ARGO Incident

Marine Safety Unit Toledo, OH
U.S. Coast Guard Sector Detroit, MI
Ohio Environmental Protection Agency
• **ARGO Background**: Built 1911, sunk in 1937 (78 yrs ago), 120ft x 35ft x 12ft with 4 to 5ft visible above mudline, lays in 50ft of water
  – Carrying approx 200,000 gal of product
  – Thought to be in Canadian waters off Pelee Island, discovered in U.S. waters 9 mi east of Kelly’s Island
  – Subject of NOAA RULET in 2013
On Friday, August 28, 2015, while performing a historical shipwreck side scan sonar search in the waters of Lake Erie, Tom Kowalczk of the Cleveland Underwater Explorers (CLUE) detected a target of interest...Argo.

CLUE provided their findings to the US Coast Guard 9th District Staff.

Tom Kowalczk
Challenges

- The unknowns
  - Vessel construction and stability
  - Cargo information
- Offshore operations limited by weather
- Diver-led operations with no visibility
- No Responsible Party
- Availability of temporary storage
National Contingency Plan

The federal government's blueprint for responding to both oil spills and hazardous substance releases. The National Contingency Plan is the result of the country's efforts to develop a national response capability and promote overall coordination among the hierarchy of responders and contingency plans.
Use of NCP Special Teams

- DRAT/DRG
- NSF
- IMAT
- NOAA SSC
- SERT
- NPFC
• **Operations**: management of tactics in support of the primary mission
  – Current operations
  – Future operations
International Coordinating Officer

- Activated CANUSLAK
- CCG Deployed ICO to ICP
- Provided tactical resources
- Provided planning support through Environmental Unit
- JIC representation – one voice
Incident Command Post
Lucas County Emergency Operations Center
Air Plume Modeling
NOAA Oil Movement Modeling
Geographical Response Plans
Geographical Response Plans

Western Lake Erie
Area Contingency Plan
Coastal/Inland
A Geographic Annex to the SE Michigan ACP

June 2015

Lucas, Ottawa, Erie, Sandusky, and Wood Counties, Ohio; Monroe County, Michigan

Western Lake Erie Area Committee
Argo Site Investigation

Open Hatch Cover

Penetration in Tank Top
Product Release

• During preparation of the Argo for cargo offload a rivet popped free and product was released.
• Released product damaged the diver’s mask and suit.
New dive suit

• Following the release, a new dive suit was used to prevent injury
  – Positive pressure suit to repel product if suit was punctured
  – Upgraded dive helmet
Samples Taken from Leak Site

- US EPA contractors conducted all product and water sampling during the response
Hot Tapping

- Hot tapping – making a connection with a vessel/pipe without releasing product
- Argo was encased in mud requiring an innovative hot tapping technique
  - Two taps were placed in the top of the tank
  - A pipe was placed in one tap to allow water to push product from the bottom of the tank to the other tap
Staging of Equipment
Temporary Storage

- A suitable tank barge to receive offloaded product was not available.
- A “tank barge” was created using Frac Tanks and a vapor collection system.
Receiving Barge
Receiving Barge
Air Monitoring

• USCG Atlantic Strike Team (AST) conducted air monitoring during the response
• AST provided the platform for water sampling
Safety Zone Enforcement
Positioning of the Work Platforms Offshore
Hot Tap Prep & Hot Tapping
Lightering Operations & Product Sampling
Product Sampling for final disposition
The End.