vital partner in our efforts to prepare for and respond to disasters on the sea, and we are extremely pleased to begin this new phase of cooperation through this Quality Partnership Agreement.

The importance of a strong and professional salvage industry in the United States has never been more apparent. America is a maritime nation, and our ports and waterways are critical components of domestic and international trade. A vessel grounding, sinking, collision, or other casualty can threaten public safety, block a channel, and harm precious natural resources through oil spills and other pollutants. Despite increased ship safety, the growing economy makes the consequences of such an event all the greater, while the increasing size and complexity of vessels means that any salvage operation is that much more complex and difficult. The American Salvage

Association and its member companies can help ensure that America is prepared to respond safely, efficiently, and effectively to any such event.

The purpose of the partnership is to strengthen the communication and working relationship between the Coast Guard and the marine salvage and firefighting industry in order to improve vessel and personnel safety within that industry; enhance national maritime security preparedness and response; promote timely, responsible and professional salvage response to marine casualties; and enhance the protection of the

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*George Wittich, ASA President, and RDML Brian Salerno, USCG, Assistant Commandant of Policy and Planning, come to the table to sign a Quality Partnership Agreement between the Coast Guard and ASA on June 11, 2007.*

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## Soundings

*Soundings* is published by the American Salvage Association to deliver the latest news on the marine salvage industry.

Articles, letters, questions and comments should be directed to Jim Bladh, Managing Editor, at the following address:

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environment along our nation’s waterways. The Agreement specifically states that the parties will seek to achieve that purpose primarily through:

- Exchanging facts or information, recognizing however that, for purposes of the Paperwork Reduction Act, any “collection of information” conducted pursuant to this partnership is voluntary and cannot be legally enforced by the Coast Guard without Office of Management and Budget approval, and recognizing further that the Coast Guard is subject to legal and ethical restrictions on its ability to share non-public information derived from sources outside the partnership;
- Cooperation to assist and ensure compliance with USCG regulations and other applicable law;
- Cooperation to promote the interest of the American public in maritime safety and security, through non-regulatory means where possible; and
- To the extent specifically authorized by statute or Presidential directive, such as making or implementing government decisions or policy, to function as an operational committee within the meaning of the Federal Advisory Committee Act.

While salvage is normally thought of in terms of “routine” collisions, groundings, and similar casualties, events in recent years have shown that salvage procedures and capabilities need to be part of a wide range of contingency plans. In the immediate aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, individual ASA members and the Coast Guard worked together to stabilize damaged vessels, clear channels, and take other action that maximized safety and minimized the environmental and economic consequences of those events. The Quality Partnership Agreement provides an opportunity to improve on this success by forging a common understanding of doctrine, priorities, and procedures should such an event occur again.

One area in particular where the Coast Guard and the ASA can work together is how salvage company representatives should function within an Incident Command System structure, and to

assist local Coast Guard Captains of the Port with contingency planning for events such as oil spills, hazardous materials incidents, Place of Refuge requests, natural disasters, and terrorist attacks. This wide range of issues demonstrates the importance of the American Salvage Association to the nation’s overall preparedness. Robust salvage capabilities are vital to the safe, successful outcome of each of these disasters, and many more. The Quality Partnership Agreement provides a mechanism for the Coast Guard and the ASA to understand how to plan for and use that capability in times of crisis, and in a way that fits into the larger community of government and private sector response organizations. The Coast Guard is proud to be associated with the American Salvage Association, and looks forward to working together on these and many other issues in the future. 

## President’s Message

BY GEORGE WITTICH  
 President, American Salvage Association

Throughout my career, and especially during the course of my seven years in ASA’s leadership, I’ve come to realize that change never happens as quickly as we would like it to. Sometimes, the best measure of change is to view where we are today as compared to a past point in time, as opposed to simply determining if an objective has been achieved.

I was hopeful and cautiously optimistic that we would see the passage of the final salvage regulations during my term as the association’s president. We now know that will not happen. We have seen progress. We have seen the furtherance of the objective. However, the processes involved within the Beltway – with requisite assessments and agency reviews can only be accelerated so much. After 9-11, with the formation of the Department of Homeland Security and the associated change in the Coast Guard’s focus, it was all but inevitable that the passage of the salvage regulations would be delayed. The fact remains that these salvage regs



GEORGE WITTICH

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are an important regulatory initiative within the Coast Guard, but the promulgation of them is not THE top priority. However, unlike most other rulemaking initiatives which are “below the cutoff” in prioritization, progress does continue toward ultimate promulgation.

Additional strides have also been made. There now exist multiple professional salvage service providers offering “coast to coast” OPA 90 coverage. With the ASA’s assistance, the necessary financial review exercise has been completed, and thus, another requisite step in the process is behind us. Our recent meeting with the vessel owning community’s associations has resulted in the development of a compromised position with respect to the pending final rule that all parties can stand behind. We will have executed our first Quality Partnership meeting with Admiral Salerno and his staff by the time this article is published, and we are hopeful that the partnership meeting will lend further progress to our objectives. The point is that we are still moving the ball forward.

Let me be clear. I am not suggesting that we sit back and wait for the Coast Guard to act on its own. Progress has been, and continues to be made – but it is of critical importance that we stay committed and keep this issue in the forefront of all ASA activities. We, as salvage companies, both acting as an association and as individual companies, must take every opportunity to educate all stakeholders, as to the economic, environmental, and life-enhancing benefits that will be achieved when these regulations are finalized. It must remain the American Salvage Association’s top priority.

I am certain that the salvage regulations will remain in the forefront of everything the ASA does. I am very much looking forward to having John Witte, Jr. lead the American Salvage Association as he takes over the leadership role in October as its fourth president. John and I have known each other for decades, and I can think of no better individual to spearhead our initiatives for the next two years. He is well known in the industry worldwide, and those who know him well, know that his passion for the issues that affect this salvage industry runs very deep. John will also have the assistance and support of our extremely capable association staff. Dick Fredricks, Tricia Welch, Jim Bladh,

and Deb Colbert, all work tirelessly in the pursuit of our common goals. I think it would be truly fitting if the salvage regulations were promulgated on John’s watch, given the initial (and continued) thrust related to this matter that this association received from the ASA’s founder and first president, John’s father, J. Arnold Witte.

As this will be my last “President’s Message,” I wanted to take this opportunity to thank everyone for allowing me the privilege to lead the association through the last two years. During that time, I believe that the ASA has changed for the better, and I still believe that members receive a phenomenal benefit for the cost of membership. We have seen an increase in membership at all levels. We have built up our financial reserves to a comfortable level which has poised us well for future growth and security. Our training endeavors continue to reap rewards – both financial and otherwise. I take no credit for these accomplishments, as they are the direct results of membership participation, a topic which I am very passionate about.

Member participation is vital for the continued success of our association. I believe it is what elevates us above other associations. If twenty percent of an industry association’s membership is actively participatory in that association’s endeavors, its membership is considered highly involved. In the American Salvage Association, better than fifty percent of its membership is actively engaged in the association’s efforts – which is truly phenomenal.

There is a real benefit to having salvor/business leaders tell our story to politicians and regulators as opposed to a hired consultant or paid lobbyist. We reap similar benefits by having our training evolutions taught by salvors, and not paid instructors. It certainly requires more work on our part, but in the end, the rewards for the ASA, as well as the individual reward that the participating member experiences, makes it worth the effort.

I would encourage every single one of our members to volunteer as an instructor for one of our training seminars, or join one of our standing committees, and/or consider running for an open position on the Executive Committee. Having spent the last seven years intimately involved in

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*“We, as salvage companies, both acting as an association and as individual companies, must take every opportunity to educate all stakeholders, as to the economic, environmental, and life enhancing benefits that will be achieved when these [salvage] regulations are finalized.”*

**- George Wittich,  
ASA President**

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the workings of the American Salvage Association, I can state, with no hesitation, that I have benefited tremendously - both from a business and personal perspective. I believe that during some point in each of our careers it is important to give back to the industry, and at least from my perspective, I've found it to be, not a chore, but an extremely rewarding experience. It is my sincerest wish that each and every one of my colleagues will have the opportunity to enjoy a similar experience during their respective career.

Thank you for my opportunity. 

## From the Editor


BY JIM BLADH  
Managing Editor - *Soundings*

Everyone in our community is very excited about the upcoming National Maritime Salvage Conference with *Marine Log* at the Hyatt Regency Crystal City October 9-11, 2007. Please take the opportunity to attend, exhibit and be a sponsor. Visit [www.marinelog.com](http://www.marinelog.com) for details and to register, and join your industry in supporting this conference. The same event was scheduled in New Orleans two years ago at the Hyatt Superdome, which was nearly destroyed by Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, thus forcing us to cancel. The delay, although unfortunate, has



allowed us the time to fine-tune and increase the exhibitors, presentations and events.

These forums offer the industry, Coast Guard, Transportation Security Administration, Department of Homeland Security, U.S. Navy Supervisor of Salvage, and others a chance to look at where we are in the maritime salvage area today and where we are going or would like to go in the future. It is the only place under one roof that you can renew old friendships and make new ones within our industry. As we all know, personal contacts are important. I have learned over the years that when you need assistance or guidance and you are able to put a face to the voice on the other end of the phone people are generally more responsive. If you can only support one or two conferences each year, this is the one not to miss.

I would like to wish our President, Mr. George Wittich, as I know that you all do, the very best in his new position as Vice President/General Manager for American Marine Corporation in California. It is also comforting to know that he will be fulfilling his term as President and will continue to be a key player in our association. 

*Jim Bladh*

## ASA Member Responds to Grounded Tanker off Coney Island

On July 12, 2007, a member of the American Salvage Association responded to *White Sea*, a 243-meter motor tanker, which ran aground near Ambrose Light, off Coney Island, New York.

The tanker was outbound fully loaded with 548,000 barrels of Low Sulfur Fuel Oil (LSFO) when she reportedly had a steering malfunction and ran aground. Immediately upon notification, the ASA member mobilized a team of salvage experts, which arrived on site within hours of the casualty.

The ASA member company's salvage engineers, along with the SERT team from the U.S. Coast Guard, worked through the day to develop a

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An ASA member works to remove 120,000 barrels of oil from the *White Sea*, which ran aground on July 12 off Coney Island, NY.

Salvage and Lightering plan and once approval was obtained from the Coast Guard, the salvage team worked through the night to remove 120,000 barrels of product from the grounded tanker. Although there was no penetration to the cargo tanks, the vessel did suffer two breaches to the ballast tanks. Upon completion of the lightering and deballasting operations, the vessel was safely refloated during the high tide on Friday, July 13th, utilizing four local tugs.

The ASA member immediately commenced an underwater inspection of the ship's hull in conjunction with local authorities and the vessel's classification society, American Bureau of Shipping (ABS). Further planning was undertaken to prepare and obtain approval from the Coast Guard for the full discharge of cargo from the casualty. Under the direct supervision of company personnel, all 548,000 barrels of cargo were transferred on to another vessel to enable the *White Sea* to safely transit the light ship to a repair facility. Cargo transfer operations were completed and the vessel sailed from New York Harbor on July 28 bound for an undisclosed facility.

"The *White Sea* underscores the need for a professional salvage response," said ASA President George Wittich. "The quick response by this ASA member company helped to protect against further damage to the marine environment and surrounding areas," he continued.

## ASA Member Lifts Damaged Railroad Bridge

On July 10, a member of ASA was contracted, following an emergency call, to lift the Bayou Boeuf Railroad Bridge in Amelia, Louisiana, which had been struck by a tug and barge resulting in significant damage to the bridge span. Upon arrival at the site, the ASA member lifted the damaged 200-ton bridge span and placed it onto a deck barge. The bridge span was then transferred to a local repair facility where the member company again lifted the bridge span and placed it into the repair yard. Upon completion of the repairs, the bridge span was placed back on the deck barge and transferred back to the rail line where it was put back on to its supports, allowing rail traffic to resume.

"The repair of the railroad bridge in Louisiana is another example where a professional salvage response was needed to help restore normalcy to the surrounding community," said ASA President Wittich. "An ASA member was quick to respond and do it successfully."

## Crashed Cessna Aircraft Recovered by ASA Member in Lake Michigan

On June 7, 2007, a member of ASA was contracted to respond to the crash of a Cessna jet aircraft, which crashed into Lake Michigan on June 4. The N550BP Cessna Citation jet aircraft was carrying two pilots and a four-member medical transplant team from the University Michigan Medical Systems Department when it crashed into Lake Michigan off Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

The United States Coast Guard and civil authorities immediately mobilized their search and rescue teams. After an extensive search, it was determined that the plane had impacted the water at high speed and there were no survivors. Parts of the plane were scattered over 30 acres at depths exceeding 60 feet. The mission then changed to one of recovery led by the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) and the Milwaukee Police Department.

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*The 200-ton damaged Bayou Boeuf railroad bridge is lifted by an ASA member company and later placed back in place once repairs were completed.*

The ASA member provided assistance in recovering the wreckage of the aircraft working under direction of the NTSB, first formulating a recovery plan. Recovery of the crew remains and personal effects was made the priority.

On June 14, 2007 authorization was given for the ASA member team to commence recovery operations. The NTSB briefed the team as to the plane components key to determining the cause of the crash. The first pieces of wreckage were

recovered that afternoon. Over the next two weeks more than 90 percent of the jet, including all of the priority aircraft components, were recovered.

“The recovery of this Cessna aircraft is another example of the ways in which professional salvors are there at the ready,” said ASA President Wittich. “The ASA member companies involved in this effort provided a safe, quick professional response to a very tragic event,” he continued. 



## Spotlight on Foss Maritime


Founded in 1889, Foss Maritime is a full service maritime company focused on solving their customers’ toughest marine transportation and logistical challenges - close to home or in some of the most extreme environments of the world. Every day, Foss tugboats, barges and people are at work around the globe helping their customers succeed in a competitive market. The Company motto of ALWAYS READY is especially relevant to rescue towing. In the past few years, Foss tugs have assisted vessels in distress in the Arctic, Pacific and Atlantic Oceans as well as the Gulf of Mexico and the Caribbean Sea. As an active member of the ISU and ASA, Foss also provides ancillary support in salvage efforts



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including: fendering, blowers, ballast pumps, fire fighting, rescue craft, boom deployment and tending and tank barges for lightering.

Foss’ highly respected team of naval architects, marine engineers and shipyard staff is also available for marine engineering support in emergency situations. While responding to emergencies, they ensure the safety of their employees, the public and the environment with a commitment to operational excellence and compliance with international and domestic quality and safety standards.


For more information about Foss Maritime and the services they provide, please visit their website at [www.foss.com](http://www.foss.com). 

Visit us at [www.foss.com](http://www.foss.com)

## ASA and Marine Log Host National Maritime Salvage Conference & Expo



The American Salvage Association and Marine Log magazine have teamed up to sponsor the National Maritime Salvage Conference & Expo, October 9-11, 2007 at the Hyatt Regency Crystal City, Arlington, Virginia. Renowned experts from the U.S. Navy, Coast Guard and shipping, salvage and insurance organizations will be on hand to discuss and debate hot industry topics. There will also be an intense, interactive, all-day training seminar on marine salvage operations and salvage contracting on October 11. The ASA Membership will meet on October 8.

The Expo will feature table-top exhibits featuring new salvage, spill response, communications, training technologies and services. For the complete list of topics, speakers and activities, please see attached National Maritime Salvage Conference & Expo Program Guide. 

## Meet the ASA Membership

For membership information, please contact Brad Rosello, Chairman, ASA Membership Committee via email at [bradleyengineering@yahoo.com](mailto:bradleyengineering@yahoo.com), or Dick Fredricks, ASA Director, via email at [rfredricks@vesselalliance.com](mailto:rfredricks@vesselalliance.com).

### Associate Corporate Members



**BMT Salvage Limited (The SA)**  
New York, NY USA  
Tel: (212) 587-9300 (24 Hours)  
[www.wreckage.org](http://www.wreckage.org)



**PCCI, Inc.**  
Alexandria, VA USA  
Tel: (703) 684-2060 (24 Hours)  
[www.pccii.com](http://www.pccii.com)



**Marine Hazard Response**  
Houston, TX USA  
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USCG (Ret.)

**VADM James C. Card,**  
USCG (Ret.)

**RADM Robert C. North,**  
U.S. Coast Guard (Ret.)

**RADM Paul J. Pluta,**  
USCG (Ret.)

**RADM Thomas Gilmour,**  
USCG (Ret.)

**CAPT W.F. "Bill" Searle,**  
USN (Ret.)

**CAPT Eugene B. Mitchell,**  
USN (Ret.)

**CAPT J. Huntly Boyd,**  
USN (Ret.)

**CAPT Robert B. Moss,**  
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**CAPT William N. Klorig,**  
USN (Ret.)

**CAPT Colin M. Jones,**  
USN (Ret.)

**CAPT Charles S. Maclin,**  
USN (Ret.)

**CAPT Richard P. Fiske,**  
USN (Ret.)

**CAPT R.S. "Chip" McCord**

**CAPT "Bert" Marsh,**  
USN (Ret.)

**CAPT Jim Wilkins,**  
USN (Ret.)

**CAPT Richard Hooper, USN**

## UPCOMING EVENTS



**September 20-21**  
ML Global Greenship 2007  
Washington, DC  
[www.marinelog.com](http://www.marinelog.com)

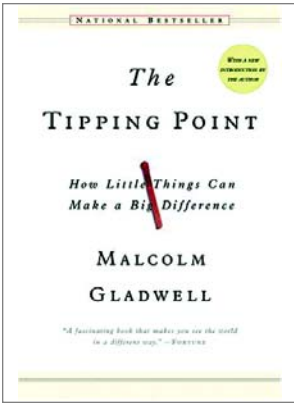
**October 8**  
ASA 2007 Fall Meeting  
Arlington, VA  
[www.americansalvage.org](http://www.americansalvage.org)

**October 9-11**  
National Maritime Salvage  
Conference & Expo  
Arlington, VA  
[www.marinelog.com](http://www.marinelog.com)

**November 5-7**  
ML Ferries 2007  
Delray Beach, FL  
[www.marinelog.com](http://www.marinelog.com)

**November 15-16**  
Clean Gulf 2007 Conference  
Tampa, FL  
[www.cleangulf.org](http://www.cleangulf.org)

**December 5-6**  
ML Intelligent Shipbuilding  
Washington, DC  
[www.marinelog.com](http://www.marinelog.com)



## “The Tipping Point”

### *How Little Things Can Make a Big Difference*

Presented to me as a gift from Captain Jim Walsh, Vice President of the Liberian International Ship & Corporate Registry, “The Tipping Point” offers the power of new ideas. It presents a course to change, with a profoundly hopeful message – that one imaginative person applying a well-placed lever can move the world.

Defining that precise moment when a trend becomes a trend, author Malcolm Gladwell probes the surface of everyday occurrences to reveal some surprising dynamics behind explosive social changes. He examines the power of word-of-mouth and explores how very small changes can directly affect popularity.

“The “Tipping Point’s” first lesson is that starting change requires concentrating resources on a few areas. The second lesson is that those who are successful at creating change do not just do what they think is right, they test their intuitions. The real lesson of the book comes only by reading it. Just imagine what might be accomplished in the maritime sector when even a few people put their minds to improving safety, environmental protection and operational efficiency.

Finally, I have learned that another friend, Patty Adams with O’Brien Oil Pollution Service, Inc., has also read this book. So should you!

*Published by Little, Brown and Company, March 2000. Available at [www.barnesandnoble.com](http://www.barnesandnoble.com).*

**A Book Review by  
Dick Fredricks,  
ASA Director**

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### General Members



**American Marine Corporation**  
Honolulu, HI USA  
Tel: (808) 545-5190 (24 Hours)  
[www.amsghq.com](http://www.amsghq.com)



**Magone Marine**  
Dutch Harbor, AL USA  
Tel: (907) 581-1400 (24 Hours)  
[www.magonemarine.com](http://www.magonemarine.com)



**SVITZER Salvage**  
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[www.svitzerwijismuller.com](http://www.svitzerwijismuller.com)



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Tel: (504) 866-6341 (24 Hours)  
[www.bissomarine.com](http://www.bissomarine.com)



**Marine Pollution Control**  
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[www.marinepollutioncontrol.com](http://www.marinepollutioncontrol.com)



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[www.tandtmarine.com](http://www.tandtmarine.com)



**Crowley Marine Services, Inc.**  
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[www.crowley.com](http://www.crowley.com)



**Ocean Group Inc.**  
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[www.groupeocean.com](http://www.groupeocean.com)



**Titan, a Crowley Company**  
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[www.titansalvage.com](http://www.titansalvage.com)



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**Global Diving & Salvage, Inc.**  
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[www.gdiving.com](http://www.gdiving.com)



**Smit Salvage Americas Inc.**  
Houston, TX USA  
Tel: (281) 372-3500 (24 Hours)  
[www.smit.com](http://www.smit.com)