Commercial Marine

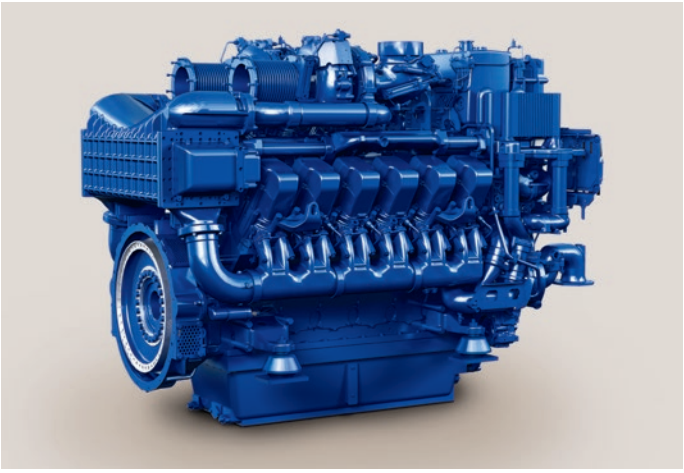
PROACTIVE SERVICE KEEPS COMMERCIAL MARINE CUSTOMERS PUSHING FORWARD

Who Southern Towing
What MTU complete lifecycle solutions
Where Memphis, Tennessee, USA

Towboats push flotillas of barges containing 620 million tons of cargo every year on the inland waterways interconnecting ports throughout the eastern half of the U.S. These unique workboats operate on a demanding around-the-clock schedule that requires the most reliable diesel engines—and an equally reliable global service network to support them.

The *Capt H.R. Kirtley*—one of 24 towboats owned by Memphis, Tennessee-based Southern Towing Company—will cover a lot of water during its 28-day work shift. The 120-foot *Kirtley* can push a 1,000-foot tow of barges to industrial facilities thousands of miles apart along the Mississippi River and the Gulf Intracoastal Waterway. And wherever *Kirtley* travels, from Baton Rouge, Louisiana to Burlington, Iowa or anywhere in between, first engineer Tommy McCoin knows MTU service is nearby if he needs it.

A Rolls-Royce solution



Engineered for power and fuel efficiency, the MTU 12V 4000 engine is ideal for Southern Towing towboats. The Z-drive propulsion system allows the vessels to move sideways, forward and reverse.

Wherever and whenever

"The four newest towboats we've built, including this one, are powered by twin MTU 12V 4000 1,600 horsepower Tier 2 engines matched to ZF Marine Z-Drives. Southern Towing has adopted this very innovative propulsion system from ocean tugboats, and the boats handle like a dream," he says.

"A big part of the decision to go with MTU engines for the new boats had to do with the support we get from MTU and its distributors. We've had a great relationship with Stewart and Stevenson and W.W. Williams (authorized MTU distributors with multiple southeastern U.S. locations) and we know we can count on them for parts and service, no matter where our boats might be," McCoin continues.

Southern Towing has a long history with MTU and its engines that goes back almost to the company's founding in 1958, a history that Stewart and Stevenson's Chad Lemoine says is largely grounded in the combined support of MTU and its large network of authorized distributors. "We're very responsive to their needs and we know the towboat business and stock the items they use most often. They like to stick with genuine parts and consumables for their engines' best performance and life. We work closely with MTU to make sure an inventory of genuine parts and filters and remanufactured parts is available when they need it," explains Lemoine.

"What I like about MTU is that every part I buy is guaranteed to be to factory specifications, whether it's a genuine new part or consumable, or a remanufactured part."

Joe Pate
Chief engineer, Southern Towing

Lemoine adds that Stewart and Stevenson's workboat customers using classic Detroit Diesel 2-Cycle engines often prefer genuine replacement parts from MTU for those older engines, many of which have been in service for three or four decades.

MTU commercial marine engines are backed by a one-year warranty, but like other commercial customers with a fleet of workboats that put in long continuous hours on the water, Southern Towing realized the benefits of adding Extended Coverage on their new Series 4000 engines.

"There's a comfort level there knowing that we have a longer period of comprehensive coverage beyond the standard warranty, especially since we're using these engines in a new propulsion system design," notes McCoin. Adds Lemoine, "MTU also has ValueCare Agreements that basically allow customers to more easily optimize availability and plan maintenance costs throughout an engine's lifecycle, but Southern Towing has a very strong handle on those costs already because they're very, very good at what they do and have been at this a long time."

Predictable quality, predictable performance

McCoin says that reliable service and factory-spec parts are important to the new Series 4000 engines, but it's not always practical for Southern Towing's engineers on duty to call an authorized MTU distributor for routine maintenance work. "Using the knowledge we've gained at the MTU Training Center, we handle a lot of those tasks ourselves on the water during a hitch," McCoin says. "Two of our engineers attended classes there in Canton (Michigan) and got a lot out of the experience, which in turn they've passed on to our crew members around the company."

Joe Pate, chief engineer aboard *Capt. Tommy Parrish*, one of *Kirtley's* sister vessels, says that training has proven valuable as he's gotten to know the new family of Z-Drive vessels. Recently completing his third hitch as engineer aboard *Tommy Parrish*, Pate calls proper engine maintenance his "number one priority."

"These new engines are powerful, quiet, smooth and fuel efficient. They're also more complex than any diesel engine that we've used before, so it's good to be able to say that they're easy to maintain. We change the oil and oil filters every 1,000 hours, fuel filters every 500 hours, and we only use genuine filters from MTU. It's just not worth it to substitute what might be an inferior filter and potentially hurt the engines' performance," Pate explains.

"Over the years on some of our older non-MTU engines, I've had to return parts that weren't genuine factory parts, like rebuilt fuel pumps and fuel injectors. What I like about MTU is that every part I buy is guaranteed to be to factory specifications, whether it's a genuine new part or consumable, or a remanufactured part, and I can be sure that the company that built the part stands behind it," Pate adds.

A boatload of support

Matthias Vogel, MTU's vice president of service, says Pate and McCoin's enthusiasm for keeping their engines 100 percent MTU is exactly the reason ValueCare Agreements were conceived. "We're offering a comprehensive, focused approach to customer service that features complete lifecycle support targeted at specific markets," he explains. The workboat industry, which places engines under heavy continuous loads and must be bulletproof reliable while underway, is one of those targets. Commercial vessels of all types and applications that use diesel power for propulsion—whether from a vintage Detroit Diesel 2-Cycle or a modern MTU engine—can benefit from the wraparound support provided by MTU and its network of trained and authorized distributors located near every major port in North America.

Smooth sailing

Inland maritime cargo transportation faces unpredictable currents and climate conditions that can dramatically impact delivery schedules. As Southern Towing's vice president Kevin Conway puts it, "This business is all about logistics. Machinery that runs around the clock in a manufacturing plant doesn't care if it's Christmas, or if it's foggy on the river or that a storm has jammed up barge traffic. Our customers expect their orders to arrive when they need them and it's our job to make sure they do. Knowing that our towboats will be taken care of quickly and properly no matter what challenges arise is very, very important to us," he says.

Tommy McCoin agrees wholeheartedly. Like all of Southern Towing's engineers, when he's on a 28-day hitch, it's his responsibility to keep its big diesels running smoothly. He says, "I like the idea of having a single source that we can depend on for whatever we need to do our jobs and serve our customers. That's one of the reasons that just about everything you see in the engine room and on the shelf has an MTU logo on it."

1 Commercial marine vessels stay productive with a complete range of parts, service and support provided by MTU, through a network of authorized distributors near every major port in North America.

Rolls-Royce provides world-class power solutions and complete lifecycle support under our product and solution brand MTU. Through digitalization and electrification, we strive to develop drive and power generation solutions that are even cleaner and smarter and thus provide answers to the challenges posed by the rapidly growing societal demands for energy and mobility. We deliver and service comprehensive, powerful and reliable systems, based on both gas and diesel engines, as well as electrified hybrid systems. These clean and technologically advanced solutions serve our customers in the marine and infrastructure sectors worldwide.

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