

## USNS GRAPPLE'S HISTORY

USS GRAPPLE (T-ARS 53) was built by Peterson Builders, Inc. of Sturgeon Bay, Wisconsin and commissioned on 15 November 1986. This is the second salvage vessel to bear the name of GRAPPLE. The first GRAPPLE was commissioned on 16 December 1943 and distinguished herself in operations in World War II, the Korean War and the Vietnam Conflict. The original GRAPPLE was decommissioned following its services in Vietnam and now serves as a salvage and diving vessel in the Taiwanese Navy.

GRAPPLE is a ship of the U.S. Atlantic Fleet, under the operational control of Commander, Second Fleet, and the administrative control of Commander, Sealift Logistics Command Atlantic. The ship's mission is to perform salvage of stranded vessels, provide rescue and assistance services, conduct off-ship fire fighting, open ocean towing, recovery of submerged objects, and manned diving operations to a depth of 300 feet.

During her years of service, GRAPPLE was involved in a variety of operations which included remote operated vehicle (ROV) operations to a depth of 3000 feet off the coast of Sardinia, Italy; salvage of two F/A-18D, three F-14 aircraft, two AV-8, one F-16 aircraft, and two MH-53 helicopters; salvage of a sunken dive boat in Bodo, Norway; retraction of a stranded coastal freighter from the harbor of Kingston, St. Vincent, West Indies; harbor clearance operations in Charleston, SC after Hurricane Hugo (which included retraction of a stranded nuclear training facility barge); recovery of a 10,000 pounds of chain from 173 feet of water off Menton, France; retraction of two stranded ammunition barges from Ocean View Beach, Norfolk, VA; recovery of a Marine Corps AAVP-7 from 60 feet of water off Moorehead City, NC; and numerous tows of decommissioned and active Navy ships, submarines and service craft including the battleship ex-USS IOWA, ex- USS SAIPAN, ex-USS PORTSMOUTH, ex-USS HYMAN G. RICKOVER and Ex CONOLLY.

Significant salvage operations in recent history include recovery of TWA Flight 800 in July of 1996 off the coast of Long Island, New York, recovery of Swissair Flight 111 in September of 1998 off the coast of Nova Scotia, Canada, and recovery of EgyptAir Flight 990 in 1999 off the coast of Nantucket, Massachusetts. Recent salvage of F-16 crash in Gulf of Mexico the first to recover Black Box, ejection seat and pilot. In each case, GRAPPLE recovered significant portions of each downed aircraft to assist with the investigation in determining the cause of the tragedy.

In March of 2003, GRAPPLE was called to serve her country in time of conflict and would be the first ARS-50 Class Ship to deploy to the Arabian Gulf. In two weeks GRAPPLE prepared for a surge deployment in support of Operations ENDURING FREEDOM and IRAQI FREEDOM. During Operation IRAQI FREEDOM, GRAPPLE conducted combat salvage operations to include the recovery of a United States Marine Corps AV-8B Harrier, salvage and tow of an Iraqi Dhow, tow preparation of two Iraqi tugs and one Iraqi barge, and tow of an Iraqi tug from Kuwait Naval Base to the new port in Uhm Qasr, Iraq. GRAPPLE returned from the conflict with Iraq in June of 2003.

Since returning from its last Mediterranean Deployment in December, 2004, GRAPPLE has recovered one MH-53 helicopter off the coast of Virginia, one AV-8 off the coast of Florida, and one F-16 off the coast of South Carolina, F18 in the Gulf of Mexico, AAV off Morehead City, NC, several burials at sea, and various diving and salvage Hurricane Katrina and Rita relief efforts.

**Today, GRAPPLE continues to live by her credo - "Ready to serve".**





## BY THE NUMBERS

7,180 days as a commissioned warship  
over 2,073,600 miles of steaming

691,200,000 shaft rotations  
8,177,600 gallons of diesel consumed

Over 1,412,580 meals served  
More than 50,000 loads of laundry

Received more than 20,932,800 e-mails  
and more than 985,600 naval messages

More than 5400 gallons of paint used  
over 71 miles of anchor chain laid

Over 2950 dives  
totaling over 145 days of bottom time  
with deepest dive recorded at 240 feet

Over 95 tows completed

# T-ARS 53

Frostich ©90



**USNS GRAPPLE (T-ARS-53)**  
**Rescue and Salvage Ship**  
Operated by Military Sealift Command

