

Improving waterway safety with Cooperative Vessel Traffic Service

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On January 30th, 2007 Cooperative Vessel Traffic Service (CVTS) Tampa held its ribbon cutting ceremony to celebrate a new chapter in an ongoing partnership between the Tampa Port Authority and the Coast Guard. The ribbon cutting allowed the Tampa Bay Harbor Safety & Security Committee (TBHSSC), the Tampa Port Authority and the Coast Guard an opportunity to recognise the fruits of more than ten years of labour. This type of partnership is a first for America's East Coast and is a sterling example of how port partnerships can be best leveraged and cost effective. This CVTS will undoubtedly improve waterway safety on Tampa Bay over the years to come so that maritime commerce can continue to flourish.

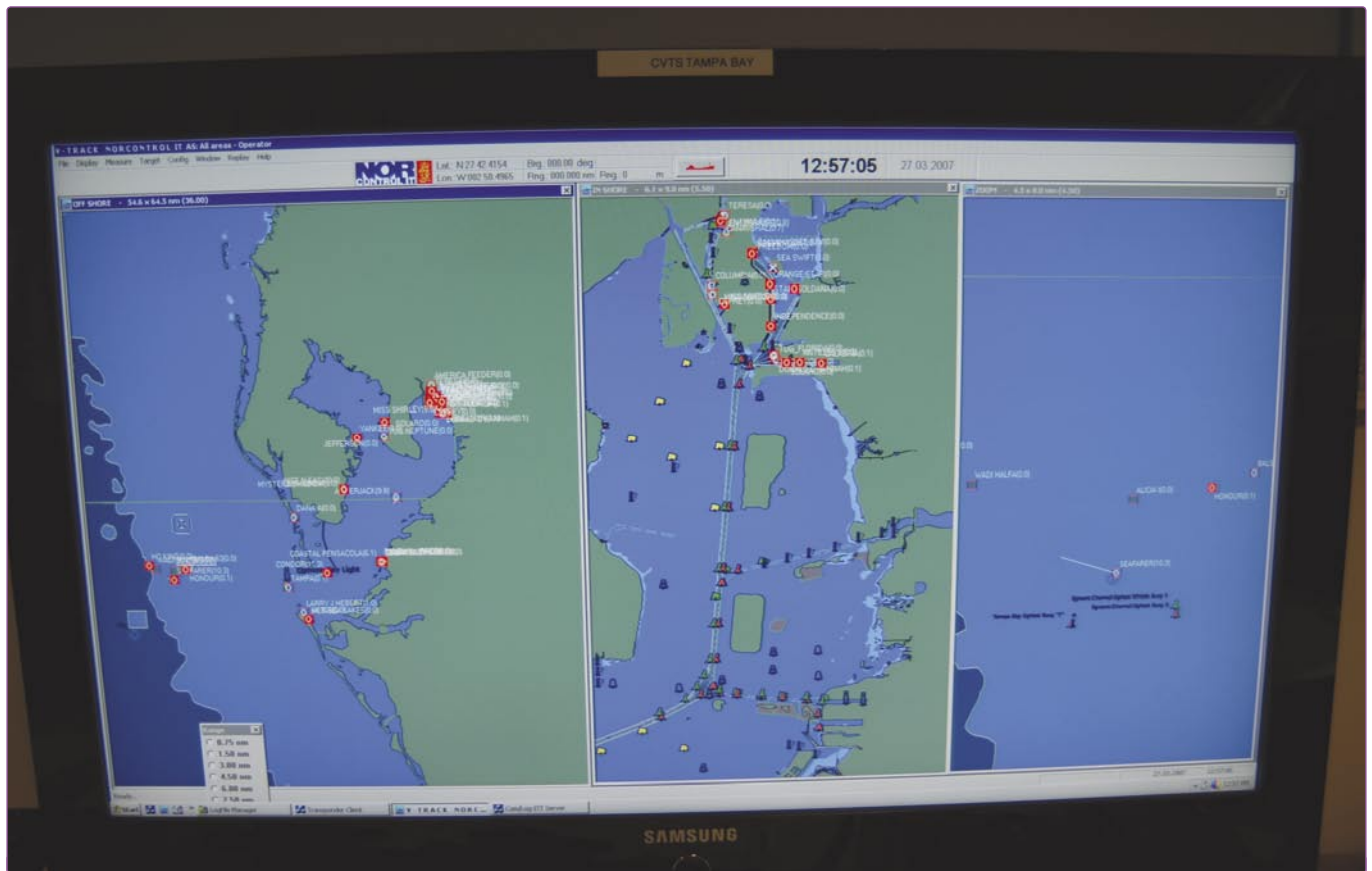
Maritime casualty history

This CVTS was established because the maritime casualty history in Tampa Bay includes the loss of the 'CGC Blackthorn' in 1980, the catastrophic Summit Venture collision with the Sunshine Skyway Bridge, also in 1980, resulted in the collapse of the bridge and the three vessel collision (between the 'Balso 37,' the 'Seafarer' tow and the 'Bouchard' tow) and resultant fire in 1993. Following these events, the state of Florida

commissioned a consortium to examine mitigation efforts to reduce risk on Tampa Bay. This consortium eventually became what is now known as the TBHSSC which is comprised of several different port community entities. Championed by the TBHSSC, efforts to achieve a higher level of maritime safety in the Tampa Bay Area culminated in the formal partnership between the US Coast Guard and the Tampa Port Authority. The goal of the partnership was, and still is, to develop, fund and provide a model port and waterway management system with its core being Cooperative Vessel Traffic Service (CVTS) Tampa. The partnership was formalised via a Memorandum of Agreement signed on May 28th, 1998 by the Tampa Port Authority and RADM North for the Coast Guard. This partnership provides for a shared commitment from both parties, each bringing different capabilities to the table. The Coast Guard is the designated 'Competent Authority' and brings regulatory & enforcement authority as well as a safety focus to the table while Tampa Port Authority provides vital local knowledge, history, additional resources, the ever important stakeholder buy-in and an economic focus. The model has proven to be ideal in Tampa Bay, garnering support from the entire port community.



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Automatic Identification allows the active monitoring and management of vessel traffic on the bay.

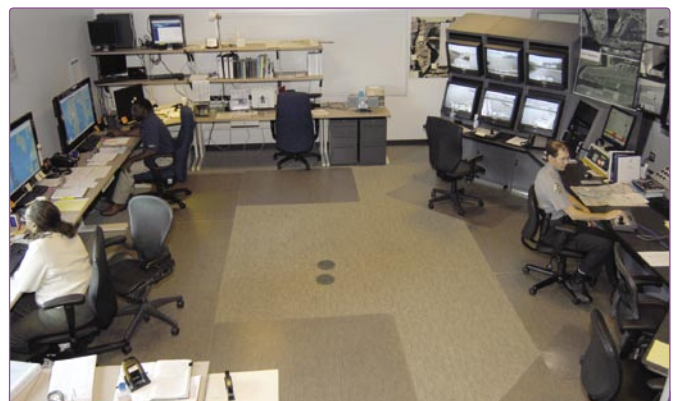
The CVTS

The CVTS consists of six Coast Guard and six Tampa Port Authority watchstanders standing watch 24-hours, seven days a week. They are tasked with monitoring VHF channels 12, 13, 16 and 22 and an Automatic Identification System (AIS) which allows them to actively monitor and manage vessel traffic on the bay. The waterway management picture on Tampa Bay is continuing to evolve. The competing demands of larger vessels, more traffic and a mix of hazardous materials, petroleum cargos, cruise ships and recreational traffic have challenged the Ports of Tampa, Manatee and St. Petersburg (each located in Tampa Bay), the Tampa Bay Pilots, as well as the Captain of the Port. In order to address these challenges and keep the waters of Tampa Bay safe, the Captain of the Port has used a wide variety of operational controls and non-regulatory solutions through the Tampa Bay Harbor Safety and Security Committee and its member organisations.

Challenges

The challenges associated with vessel traffic management in Tampa Bay are varied and plentiful. The increasing size and volume of vessel traffic, combined with the limited channel width and rapidly changing weather patterns, will continue to require traffic managers to organise and resolve vessel traffic conflicts on a regular basis.

Since the standup of CVTS Tampa, there has been a tremendous increase in reported marine casualties, specifically equipment failures causing power loss, propulsion and steering failures which can lead to collisions, allisions and groundings. To date, there has been a greater than 400 per cent increase in reported marine casualties over the same period last year. We believe that these are incidents that have occurred in the past but they remained unreported. The CVTS provides the Captain of the Port with 'eyes and ears' on our waterways and he can now see where he



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The CVTS provides the Captain of the Port with 'eyes and ears' on the waterways and he can now see where he once was previously blind.

was previously blind. This vision has already made our waterways safer. In one particular incident, a vessel lost power inbound when adjacent to a dock and repaired its engine while at dock. Since the cause of the power loss was unknown, the Captain of the Port required a tug assist outbound. The vessel had another power loss outbound. The tug assisted the vessel back to dock where it remained until repaired properly. Had the Captain of the Port

been unaware of the fact that this vessel had lost power initially, he most likely would have found out after it grounded, or worse, had a collision.

Cooperative Vessel Traffic Service Tampa is still evolving but with the assistance of each of our port partners, we will continue to improve our services and make this port safer for all mariners.

ABOUT THE ORGANISATIONS

The **United States Coast Guard (USCG)** is a military branch of the United States involved in maritime law, mariner assistance, and search and rescue, among other duties of coast guards elsewhere. One of the seven uniformed services of the United States, and the smallest armed service of the United States, its stated mission is to protect the public, the environment, and the United States economic and security interests in any maritime region in which those interests may be at risk, including international waters and America's coasts, ports, and inland waterways.

USCG has a broad and important role in homeland security, law enforcement, search and rescue, marine environmental pollution response, and the maintenance of river, intracoastal and offshore aids to navigation (ATON). It also lays claim to being the United States' oldest continuous seagoing service. The United States Coast Guard has about 40,150 men and women on active duty.

Tampa Bay Port Authority. As Florida's largest port, Tampa handles approximately 50 millions tonnes of cargo per year. The Port of Tampa is also the largest economic engine in West Central Florida. It continues to grow and diversify, attracting new investment and facilitating trade growth while enhancing security and safety.

The Port of Tampa is home to a vibrant and diverse traffic base, which moves efficiently through an extensive array of terminal facilities encompassing container,

bulk, break bulk, RoRo, project cargoes and cruise passengers, with one million square feet of warehousing and cold storage facilities. Their strategic location provides the most direct route to Mexico, Latin America and the Caribbean and the region's rapidly expanding load center hubs providing worldwide services. With a main shipping channel depth of 43 feet, Tampa is also the closest full service US port to the Panama Canal.

ENQUIRIES

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