



# NOAA Abandoned Vessel Program Removal Case Study: *F/V Mwaalil Saat*

Contributing Agency: CNMI Office of Coastal Resource Management, USCG

## OVERVIEW

### VESSEL

<i>Dimensions:</i>	30' x 93'	<i>Hull:</i>	Steel
<i>Type:</i>	Trawler	<i>Tonnage:</i>	164

### SITE

<i>Name:</i>	Tanapag Lagoon
<i>Location:</i>	Saipan, CNMI
<i>Coordinates:</i>	15 13.450'N 145 43.893' E
<i>Land:</i>	Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, Marianas Public Lands Authority



### INCIDENT & REMOVAL

<i>Situation:</i>	Broke mooring / sunk during typhoon
<i>Incident Date:</i>	Jun. 28, 2004
<i>Total Duration:</i>	2 months, Jun. 28, '04 – Sept. 4, '04
<i>Actual Operations:</i>	Spread across several weeks
<i>Cost:</i>	\$3,500,000
<i>Funding:</i>	US Oil Spill Liability Trust Fund
<i>Agencies Involved:</i>	USCG, CNMI Coastal Resource Management, NOAA, OSHA, Marianas Public Land Authority, CNMI Emergency Management Office and CNMI Division of Environmental Quality
<i>Primary Threats:</i>	Public Safety, Environment, Navigation

## DETAILS

### VESSEL, HISTORY & INCIDENT

NOAA AVP #:	2546
Vessel ID#:	1101004

The Mwaalil Saat was a 93' derelict steel hulled trawler that was tied up to a jetty belonging to the Marianas Public Lands Authority in Saipan. The vessel was surveyed by NOAA's Abandoned Vessel Program in June of 2003; a number of threats were identified and NOAA concluded that the vessel removal was a high priority. In June, 2004 the vessel broke its mooring during Typhoon Tingting and was grounded on its side in Tanapag Harbor. While the owner reported that the tanks had been run dry, there was a diesel sheen around the vessel and two foot by half mile trail of black oil. The vessel was blocking the island's only fuel dock. The situation was critical since fuel for the island's electricity comes through that dock. The vessel rested on a sand and coral rubble bottom with low coral cover and was in close proximity to more sensitive habitats including mudflats, mangroves and coral reefs. The owner was derelict and carried no insurance on the vessel.

## **INCIDENT RESPONSE & SALVAGE OPERATIONS**

**Contractor:** Titan Maritime, LLC  
**Authority:** National Contingency Plan (40 CFR 300)  
**Permits:** Permits were not required for the emergency wreck removal operation  
Waiver were issued for 401 Water Quality Certification by the Division of Environmental Quality and a CRM permit by Coastal Resources Management

In response to the incident, a Unified Command was established and the US Oil Spill Liability Trust Fund was opened. The Command considered several response options including leaving the vessel in place and modifying the dock to allow ships to offload fuel from further offshore, refloating the vessel, putting the vessel on a barge and hauling it for at sea disposal and cutting the vessel up for upland disposal. The upland disposal option was eventually implemented. This option required the use of an upland staging / storage area managed by the Marianas Public Lands Authority, which required strict assurances that the vessel would be moved from the site within 90 days.

The operation occurred in two distinct phases; removing the vessel from the water and breaking it for scrap. During the first phase Titan Maritime removed vessel debris from the area surrounding the vessel, cut the ship into five large sections and moved the sections to the upland staging area. In the staging area Titan proceeded to cut the ship into sections small enough for their subcontractor, AMPAC, to load into trucks and haul to a local scrap company. These sections were typically about 5 tons. As this phase proceeded, the salvors used sorbent material to collect and contain as much oil as possible. They also had to remove asbestos as it was found. Another contractor, South Pacific Environmental, was on hand to collect runoff water (used to cool hotwork during cutting). They also cleaned the engine room before it was cut up.

When the operation was complete, contaminated sediments were removed from the staging area and clean aggregate was applied.

## **DISPOSAL OPERATIONS**

**Contractor:** Titan Maritime, LLC  
**Authority:** National Contingency Plan (40 CFR 300)  
**Permits:** Marianas Public Land Authority Land Use Permit

The debris brought up from the vessel and the area surrounding it were returned to the owner or sent to a landfill after being tested for PCB contamination. 50 cubic yards of contaminated sediments were packed up and shipped to an EPA regulated waste disposal site in Washington State for processing and disposal. 125.5 metric tons of scrap was recycled by KP Scrap.

## **LESSONS LEARNED**

*Waiting to remove vessels can be costly and dangerous*

The vessel was identified by NOAA and the local government as high priority candidate for removal but the funding was not available to dispose of it. The vessel remained in a neglected state until the next large storm which precipitated a serious incident and a very costly response. The final response option did, however, include full wreck removal, mitigating all current threats and removing the potential for future damage to public safety, infrastructure and the environment.

# Removal Case Study: *F/V Mwaalil Saat*



*Grounded vessel being cut underwater (black water)*



*Debris lifted from the water*



*Sections of hull staged for further work*



*Machinery and hull section*

## **CONTACT INFORMATION**

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