

## **New artificial reef in Martin County**



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MARTIN COUNTY, FL--The 69-foot steel tug boat Big Al was sent to the bottom of the sea early Wednesday afternoon as an estimated 100 spectators aboard 20 boats watched, photographed and took video of what is Martin County's newest offshore artificial reef structure.

And perhaps no one is happier than Joyce Powell.

For the past 18 months, Powell's life has seemingly revolved around the big boat that was donated to the MCAC Artificial Reef Fund by American Custom Yachts in Stuart. The tug was originally hauled out into ACY's boat yard for repairs, but after many months of non-payment, the owner abandoned the ship and ACY took possession.

The MCAC "Reefers" led by Dave Powell and Curt Croteau, and Martin County Coastal Engineer Kathy Fitzpatrick, coordinated efforts to clean the vessel in accordance with standards set forth by the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, the Florida Department of Environmental Protection, the Environmental Protection Agency, the Army Corps of Engineers and the U.S. Coast Guard.

Developer Ted Glasrud, of Stuart and Minnesota, underwrote much of the expense of the tug's preparation. As a result, the reef will be known on future charts as Glasrud Reef.

The tug sank quickly after it was properly positioned in line with other artificial reefs created by the county and the foundation through private contributions. The crew working aboard the Regina T tug and Molly work boat owned by McCulley Marine Services, and Treasure Coast reef consultant Kerry Dillon battled current, wind and the edge of the severe midday squall that impacted Martin County on the mainland.

After reaching bottom in 187 feet of water near the Wickstrom, a 168 foot long steel freighter deployed in January 2003, the Glasrud Reef coordinates were very close to Latitude N 27 12.676' Long. W 80 00.261'. It is part of Martin County's Sirotkin permitted reef area located in deep water.

Dave Powell said that Kerry Dillon told him that after the follow-up dive to check on the tug's positioning, it landed correctly, bottom side down. Powell also said the target was to set the tug in a north to south direction and that was achieved as well with the bow facing just slightly east of south.

"Capt. Frank Masters who directed the operation at the helm of the Regina T did an outstanding job of handling the complex aspects that arose (Wednesday)," Powell said. "He made sure his crew's safety was the of the utmost importance and adjusted to several hiccups that came up."

As for Powell's better half, seeing the big boat slip beneath the waves was a welcome sight.

"This project has been such a big topic in our home the past 18 months," she said. "I'm glad to finally get the kid out of the house."

## GLASRUD REEF

### Coordinates

--Latitude N 27° 12.676' Longitude W 80° 00.261'

### Statistics

--Part of Sirotkin permitted reef area

--69-foot steel tug boat

--Sunk in 70 minutes from time fuel tanks were pumped full of seawater

--42 feet of vertical profile from sea bottom

Reported by: Ed Killer/Scripps Treasure Coast Newspapers