

Mobilising under LOF to save the gas carrier SCF Tomsk



Salvage World will profile a number of Lloyd's Form salvage operations in this LOF centenary year. We begin with an account of the SCF Tomsk salvage, from Captain Rich Habib, Titan's Director of Salvage.

Tropical Storm Noel struck the Dominican Republic last October 28, claiming 115 lives. SCF Tomsk, a 35,000 m³ gas carrier, was at an offshore mooring with some 10,000 m³ of propane/butane. In the early hours of October 29 her wires began to part.

The Captain was unable to bring the bow into wind. His ship was driven onto a nearby headland, grounding on a limestone bottom. Rammed further ashore by heavy seas, she was effectively pinned against the headland, with big seas breaking over her deck.

Titan and other salvors responded, some by moving Salvage Masters towards the scene. Titan Senior Salvage Engineer Paul Hansen was just 70 miles away but he was struggling with the chaotic local situation. Many roads had been washed out.

I was in Titan's Florida office that morning, along with Mauricio Garrido, our Director of Business Development. He was working the phones, trying to set up a coherent logistics lifeline to the ship. I left for the airport and the first flight into Santo Domingo.

During the afternoon Paul reached the headland overlooking the ship and made VHF contact with the Master. He saw that SCF Tomsk was in heavy motion, her hull smashing against shelving rocks. Big waves swept across her main deck. The port tanks (inshore) had been breached and Lloyd's SERS was indicating that much of the hull strength was likely compromised.

We were then awarded a Lloyd's Form. I reached the scene that evening, as Mauricio's efforts built up a head of steam. An international team mobilised from the USA, UK, Denmark, Sweden, Panama and Trinidad. Our Naval Architect, Phil Reed, was working closely with Lloyd's SERS. Acting through partners, we set up a logistics base in Puerto Rico – well clear of the devastated area. A US-based aircraft was chartered to fly in equipment.

Lightering experts MPC were preparing a team and equipment as tugs mobilised from Puerto Rico, Jamaica and the Dominican Republic. We were liaising closely with the US Coast Guard in Puerto Rico and Santo Domingo.

Planning began for possible cargo lightering. Trucks and a reception facility were arranged, to take the heavy fuel. Biologists were on standby to assist the Club, in the event of environmental damage. All these actions were initiated

on agreement of LOF.

I was busy advising the Captain on ballasting down. By late evening this was having some effect, allowing the exhausted Master and Chief Engineer to snatch a few hours rest. Meanwhile, the mobilisation continued.

I boarded the casualty by US Coast Guard helicopter the next day. During the night ballast was adjusted again, to reduce pounding. With a new day, the full panoply of salvage team, equipment and vessels began to arrive.

SCF Tomsk's stern was pulled clear of the rocky shelves that threatened to penetrate and flood the engineroom. As the weather eased, her bow was pulled clear and the vessel settled on the flat limestone bottom between mooring and headland. Finally, the tanker was deballasted, her breached tanks blown down and the cargo shifted, freeing her from the bottom. With the vessel safely at anchor, a damage survey was conducted. Titan then took her into the mooring for discharge. Ship and cargo were saved.


Tanker spill statistics

The International Tanker Owners' Pollution Federation (ITOPF) reports a significant fall in oil spills from tankers in 2007. Thirteen of the 17 incidents attended involved non-tankers.

ITOPF, with a membership representing 95 per cent of the world tanker fleet, celebrates its 40th anniversary this year.

CONFERENCE DATES

- **ITS 2008**, May 19-23, Singapore: this year marks the 40th anniversary of this biennial event, now heading for a record number of delegates and exhibitors. By late January, over 200 companies from 33 countries were booked to participate. ISU Executive Committee Member Joop Timmermans (ITC) will be amongst the speakers. For more information, contact: +44 (0) 1225 868821 or visit www.tugandsalvage.com
- **International Harbour Masters Association**, May 12-16, St Petersburg: ISU President Arnold Witte will give a paper on casualty management and interaction with shore authorities. For more information, contact Kevin Richardson, Port of Dover: +44 (0) 1304 240400.



Salvage World

This publication is produced by the International Salvage Union. Members and Associates are invited to submit material for publication. All contributions should be forwarded to Mike Lacey, ISU Secretary-General, on
Tel: +44 (0) 20 7645 9104
Fax: +44 (0) 20 7929 0213
Email: isu@marine-salvage.com