

## Restoring a 109 Years of Nautical History Not a Task for the Faint of Heart

Posted by [petehurrey](#) On 07/28/2010

Most iconic landmarks like the Hooper Island Lighthouse wither in the sands and waves of time. However, because of the efforts of Marine Technologies, Inc. and the hard-working marine construction specialists daring strong currents, high voltage and delicate balancing over thin air that will not be the case this time.

Hooper Island Lighthouse is one of only eleven in the U.S. that rests atop a caisson. The structure sits in 18 feet of water about three miles west of Middle Hooper Island. The foundation extends eighteen feet above the high waterline, and the focal plane of the light is sixty-three feet.

The height of the structure is not the problem. The inch and half thick case iron foundation; wrapped around a few tons of concrete, brick and stone is.

Enter Marine Technologies, Inc., a Baltimore-based global marine construction company which has worked on projects across the region and around the world and the men that risk life and limb performing seemingly impossible tasks in conditions most cannot imagine.

TheBAYNET.com was invited to one workday session and observed these hearty souls at work. Meet Ian Bonham, Josh Will, Curtis Nehoda, John Mekosh and supervisor, Adam Miller – all commercial divers, all marine construction specialists. The crew began its day at 4 a.m. when most awoke in their homes in the Baltimore area and drove two hours to reach Solomons Marina. After loading up their coolers and gear, the crew headed out for a 45-minute ride to an awaiting tug and 'spud' barge work platform.

The task on this day was to install wooden bumpers to the case iron caisson to protect new ladders and repaired structure installed earlier in the project. After unloading gear from the transit boat to the barge, Capt. Bruce Keller and Assistant Capt. Chet Evans wait for the anchoring 'spuds' to be crane-lifted and then move the barge into place so that the construction crew can operate on the base of the lighthouse.

Once in position, the spuds are lowered to create a solid anchor for the structure and the crew went to work. This day, it would be diver Nehoda's day to be in the water. The Chesapeake Bay in the area of Hooper Light House is home the commercial shipping channel leading to the port of Baltimore. The adjacent water is deep and the currents are swift and strong at the base of the lighthouse.

On this day, the current is strong enough to require Nehoda to strap himself to the structure to keep from being dragged away. Pictures being worth a 1000 words, take a look at the slide show to see how the work day progressed and what the crew goes through on an average day.

When all was said and done, the crew worked for 14 hours into the dark of night before being taken back to Solomons Marina where they all had to drive two hours only to turn around and do it again the next day.

---

Copyright © 2020 thebaynet.com. All rights reserved.