



DONJON-SMIT Alliance NEWS

AN OPA-90 ALLIANCE

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DONJON-SMIT FROM JOHN A. WITTE, JR.'S PERSPECTIVE

Alliance News recently sat down with John A. Witte, Jr. to get his thoughts on the Donjon-SMIT alliance and changes in the salvage industry.

Q: To begin, would you please give an overview of Donjon Marine Co., Inc.'s history and range of services?

A: Donjon Marine was incorporated in 1967 by J. Arnold Witte, a maritime attorney by trade, who had experience in the marine industry as a result of his work with his father, John J. Witte, and Witte Marine Equipment Company. Donjon's initial focus was marine salvage. We have subsequently expanded our range of services to include, in addition to our marine salvage and related activities, dredging, marine transportation, bulk stevedoring, heavy lift, and metal recycling. Also, Donjon recently opened the doors of our initial foray into shipbuilding and repair. In late December of 2009, Donjon opened its doors to Donjon Shipbuilding and Repair, a fully automated shipbuilding and repair facility located in Erie, PA.

Q: How and why did the unique Donjon-SMIT alliance come about?

A: Donjon Marine was created to respond to the marine salvage and related needs of the maritime community. Marine salvage remains and will continue to be a primary focus of Donjon. As a result of the political and regulatory environment



John A. Witte, Jr., Executive Vice President, Donjon Marine Co., Inc.

here in the U.S. with regard to safeguarding the environment, legislation governing marine salvage – or more to the point, a professional salvage response – was instituted beginning with the Oil Pollution Act of 1990 (OPA 90). As time continues to march forward, all marine salvage services involving vessels that carry or have onboard a petroleum product or similar pollutant will be required to have a named salvor. For Donjon

to continue to be a leading salvage responder here in the U.S., we established an alliance with SMIT Salvage Americas, a subsidiary of highly successful international marine salvage service provider SMIT International. There is no present provider of salvage and salvage related services with the history of cost effective success as the Donjon-SMIT team. Our joint commitment to providing a superior salvage response, based upon our combined history of success, can neither be questioned nor duplicated.

Q: How do you think the OPA 90 Salvage and Marine Fire Fighting regulations have advanced marine salvage capabilities in the U.S.?

A: I have always been of the opinion that there are, for the most part, sufficient assets within the OPA 90 response area to respond to any casualty. In my mind, the real issue has been coordination, availability and access. The onset of the OPA 90 era has required the professional marine salvage community to not only insure that their wholly owned and operated assets are in a ready and operational condition, but where there are additional

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DONJON-SMIT FROM JOHN A. WITTE, JR.'S PERSPECTIVE

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needs in a service provider's response capability, to fill these needs with the services and equipment necessary to provide the complete professional salvage response required by OPA 90; the goal of any professional salvor.

Q: What are your thoughts on protecting the marine environment in this day and age?

A: Marine salvors are the first line of defense in the protection of our marine environment. The concept of "keep the oil in the ship" is one of the primary drivers of any marine salvor when first assessing a casualty. While pollution control and cleanup are important functions, once pollutants escape the safe confines of a vessel's hull, any escape has a negative impact on the environment. We only have one marine environment. If we ruin it

by allowing any activity to create a negative environmental impact, we will be allowing a life sustaining asset to dissipate and possibly disappear. If, thru inaction or worse, we as a worldwide community allow our marine environment to begin to diminish in any way, how long before the rest of our functional planet will follow? Good salvage is good environmental protection.

Q: Can you speak to Donjon-SMIT's commitment to help its clients meet their regulatory requirements?

A: Both Donjon Marine and SMIT Americas are in the business of marine salvage. We, as individual service providers, were providing marine salvage and related services before the start of the OPA 90 era, so Donjon-SMIT is not strictly a

creation thereof. We are also both of the opinion that to be successful over the long term, you must keep your clients and potential clients happy. Salvage of 30 years ago was pretty simple from a regulatory compliance perspective. There was limited oversight and certainly not the legal landmines that the response community must presently navigate. Donjon-SMIT is involved in the changing regulatory landscape and is aware of the issues, both obvious and hidden. Part of our service to our clients is to provide them with the support and direction they may require to ensure absolute regulatory compliance. Donjon-SMIT is not a creation of OPA 90 but a teaming of salvors who respond to the needs of the marine community as required by OPA 90; a subtle, but important distinction. ❖

Donjon-SMIT Responds to Crippled *Sealand Eagle*

By Steven Newes, Senior Vice President, and Paul Hankins, Vice President, Operations, Donjon Marine Co., Inc.

In mid-January, the container vessel *Sealand Eagle* encountered a severe storm. In the pre-dawn hours a huge wave, by some estimations greater than 100', broke over the bow of the ship. Fortunately there was no one hurt in the incident, but the wave caused severe damage to the containers in the first position on the deck of the ship and, as a result to the ship's 65' tall foremast. The wave swept away deck lights on the mast, broke its stays, and bent the 2' diameter steel mast backwards against the deck hatch at a 45 degree angle.

As the ship approached New York, the operating company called for assistance from its Salvage and Marine Firefighting (SMFF) contractor, Donjon-SMIT and, in turn, alliance partner Donjon Marine Co., Inc. Per U.S. Coast Guard Captain of the Port orders, the ship and operating company were required to ensure

that any containers or debris that might fall from the ship during its New York entry be immediately

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Donjon-SMIT Responds to Crippled *Sealand Eagle*

(*Sealand Eagle*, from page 2)

recovered. Donjon's crane barge, *Delaware Bay*, with the tug *Atlantic Salvor* and the tug Thomas Witte, along with a cargo barge, met the ship at the outer entrance to New York Harbor and followed the ship to berth in Port Elizabeth, NJ.

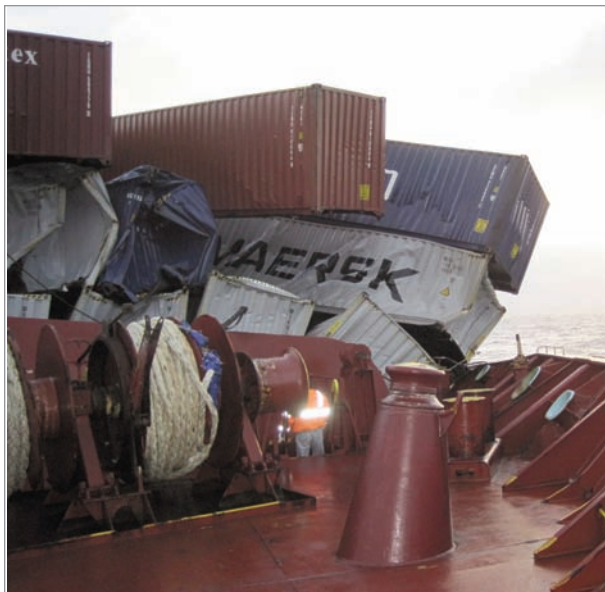
A Donjon salvage team and the derrick barge Chesapeake 1000 with 230 ft. of boom length then

commenced work to remove approximately 37 containers and place them aboard two deck barges where they could be safely shuttled ashore. The derrick barge *Delaware Bay* also supported miscellaneous debris removal from the ship's deck. In addition, to complete its voyage to Houston, the *Sealand Eagle's* foremast had to be safely secured and her forward navigation lights – residing atop the mast – repositioned so that they properly identified the vessel at night.

A Donjon salvage crew welded I-beam support brackets underneath the damaged mast to the deck below and also rigged new stays to provide the crippled mast more support. Gusset plates were welded to the mast/deck connection for even more support. Finally, a temporary bracket was fabricated to reposition the dislocated forward running light to its proper location.

With the repairs completed and with Coast Guard and ABS approvals, the vessel was cleared to continue her transit to Houston for her scheduled cargo offload. Because of the speed and efficiency with which Donjon responded to the incident and its familiarity with the damage, Donjon was asked to coordinate the permanent repair of the mast. During the period of the transit, Donjon contacted organizations in Houston with the proper equipment and resources to quickly execute a major repair of this magnitude. After the vessel's arrival in Houston, in less than 48 hours, Donjon and its team successfully removed the damaged mast, cut out the damaged section, fabricated a new section, welded it in place and then resteped the mast, rewelding it into position and rerunning all the electric cabling necessary on the mast.

With the repair a success and approval by ABS, the *Sealand Eagle* sailed for Mobile, AL in just 48 hours after arriving in Houston. The repair was testimony to Donjon-SMIT's ability to rapidly react and assemble the necessary equipment and personnel to meet the wide variety of a customer's salvage-related needs. ❖



OPPOSITE PAGE: Damaged containers on the deck of the Sealand Eagle. THIS PAGE, TOP: The salvage crew rigged new stays and welded I-beam support brackets for the crippled mast. THIS PAGE, BOTTOM: The wave left containers in a precarious position on deck.

Donjon-SMIT proudly provides nationwide emergency response services



West Coast: Vancouver, British Columbia; Seattle, WA; Astoria, OR; San Francisco, CA; Los Angeles, CA; San Diego, CA

East Coast: Portsmouth, NH; Albany, NY; New York, NY; Philadelphia, PA; Baltimore, MD; Norfolk, VA; Charleston, SC; Savannah, GA; Brunswick, GA; Fernandina, FL; Jacksonville, FL; Miami, FL

Great Lakes: Cleveland, OH

Bahamas: Freeport, Bahamas

Gulf Coast: Port Arthur, TX; Houston, TX

Alaska: Valdez, AK; Dutch Harbor, AK

Pacific Ocean: Hawaii, Guam

Puerto Rico and U.S. Virgin Islands: San Juan.



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