

THE NANTUCKET Independent

SETTING THE RECORD STRAIGHT



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Joe Farrell joins Haiti's volunteer aid effort

BY MARY LANCASTER INDEPENDENT WRITER



The Resolve Pioneer, berthed in Port Everglades, Florida, is being loaded with medical supplies and food for Haiti. *COURTESY PHOTO*

No one asked him to go. As he has done after other monumental disasters, parttime Nantucket resident and CEO of South Florida's Resolve Marine Group, Joseph Farrell last week voluntarily joined the massive recovery effort following Haiti's devastating January 12 earthquake.

On January 19, Farrell deployed his 207-foot salvage ship *Resolve Pioneer* from Port Everglades, Fla. loaded with first aid supplies, medicines, containers of food, tents and sleeping bags, and staffed with an expert dive team. A barge accompanied the ship, carrying a 450-ton capacity crane, and Farrell and more of his crew flew to Haiti last Friday to await the arrival of the heavy equipment.

"We came down knowing we were going to be needed," Farrell said in a late Monday phone interview from the ship. "Nobody hired us.

We are working to clear their port so oil and gas can be returned to the country. These people are so happy we showed up."

Farrell reported that the Port-au-Prince area continues to experience tremors. Most of the houses still standing have sustained such remarkable structural damage that residents are sleeping outside at night next to their cars. Farrell said he and his staff spent their first nights sleeping in a truck until the *Pioneer* arrived.

Though he describes the area as "cave man territory" with no water or electricity, Farrell said the people there who have undergone unimaginable suffering are sedate and appreciative for any assistance offered.

"They are a humble sort of people," he said. "I hope the world relief effort stays with this. With world effort and support maybe we can turn this place around, but they are going to need efforts for a long time."

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With a barge in tow, Resolve's Pioneer leaves for Haiti on a humanitarian mission and to help rebuild Terminal Varreux.

One of Farrell's crew's main missions is to clear the terminal of Varreux to allow the fuel pipeline to be reconnected, a massive project being shared by SEACOR Holdings. Farrell's divers are removing debris and setting up rigging so oil tankers can tie up and ships are able to enter the port with rice and other food.

"The docks are no good," said Farrell. "I don't see how they are still standing. The Varreux dock collapsed while men were unloading a ship at the time of the earthquake. I think as our divers get into removing the dock that collapsed with bodies in there, it will bring us back a notch or two."



Joe Farrell, CEO of Resolve Marine

COURTESY PHOTOS

"This will be a protracted effort. It looks like the U.S. Navy has taken over the other main port and may ask us to go into another port to clear out the cranes so they don't fall on other ships."

Farrell said he anticipates that he will leave his equipment in Haiti for a very extended period. When Hurricane Katrina struck the Gulf Coast in 2005, Farrell's company was there to help in the aftermath and he left seven of his crane barges there for two years to aid government recovery actions. Resolve Marine took the lead in assisting with salvage after Hurricane Andrew hit Miami, Fla. in 1992 and has been on scene to help with other major disasters.

"There aren't many other private companies here yet," Farrell said. "There are some shipping companies engaged by the government for supplies, but not many people have the kind of resources we have at Resolve with heavy equipment. We knew they needed help. Our mission was to get to the port and get this place going."

"I'd rather be dealing with something like erosion on Nantucket." I