

The Report



The Journal of The International Institute of Marine Surveying

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Australasian Branch Seminar hits new heights

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Using Technology to Improve the Quality of Service to Clients

Alessio Gnecco MIIMS



Despite any effort, incidents occur and they are of particular importance when they involve commercial vessels with risk of sinking or capsizing or when their salvage is to be attempted. This happens specifically when, due to collisions, groundings or other circumstances, the incident causes a loss of the normal free floating characteristics of the damaged vessel.

In such cases the surveyors are called to one of the most challenging tasks they can encounter in their professional life. All the usual approaches have to be reconsidered, the time is limited, information scarce, conflicting interests colliding and the risk huge.

An excellent description of the matter, seen from different perspectives, is given by the "Casualty Management Guidelines" by John Noble, published by the Nautical Institute and that were presented at the latest conference of the Institute. I strongly recommend their reading to anybody who might be involved in a salvage case at any stage and of course to the colleagues of IIMS.

Since the beginning of my career I got the opportunity to assist to a few salvage operations and their aftermath, either as young project manager of a shipyard awarded the contract of repairing heavily damaged vessels, as owners' superintendent on board of grounded ships or as surveyor appointed either by the hull and machinery underwriters or by the owners of the involved asset.

In all these cases I had the full awareness of the necessity to be prepared well in advance of the event and I was conscious that specific tools were necessary, especially from the calculation point of view. Luckily the performances of modern computers are increasing at an astonishingly pace and very handy instruments can support the decisions of the surveyor giving him/her a better confidence.

However, it is often necessary to refer to specific and on-purpose developed software. For this reason, Herbert Engineering Co. (www.herbert.com) and Stige Surveys and Consulting (www.stige.co.uk) of the writer reached

an agreement on the use of the well known Hecsalv software. The agreement included a preliminary training course and the creation of a network of contacts ready to be activated in case of immediate necessity.

Established in 1963, Herbert Engineering Corp. is an Alameda (California) based, naval architectural firm that has provided ship design services and software products for the marine industry for over four decades. Back in February 2011 Herbert Engineering and ABS announced their joint venture into Herbert-ABS Software Solutions, LLC (Herbert-ABS), offering leading edge loading and salvage analysis software packages as well as software design tools to the maritime and offshore industries.

Among them is Hecsalv, a software specifically designed for Ship design and salvage engineering response, in use by Navies, salvors, owners, consultants, designers and shipyards.

In the ship design field, Hecsalv is used to evaluate various hull forms, to create detailed 3D vessel models, to develop load cases review resulting intact and damaged stability, to develop allowable bending moments and shear force envelopes, to produce Trim and Stability booklets.

Hecsalv assists salvage engineers in the salvage of free-floating and stranded ships by providing initial engineering estimates for planning and mobilizing a salvage mission and in-depth engineering assessments during the salvage operation.

Herbert Engineering, with its headquarters in the western coast of USA and subsidiary offices in Annapolis (USA), Glasgow and Shanghai will give to Stige Surveys and Consulting the computing facilities and the technical background allowing a prompt and qualified support and response.

The use of a program as Hecsalv is not obvious and it may lead to gross misunderstandings. In addition, when a salvage is in progress there is no time for any “training on the job”, so it is necessary to create in advance a reliable connection with someone who is usually dealing with such tools, without wasting time in finding consultancy agreements or because the surveyor and the consultant are not speaking the same language.

The purpose of the agreement was therefore to create a link between the world of the surveyors and a specialist firm capable to support them in case of need.

