“十二五”国家重点图书
船舶与海洋出版工程

KEY TECHNOLOGY ON DEEP-WATER SEMI-SUBMERSIBLE DRILLING PLATFORM:

GLOBAL PERFORMANCE; STRUCTURE ANALYSIS; VORTEX-INDUCED VIBRATION

谢 彬 杨建民 主编

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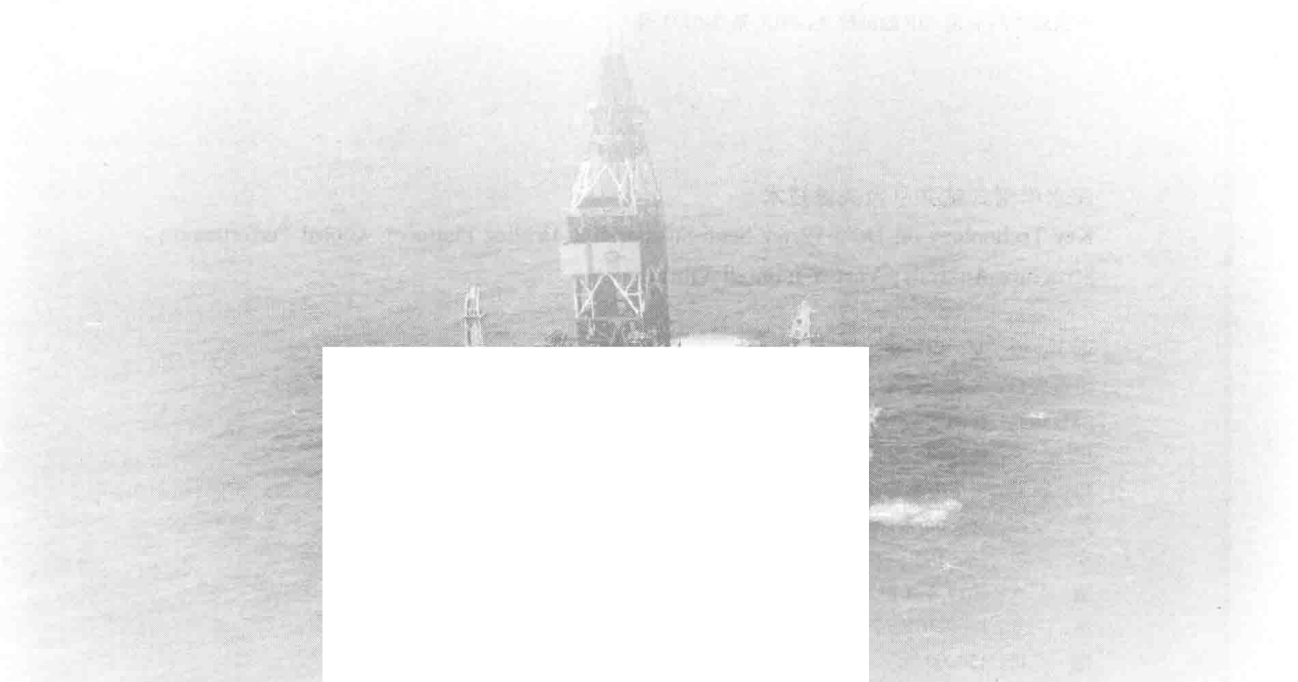

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Abstract

This book is based on the project 'Research on the Key Technology of 3 000 m Deepwater Semi-submersible Drilling Platform' aiming at solving the key issues of design and construction techniques. It contains 5 parts, including environment of South China Sea, hydrodynamic performance of semi-platform, structure analysis of semi-platform, vortex induced vibration, and expand research.

This book reflects abundant research results of design and construction techniques of deepwater semi-submersible drilling platforms.

This book will provide a very good reference for researchers and engineers in the field of offshore technology.

图书在版编目(CIP)数据

深水半潜式钻井平台关键技术 = Key Technology on Deep-Water Semi-Submersible Drilling Platform: Global Performance; Structure Analysis; Vortex-Induced Vibration: 英文/谢彬,杨建民主编. —上海: 上海交通大学出版社, 2014
ISBN 978-7-313-10459-5

Ⅰ. ①深… Ⅱ. ①谢… ②杨… Ⅲ. ①海上平台—海上钻井—文集—英文 Ⅳ. ①TE52-53

中国版本图书馆 CIP 数据核字(2013)第 246771 号

深水半潜式钻井平台关键技术

Key Technology on Deep-Water Semi-Submersible Drilling Platform: Global Performance; Structure Analysis; Vortex-Induced Vibration

主　　编: 谢　彬　杨建民
出版发行: 上海交通大学出版社　　地　　址: 上海市番禺路 951 号
邮政编码: 200030　　电　　话: 021-64071208
出 版 人: 韩建民
印　　制: 上海万卷印刷有限公司　　经　　销: 全国新华书店
开　　本: 787 mm×1092 mm　1/16　　印　　张: 36
字　　数: 780 千字
版　　次: 2014 年 4 月第 1 版　　印　　次: 2014 年 4 月第 1 次印刷
书　　号: ISBN 978-7-313-10459-5/TE
定　　价: 150.00 元

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Key Words

absorbed energy ····· 115
added mass ····· 257,279
additional internal forces ····· 526
amplitude ····· 80,265
asymptotic analysis ····· 64
attack angle ····· 340
basic design ····· 3
carbon nanotubes ····· 501
catenary mooring system ····· 113
circular cylinder ····· 256,265
collisions ····· 225
concept design ····· 3
deepwater risers ····· 350
deepwater semi-submersible drilling rig ····· 191
density difference ····· 81
DOT tunnel ····· 521
dynamic analysis ····· 124
dynamic response ····· 355
elastic medium ····· 427
evolution ····· 80
experimental investigations ····· 341
experimental tests ····· 376
fatigue life ····· 188
FEA ····· 188,193
finite element method ····· 351
flexible riser ····· 302,398
flow pattern ····· 550
frequency ····· 289
functionally graded materials ····· 463
functionally graded shell ····· 428
grouping effect ····· 545
heave ····· 103
high mode ····· 372
higher harmonics ····· 399
hydrodynamic ····· 350
Hydroelasticity ····· 279
HYSY981 ····· 1
induced current ····· 58,62
intellectual property right ····· 13
intensity ····· 27
interfacial solitary wave ····· 51
internal solitary horizontal wave ····· 87
internal solitary waves ····· 62
internal solitons ····· 79
internal wave evolution ····· 61
internal waves ····· 63,78
in-line response ····· 386
laboratory tests ····· 387
large aspect ratio ····· 399
lift ····· 267
lock-in ····· 256,265
long flexible riser ····· 383,386

Long Term Forecast ····· 183
mass ratio ····· 256
mechanical properties ····· 501
model test ····· 139
modes ····· 288
Morison's equation ····· 89
moving loads ····· 464
multiple control rods ····· 338
multi-mode response ····· 399
natural frequency ····· 258
natural period ····· 103
nondimensionalized ····· 392
non-homogeneous material ····· 493
non-homogeneous ····· 483
non-linear dynamic analysis ····· 113
non-stationary ····· 26
numerical simulation ····· 132,225
perturbation of magnetic field vector ····· 498
phase ····· 265
piezoelectric ····· 462
pycnocline depth ····· 81
pycnocline ····· 61,80
RAO ····· 104
riser ····· 338
Rolling Correction ····· 524
semi-submersible offshore platform ····· 228
Semi-Submersible Rig ····· 177
semi-submersible ····· 89,103,104
shear flow ····· 306
simplified fatigue assessment method ····· 189
solitary waves ····· 62,78
South China Sea ····· 61,178,195
SPAR ····· 89
Spectral-based fatigue analysis ····· 191
standing wave ····· 314
structural damage ····· 225
suppression ····· 338
thermal shock ····· 498
thermo-magneto-stresses ····· 493
travelling wave ····· 314
tropical cyclones ····· 25
truncated mooring line ····· 123
tunnel lining ····· 524
two-layer fluid ····· 41
two-layer ····· 63,75
typical joint ····· 191
Ursell number ····· 52
validity ranges ····· 40
velocity profile ····· 60
vibration ····· 283
viscous damping ····· 115
vortex-induced vibration ····· 256
wake oscillator model ····· 302
wake oscillator ····· 305
WAMIT ····· 104
water densities ····· 79
wave force ····· 87
wave-current fields ····· 547
wave-current ····· 545
Weibull shape parameter ····· 177

PREFACE

There are abundant petroleum and gas resources in the South China Sea, which occupy 1/3 of China's total amount of natural oil and gas. And nearly 70% of them are stored in deep water area. However, due to the harsh environmental condition in South China Sea, including frequent typhoons in summer and continuous monsoons in winter, the exploration and development of deepwater oil and gas in South China Sea are confronted with severe challenges. To prepare the required equipments for the development of deepwater oil-gas field in South China Sea, China National Offshore Oil Corporation (CNOOC) launched the research programme on the first deepwater semi-submersible drilling platform in China in January 2006. The deepwater semi-submersible is a kind of mobile drilling platform, which can be used in a repetitive pattern. Because of its excellent performance in the sea, strong seakeeping capacity, large deck area, large carriage capacity and good adaptability to a wide range of water depth, the deepwater semi-submersible is widely used in every sea area around the world. Moreover, it will become the most promising equipment for offshore oil exploration and drilling in the next decade. However, the design and construction techniques of deepwater semi-submersible are monopolized by several developed countries, leaving China still blank in this area. So, for China, it's of great significance to break the technological monopoly and obtain independent intellectual property rights of deepwater semi-submersible drilling platform technology. For one thing, it has practical values for the development of offshore technology in China; for another, it also has strategic meanings to promote China's offshore oil industry in deepwater area. Supported by Ministry of Science and Technology of China, a major project of National High-tech R&D Program of China (863 Program), titled 'Research on the Key Technology of 3 000 m Deepwater Semi-Submersible Drilling Platform', was officially approved in 2006. China Offshore Oil Research Centre took the lead of this research, cooperating with several prestigious universities, shipbuilding enterprises and research institutions, all of which formed a group for this project. Based on the amalgamation of industry, education, and research, the research group accomplished the task successfully with four-year hard

working. The project has passed the examination from the 863 Program under the Ministry of Science and Technology of China. Meanwhile, the research group is also awarded Excellent Executive Team in the national scientific and technological plans during the 11th Five-Year Plan Period by the Ministry of Science and Technology of China.

Based on the construction of HYSY981, the project 'Research on the Key Technology of 3 000 m Deepwater Semi-Submersible Drilling Platform' aiming at solving the key issues of design and construction techniques. Through combinating research with application, 36 technological breakthroughs have been made and some of the results reach the world advanced levels. This book reflects abundant research results of design and construction techniques of deepwater semi-submersible drilling platforms and will be a good reference for researchers and engineers in the field of offshore technology.

Up to now, some high-level deepwater structures, including HYSY981 Drilling Platform and HYSY201 Deepwater Pipe Lay Crane Vessel, have been constructed successfully. With more and more large-volume structures for offshore oil exploration and development being put into use, speed up development has been made in deepwater equipment in China. The deepwater oil and gas field development in South China Sea expedites scientific and technological progress in China. May the publication of this book will benefit comprehensive researchers and engineers in the field of offshore technology.

Contents

INTRODUCTION 1

0.1 Introduction 1

0.2 Historical Developments of Semi-Submersible Rig 2

0.3 Key Technologies and Innovations of HYSY981 2

0.4 Conclusions 13

1 ENVIRONMENT OF SOUTH CHINA SEA 14

1.1 Prediction of Extreme Wind Speed under the Background of Climate Change 14

1.2 Non-Stationary Variation of Tropical Cyclones Activities in the Northwest Pacific 25

1.3 Long Internal Solitary Waves Induced Currents in the Ocean 35

1.4 Validity Ranges of Interfacial Wave Theories in a Two-Layer Fluid System 39

1.5 Modeling Evolution of Internal Waves in the South China Sea 58

1.6 Analysis of Current Induced by Long Internal Solitary Waves in Stratified Ocean 62

1.7 Characteristics of Flow Fields Induced by Interfacial Waves in Two-Layer Fluid 75

1.8 Effects of Pycnocline Parameters on Evolution of Internal Solitons 79

2 HYDRODYNAMIC PERFORMANCE OF SEMI-SUBMERSIBLE PLATFORM 85

2.1 Wave Loading on Floating Platforms by Internal Solitary Waves 85

2.2 Analysis on Low Frequency Heave, Roll and Pitch Motions of a Deepwater Semi-Submersible 90

2.3 Effects of Volumetric Allocation on Heave Response of Semi-Submersible in Deep Sea 102

2.4 Prediction of Mooring Line Damping in Time Domain Analysis 112

2.5 Dynamic Analysis of Truncated Mooring Lines Using Numerical Simulation and Model Tests ····· 122
2.6 Numerical Calculation and Model Test Study on a Quay Mooring Semi-Submersible Drilling Platform ····· 141

3 STRUCTURE ANALYSIS OF SEMI-SUBMERSIBLE PLATFORM ····· 163
3.1 Global Strength Assessment for Semi-Submersible Column after Supply Vessel Collision Accident ····· 163
3.2 Study on Simplified Fatigue Assessment Method for Semi-Submersible Rig in South China Sea ····· 177
3.3 Spectral-Based Fatigue Analysis for Deepwater Semi-Submersible Rig in South China Sea ····· 190
3.4 Comparative Analysis on Fatigue Damage of Deepwater Hybrid Mooring Line ····· 200
3.5 A Study on Numerical Simulation for Collision Response of a Semi-Submersible Platform ····· 225
3.6 Collision Character Research for Semi-Submersible through Model Test, Simplified Analytical and Numerical Simulation Method ····· 239

4 VORTEX INDUCED VIBRATION ····· 256
4.1 Variation of Added Mass and Its Application to the Calculation of Amplitude Response for a Circular Cylinder ····· 256
4.2 An Estimation Scheme for the Fluid Forces and Response Associated with a Circular Cylinder at Lock-in ····· 264
4.3 Hydroelastic Dynamic Characteristics of a Slender Axis-Symmetric Body ····· 279
4.4 Prediction of Vortex-Induced Vibration of Flexible Riser Using an Improved Wake Oscillator Model ····· 294
4.5 Multi-Mode Vortex-Induced Vibration of Slender Cable Experiencing Shear Flow ····· 305
4.6 Controlling Parameter for Wave Types of Long Flexible Cable Undergoing Vortex-Induced Vibration ····· 314
4.7 Suppressing Vortex-Induced Vibrations of Long Flexible Riser by Multiple Control Rods ····· 324
4.8 Influence of Attack Angle on VIV Suppression by Multiple Control Rods for Long Flexible Riser Model ····· 336
4.9 Identification of Hydrodynamic Coefficients from Experiment of Vortex-Induced Vibration of Slender Riser Model ····· 350

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4.10 Experimental Investigation on VIV Responses of a Long Flexible Riser Towed Horizontally in a Wave Basin ····· 372
4.11 Laboratory Investigation on the In-Line Dynamic Characteristic of Long Flexible Riser under Vortex-Induced Vibration ····· 385
4.12 Laboratory Tests of Vortex-Induced Vibrations of a Long Flexible Riser Pipe Subjected to Uniform Flow ····· 398

5 EXPAND RESEARCH ····· 426
5.1 Thermo Mechanical Vibration Analysis of a Functionally Graded Shell with Flowing Fluid ····· 426
5.2 Active Control of Functionally Graded Laminated Cylindrical Shells ····· 442
5.3 Studies on Dynamic Behavior of Functionally Graded Cylindrical Shells with PZT Layers under Moving Loads ····· 462
5.4 Thermo-Magneto-Dynamic Stresses and Perturbation of Magnetic Field Vector in a Non-Homogeneous Hollow Cylinder ····· 483
5.5 Effect of Temperature on Elastic Properties of Single-Walled Carbon Nanotubes ····· 501
5.6 Analysis of the Behavior of DOT Tunnel Lining Caused by Rolling Correction Operation ····· 521
5.7 Multidisciplinary Design Optimization — A New Way to Bring Softer Bows ····· 533
5.8 Numerical Simulation of Wave-Current Flow Field around Pile Groups by a Vortex Method ····· 545

INTRODUCTION

0.1 Introduction

To satisfy the increasing demand of oil resource, the trend of exploitation of offshore oil and gas resource has appeared, especially in deep water. The South China Sea is one of the 4 largest offshore oil and gas reserves in the world. A preliminary estimate of the geological oil resources in the South China Sea is about 23～30 billion ton, but the distribution of the oil and gas reserves is mainly in deep water.

The priority for deepwater exploration is developing deepwater drilling equipment. Two kinds of deepwater drilling equipments (the semisubmersible rig and the drilling ship) have been developed worldwide. The semisubmersible rig has obvious advantages including superior performance and good seakeeping. So it is used more than drilling ship in deepwater drilling.

However, due to China's late involvement in the deepwater oil and gas industry, its research and development (R&D) technologies are still underdeveloped, and the key technologies used in deepwater drilling equipment are behind those advanced countries in offshore R&D by 15～20 years[1].

In such circumstances, China has decided to invest in R&D of the offshore oil and gas industry. The design and manufacture of HYSY981 has been listed in the National '863' Program Plan, and it has made many breakthroughs for domestic deepwater engineering technology. The HYSY981 is China's first independently designed and constructed 6th-generation semi-submersible rig, which CNOOC (China National Offshore Oil Corporation) possesses its independent intellectual property right. The HYSY981 is capable of drilling, completion, testing and workover. The main operating area is the South China Sea, but the rig can also cover Southeast Asia, West Africa, Gulf of Mexico, etc. The maximum operating water depth is 3 000 m and the maximum drilling depth is 10 000 m. At present, the concept design, basic design and detailed design have been completed. The platform is in construction in Shanghai Waigaoqiao Shipyard and expected to operate in 2011.

0.2 Historical Developments of Semi-Submersible Rig

Since the first semi-submersible rig was brought into operation in 1960s, the semi-submersible rigs have experienced six generations development as follows[2]: ① The 1st generation: Before 1971; ② The 2nd generation: 1970s; ③ The 3rd generation: early 1980s; ④ The 4th generation: late 1980s & late 1990s; ⑤ The 5th generation: late 1990s & early 2000s; ⑥ The 6th generation: After 2000. Through the six generations development, improvements in various aspects have been made, including[3]:

(1) Increased operation water depth: The operation water depth of the 1st generation is only 150 m, while the newly built semis can work in the water depth of 3 000 m. It is also estimated that semi-submersible of operation water depth of 4 000～5 000 m would be developed in the following 20 years.

(2) Larger variable deck load (VDL) capacity: VDL is one of the key characteristics for a semi-submersible. VDL has been increased from less than 2 000 t (the 1st generation) to 9 000 t (the 6th generation).

(3) Changed positioning method: The early semi-submersibles were positioned by traditional mooring system. Since the 4th generation, dynamic positioning system (DPS) has been used and has gradually become an important positioning approach especially for water depth above 1 500 m.

(4) Suitable for more severe sea condition: The semi-submersibles have much better hydrodynamic performance so that the platforms can work in more severe sea condition.

(5) Simplified configuration: Simplified configuration with less columns and braces has been more adopted currently.

(6) Larger amount of high strength steel is used: In the manufacture of newly built semi-submersibles, the amount of higher strength steel with yielding stress of 420～460 MPa is about 25%～50% of the whole amount of steel. In the critical connection zone, steel with yielding stress of 700～827 MPa is used.

(7) Installed with more advanced drill rig: With the development of the marine related equipment, more advanced drilling rig has also been installed in the 6th generation semi-submersibles.

0.3 Key Technologies and Innovations of HYSY981

To provide technical support and solve critical issues for the design and construction

of HYSY981, we have done numerous R&D, through which we have focused on the key technologies for designing and constructing the 6th generation of semi-submersible drilling rig and made several innovations. These key technologies and innovations can be divided into four aspects as follows.

0.3.1 Design of HYSY981

The whole design process of HYSY981 comprises three phases. Firstly, we made a study on four typical semi-submersible platforms, GVA7500, F&G ExD, Aker H-4.3 and MSC DSS50. After making a comparison of these four platforms and clarifying the determinant design parameters, we brought about the concept design scenario, as shown in Fig. 0.1. The comparison shows that the stability of the concept design is much better than other scenarios, and the air gap of the concept design is superior to other scenarios, while the hydrodynamic performance is in the middle among the scenarios. Finally, we started the basic design based on F&G ExD. To suit the extreme sea condition of South China Sea, we adjusted the mother scenario in following aspects:

(1) The length of pontoon is enlarged to meet the need for larger variable load.

(2) The water plane area of columns is enlarged to provide more stability reserve.

(3) The height of columns is heightened to satisfy the air gap requirement in severe sea condition.

(4) The bow and stern compartments of pontoons and deck are elongated to meet the demand for dynamic positioning system of Class 3 (DPS-3).

The basic design scenario of HYSY981 is shown in Fig. 0.2.

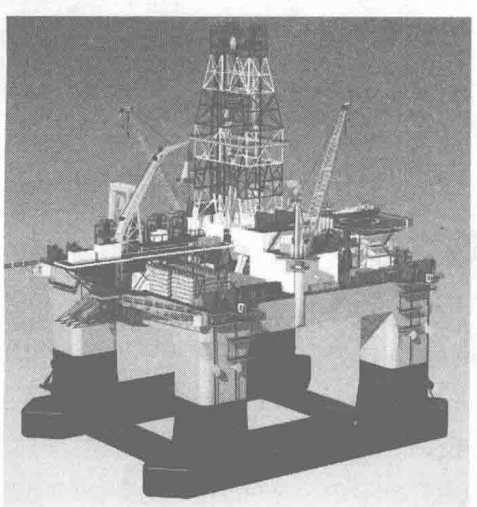

Fig. 0.1 Concept design blue print

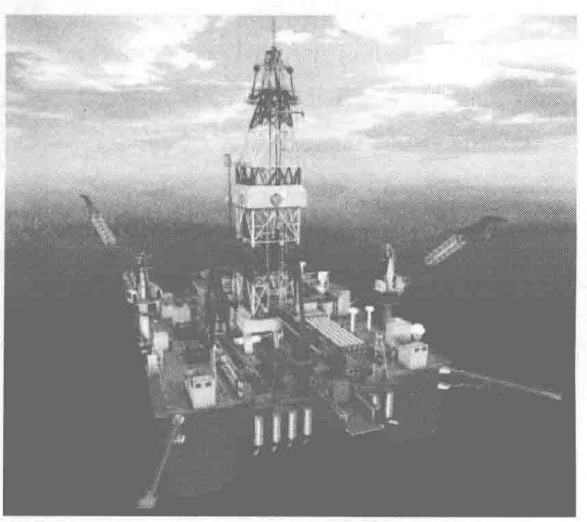

Fig. 0.2 Basic design of HYSY981

Through the design process of HYSY981, we have obtained six innovations as follows.

0.3.1.1 Innovation I: Suitable for the extreme environmental condition in South China Sea

The South China Sea is an area where typhoon happens frequently, with an average of 27～35 times per year. Typhoons are generally stronger than hurricanes, and have resulted in great damages to offshore installations and are principal hazards to offshore operations and platforms in the South China Sea. Serious damage often leads to stoppage of oilfield production. Another special phenomenon occurring frequently in South China Sea is internal waves, which are gravity waves that oscillate within a fluid medium rather than on its surface. Internal waves flow with a maximum speed of 2 m/s, and have much longer periods and larger amplitudes than surface waves. The internal waves may cause great effect to offshore platforms and operations. Consequently, the existence of internal waves should not be neglected.

In our design, 200-year return sea condition of South China Sea is chosen as design environmental condition in stability analysis and global strength analysis. Internal wave is considered in the advanced research for the first time. Through both ways, better reliability of the platform can be achieved.

0.3.1.2 Innovation II: Advanced positioning system

For the sake of both cost and positioning capability, we adopted diversiform positioning strategies in the design of HYSY981. Mooring system is used when operation water depth is below 1 500 m, while dynamic positioning system (Class 3) is used when operation water depth is above 1 500 m. Combined positioning could be used for various sea states. DPS－3 is of higher positioning redundancy thus ensuring platform positioning even if one compartment fails. Fig. 0.3 is a model of DPS－3.

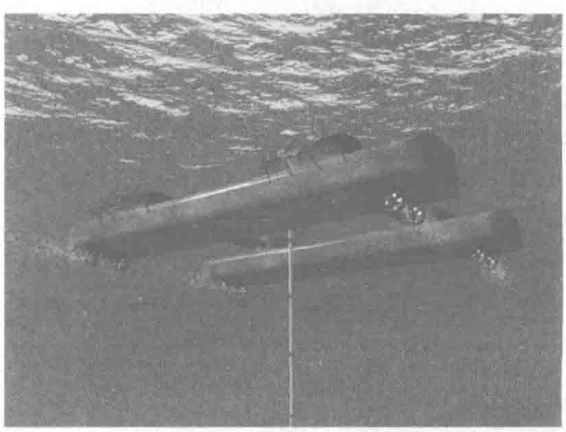

Fig. 0.3 Dynamic positioning system (Class 3)

0.3.1.3 Innovation III: Larger variable deck load (VDL)

VDL is one of the most critical design targets for a drilling semi-submersible, and is a determinant factor for life time cost. The original VDL of F&G ExD is 7 000 t. Through a structural optimization design, a lighter platform weight is achieved and the VDL of HYSY981 is increased to 9 000 t. The VDL of HYSY981 tops among the 6th generation semi-submersible with 4 columns type around the world. As a

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