NDIA Speaker/Panel Questions - Capt Wilkins

Capt Wilkins – Could you envision a dual-use application for an expeditionary heavy-lift salvage system – e.g., Marine Corps combat engineering – or is the capability needed simply too large and too specialized?

   Answer: We're presently working on identifying lighter weight and more transportable equipment to accomplish heavy salvage. It is conceivable that there is a Venn Diagram type overlap between USMC combat engineering requirements and salvage forces.   The Navy's Mobile Diving and Salvage Units (MDSU) have expeditionary salvage capability which may very well support USMC requirements, however the SEABEE's Underwater Construction Teams currently have mission assignments to directly support USMC inshore efforts during wartime.

Followup – in addition to salvage for Sea Base connectors, what unique salvage / DFMO/ repair might be required for the Sea Base itself?

   Answer: As I discussed in my presentation, USN Salvage Forces provide four distinct types of missions during wartime:

   (1) Harbor & Channel Clearance
   (2) Amphibious Salvage
   (3) Battle Damage Assessment and Repair
   (4) Rescue Towing

Given that the Sea Base is envisioned to largely be comprised of ships (or at least afloat vessels), the principal role of salvage for the Sea Base itself is in Battle Damage Assessment and Repair. In this role, salvors/divers are specifically trained in underwater ship husbandry (UWSH), and can assess and repair ships and ship systems, whether damage is induced due to battle, collision or routine operations.

Capt Wilkins (beyond our preview here)

How many tons is a "Heavy Lift?"

   Answer: "Heavy lift" has no formal definition, but is largely used when speaking of salvage that requires ability to provide hundreds or thousands of tons of lift or pull.

Is the huge focus on Sea Basing based on any assumptions that global warming and its corresponding rise in the water levels of the oceans will be a significant geo-political influence on the threats and warfare of the future?

   Answer: Not to my knowledge.