

AMO first responders participate in Donjon-SMIT LLC Salvage Marine Fire Fighting Network activation drill

American Maritime Officers members Dec. 8 participated in an activation drill in the New York area for the Donjon-SMIT LLC Salvage Marine Fire Fighting Network. PRONAV Offshore Services LLC manages this nationwide network of first responders for Donjon-SMIT.

PRONAV has recruited AMO officers to serve as first responders in 41 U.S. Coast Guard Captain of the Port Zones in the continental U.S., non-contiguous states and U.S. territories. The AMO first responders help fulfill an important mandate of new Coast Guard regulations, which require each tank vessel calling at a U.S. port to pre-designate a marine salvage company within its tank vessel response plan to ensure rapid response to any casualty involving damage to the vessel with the potential to spill oil.

AMO members serving in this activation drill were Michael Funk, Tim Kelly and Erich Becher. All described the drill, presentations and discussions involved as informative and professional, and each expressed their interest in continued participation in the Donjon-SMIT Salvage Marine Fire Fighting Network (SMFF). AMO officers also commended Donjon-SMIT on the



quality of the equipment prepared for and made available to the first responders.

"I was very pleased with the exercise last week," Becher wrote. "It was professionally run and very informative. The main purpose, and what I believe the PRONAV participants took away from it, was to better acquaint us with the role of the firefighting first responders in the SMFF network.

"In addition, we saw firsthand the capabilities and resources of the joint

American Maritime Officers members serving in the Dec. 8 Donjon-SMIT network activation drill in the New York area were Michael Funk, Tim Kelly and Erich Becher. With them here is Chris Law of Martin and Ottaway.

Donjon-SMIT organization in emergency response to marine casualties of any kind. Their organization and preparedness were very impressive to see," he wrote.

AMO officers working as first responders on their vacation time are paid per day of activation for service in the SMFF Network, whether the activation is in response to an actual incident or for a preparedness exercise. The PRONAV FlexCrewSM SMFF Network of AMO first

responders is managed for Donjon-SMIT through the PRONAV FlexCrewSM program, and was established and manned early this year through a cooperative effort between PRONAV and the AMO Dispatching Department.

The participants in the drill Dec. 8 expressed satisfaction with the experience of working with Donjon-SMIT and affiliated representatives, and with their receptiveness to the involvement and ideas of the AMO officers.

"Throughout the day, they asked us for input to their plans and seemed very interested in what we had to say," Becher said. "I think we were able to give them a few new ideas that may benefit the program as it evolves and matures. It was a pleasure to be a part of the program and I look forward to participating in any activities that they may ask us to be involved in."

PRONAV in October announced an increase in the frequency of network activation drills to meet anticipated U.S. Coast Guard requirements. The Coast Guard has favorably viewed the approach of employing merchant marine officers as first responders, and the service is being offered to other salvage organizations.