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## **Thrustmaster to Supply 8 Thrusters for Argo II**

(6/21/01) -- Thrustmaster of Texas, Inc. has been selected to furnish thrusters, power equipment, controls and a dynamic positioning system for the upgrade of the M/V *Argo II*. The *Argo II* is a 215 ft. oil field supply vessel (OSV) being converted to a DPS-2 class diving and underwater support vessel. The vessel is owned by Universal Faith in Panama and is under longterm charter with Assodivers of Greece.

Thrustmaster, based in Houston, Texas, is supplying eight (8) Model 36TT250L hydraulic tunnel thrusters. Each unit has a 36-inch diameter tunnel and uses a 250 horsepower podded hydraulic propeller drive. The hydraulic power systems are diesel engine driven closed loop hydrostatic transmissions, providing infinite propeller speed control with high accuracy and excellent efficiency over the full speed range of the propeller. The thrusters are installed in voids and ballast tanks while the hydraulic power units are remotely installed in machinery spaces.

The main fixed propellers of the vessel are replaced by controllable pitch propellers, driven by 1650 horsepower main engines. A redundant dynamic positioning system is provided by Thrustmaster, controlling the main propellers, rudders and the eight (8) new tunnel thrusters. The DP system includes a sensor suite with dual DGPS and hydro-acoustic positioning sensors.

Multiple diesel hydraulic thrusters were selected because of low cost, ease of installation, redundancy and flexibility of operation. During mild weather conditions, the vessel can hold station with only a few thrusters and engines on line. As weather conditions deteriorate, additional thrusters can be brought on line. This flexibility allows more efficient engine loading and fewer operating hours for each thruster. The hydraulic propeller drives are very responsive and accurate in DP service. The hydrostatic transmission in combination with podded hydraulic drives (no gears) has a better overall efficiency than diesel electric, especially at partial load conditions. In the lower horsepower brackets, the acquisition cost of diesel hydraulic drives is lower than diesel electric drives.

Thrustmaster manufactures a wide variety of propeller thrusters up to 3,000 horsepower. They include tunnel thrusters, Z-drives and retractable azimuthing thrusters. They can be powered hydraulically, electrically or with direct engine drive.