

UNITED STATES COAST GUARD

ADDRESS REPLY TO:
COMMANDANT
U.S. COAST GUARD
HEADQUARTERS
WASHINGTON 25, D.C.



• 5 JUN 1961
MVI
(GREEN BAY - USCG
LIGHTSHIP RELIEF
a-3 Bd)

Commandant's Action

on

Joint Marine Board of Investigation; collision involving the SS GREEN BAY and USCG LIGHTSHIP RELIEF (WAL-505) on Ambrose Lightship Station, 24 June 1960 with the resultant sinking of the RELIEF

1. The record of the Joint Marine Board of Investigation convened to investigate subject casualty together with its Findings of Fact, Opinions and Recommendations has been reviewed.
2. In the early morning hours of 24 June 1960 the United States cargo vessel GREEN BAY was outbound from Port Newark, N. J. to India and the Middle East with 8,100 tons of general cargo. After clearing the Narrows, visibility decreased to zero in fog and remained so up until the time of collision. Gedney Channel Lighted Whistle Buoy (LL 1287) was left to port at about 0326 whereupon the vessel was maneuvered on various courses and speeds to seaward of the entrance of Ambrose Channel searching for the pilot launch. The launch was located at about 0400 while the GREEN BAY was drifting on a heading of 035°T with engines stopped. Before the pilot departed the master took a radio direction finder bearing on Ambrose Lightship and a radar bearing was taken by the pilot. Both bearings were determined to be 070°T. At the investigation the pilot estimated that at the time he took the radar bearing the range was 3/4 of a mile. The master, on the other hand, estimated the LIGHTSHIP to be 1-1/2 miles distant but this was not verified by any means. The pilot disembarked at about 0403. The engines were ordered slow ahead at about 0404 followed a minute later by half ahead and the helmsman was told to come right to 070°T in order to head the vessel directly toward the LIGHTSHIP. The lookout on the bow estimated he heard the fog signal from the LIGHTSHIP about 3 minutes before collision broad on the starboard bow then sighted the loom of the light on the same bearing. This bearing then changed slowly to dead ahead. According to the lookout this information was relayed by telephone to the bridge by the chief mate who was also on the forecastle head but the chief mate stated that when he first saw the loom of the light about 1-1/2 minutes before collision it was dead ahead and this was the report he made to the bridge. The master upon receiving the report of the

loom dead ahead, went to the wing of the bridge but could see nothing. Moments later the thin loom of the light was visible ahead whereupon he ordered the rudder hard right to 090°T to clear the LIGHTSHIP and the engines full ahead to increase the swing. According to the helmsman the vessel had not yet been steadied on 070°T when this order was received. Within seconds the light ahead became intense and realizing the LIGHTSHIP was closer than he had originally thought the master rang up full astern. A short time later, at about 0411.5 the bow of the GREEN BAY struck the LIGHTSHIP on her starboard side just aft of amidships at almost a 90 degree angle. The LIGHTSHIP was observed to roll under the impact, then the GREEN BAY began making sternway and backed clear. The engine was stopped at 0417 and the vessel anchored at 0421.

3. On the morning of 24 June 1960 the USCG LIGHTSHIP RELIEF (WAL-505) was in position at the Ambrose Lightship Station. When the deck watch changed at 0345 visibility was noted to be zero due to fog. A check of the fog signal, radio beacon and the light showed all to be operating properly. A short time after 0400 a fog signal was heard close aboard. About a minute later a second fog signal was heard and a white light and the black shape of a vessel were observed approaching on the starboard side. The deck watch called the man on watch in the engine room to come topside and when he arrived on deck the vessel, later determined to be the GREEN BAY, was about 50 feet away. The general alarm was sounded and within seconds, at about 0411.5, the bow of the GREEN BAY struck the RELIEF at about a 90 degree angle just aft of amidships. The RELIEF rolled about 15° to port as a result of the impact, then righted herself as the GREEN BAY backed clear. A check of the damage disclosed that the vessel had been holed and the engine room was flooding. Shortly thereafter the generator ceased operating. The order to abandon ship was then given. All hands were mustered and left the vessel in a self-inflating rubber raft. By this time the vessel was down by the stern and a few minutes later was observed to go down stern first. At about 0530 the crew of the RELIEF was located and picked up by the motor lifeboat from the GREEN BAY.

4. There were no lives lost as a result of this collision. One man aboard the RELIEF received minor injuries to his knee and hip. Damage to the GREEN BAY was confined to the stem and was estimated to be in the amount of \$3,000.

REMARKS

1. It is considered that this casualty was caused principally by the GREEN BAY being headed directly toward the LIGHTSHIP in zero visibility.

2. Contributing to the casualty was the failure of the vessel to fix her position either by radar or radio direction finder bearings before setting her course.

3. Concurring with the Board the engine order of half ahead under the existing conditions was excessive particularly in view of the fact that the master apparently had no confidence in his radar due to previous erratic operation in addition to the fact that the distance to the LIGHTSHIP was never established.

4. On the basis of the evidence in the record, no conclusion can be drawn as to the cost of salvaging and repairing, or in lieu thereof, replacing the sunken lightship. The exact damage and the claim to be asserted therefor will be determined by separate action.

5. By copy hereof the Commander, Third Coast Guard District is directed to take such action as may be indicated with respect to the performance of duty of Coast Guard personnel during this incident.

6. Subject to the foregoing remarks the record of the Marine Board of Investigation is approved.



A. C. RICHMOND

UNITED STATES COAST GUARD

ADDRESS REPLY TO:

Officer in Charge
Marine Inspection
720 Custom House
New York 4, New York



A25(MIS-017360)
3 August 1960

From: Captain Walter B. MILLINGTON, USCG, Chairman
To: Commandant (C)
Via: Commander, Third Coast Guard District (d)

Subj: Joint Marine Board of Investigation; collision involving
SS GREEN BAY and USCG Lightship RELIEF (WAL-505) and
resultant sinking of the RELIEF in Ambrose Channel, New
York Harbor, 24 June 1960; report on

Ref: (a) Comdt (MVI) ltr 30 June 1960 (GREEN BAY - USCG Lightship
RELIEF (WAL-505) C-3 Bd)
(b) Chapter VI, CG Supplement, MCM
(c) Section 0201 b (1) CG Supp. MCM
(d) 46 CFR Subpart 136.09

- Preliminary Statement -

As directed by reference (a) and in accordance with references
(b), (c) and (d), the report of subject investigation is submitted
herewith.

- Findings of Fact -

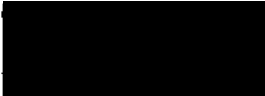
1. In a dense fog, at approximately 0411, EDST, on 24 June 1960, the
SS GREEN BAY collided with the USCG Lightship RELIEF (WAL-505) which
was anchored on Ambrose Channel Lightship Station, off the entrance to
Ambrose Channel, New York Harbor, in position 40°-27.1' north latitude
and 73°-49.4' west longitude. The RELIEF sank on station about ten
minutes after the collision. There were no lives lost as a result of
the collision; however, the Acting Officer in Charge of the RELIEF
received minor injuries to his knee and hip. There were no personnel
injuries sustained aboard the GREEN BAY.

2. Pertinent characteristics of the two vessels involved in the col-
lision are as follows:

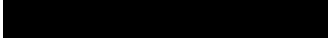
(a) SS GREEN BAY

(1) Nationality	U. S. A.
(2) Type	Freighter - single screw
(3) Official No.	244287
(4) Home Port	New Orleans
(5) Propulsion	Steam

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(6) Built	1943; Oakland, Calif.
(7) Tonnage	6,125 gross; 3,554 net
(8) Length-breadth-depth	438.9; 63.1; 27.7
(9) Place & date last inspected	New Orleans; 26 January 1959
(10) Draft	27'-00" fwd; 28'-6" aft
(11) Gyro compass	Yes
(12) Course Recorder	Inoperative
(13) Loran	Yes
(14) Fathometer	Yes
(15) Radar	RCA
(16) Owner & Operator	Central Gulf Steamship Corp. (Del.) 19 Rector St., New York, New York
(17) Master	

(b) USCG LIGHTSHIP RELIEF (WAL-505)

(1) Type designation	WAL
(2) Base	St. George, S.I., New York
(3) Propulsion	Diesel
(4) Built	1904; Camden, New Jersey
(5) Displacement Tonnage	566.0 full; 495.7 light
(6) Length-breadth-depth	130'-6"; 29'-6"; 22'-9"
(7) Draft-Full Load	11'-7" fwd; 11'-9" aft
(8) Radar	Bendix MR-3A
(9) Acting Officer in Charge at time of collision	 BMC

3. The speed table of the GREEN BAY indicates as follows:

<u>Telegraph</u>	<u>RPM</u>	<u>Speed (knots)</u>
Dead slow ahead	20	3.75
Half ahead	40	7.5
Full ahead	60	11.25

4. At the time of the collision a dense fog covered the area, there was a light wind, and the sea was calm with a slight swell. Visibility was zero.

5. The GREEN BAY departed Port Newark at about 2356 on 23 June 1960 bound for Bombay, India and the Middle East with approximately 8100 tons of general cargo. The draft on departure was 27' fwd. and 28'-6" aft.

6. At approximately 0126, Sandy Hook Pilot ██████ took the conn of the GREEN BAY to make the transit through the Narrows and Ambrose Channel. At this time visibility was estimated at two to four miles; however, after clearing the Narrows, visibility closed to zero and remained so throughout the transit of Ambrose Channel. In addition to Pilot ██████, the Master of the GREEN BAY, ██████, and ██████, Third Mate and duty watch officer, were on the bridge. The Pilot and Captain ██████ were sounding fog signals manually. The radar was in operation and set on the four-mile scale. Pilot ██████ used the radar extensively and without difficulty in navigating Ambrose Channel through the fog. No radar plots, however, were maintained aboard the GREEN BAY at any time prior to the collision.

7. At approximately 0326 Gedney Channel Lighted Whistle Buoy was logged abeam to port. From this time until Pilot ██████ debarked at about 0403, the GREEN BAY was steering various courses at various speeds in an attempt to locate the pilot launch. When the pilot launch was located at approximately 0400, the heading of the GREEN BAY was approximately 035° T. and the vessel was drifting with engines stopped. At about this time Captain ██████ took an RDF bearing on the Lightship. Pilot ██████ agreed that this RDF bearing was correct and also took a radar bearing on a target he identified as the Lightship. Both bearings checked with each other as 070° T. on the Lightship. Pilot ██████ estimated the distance to be approximately three-quarters of a mile by radar. At about 0403 Pilot ██████ debarked from the GREEN BAY. Mr. ██████, 2nd Mate, had at this time reported to the bridge to relieve Mr. ██████ but Mr. ██████ remained on the bridge until after the casualty.

8. After discharging the Pilot, the GREEN BAY got underway at approximately 0404 at dead slow ahead. Visibility remained zero. At 0405 speed was increased to half speed ahead. Captain ██████ gave the helmsman an order to steer 070° T. Chief Mate ██████ and ██████, A.B., were on the forecastle head as lookouts. Mr. ██████ was manning the phones to the bridge. ██████ stated that about three minutes before the collision he heard the fog signal of Ambrose Light Vessel at 045° on the starboard bow of the GREEN BAY and then sighted the loom of the light on about the same bearing; that he reported these to Mr. ██████ and, that the Chief Mate made a telephone report to the bridge. ██████ also stated that the bearing of the loom of the light gradually changed toward the bow; that he reported the changes to Mr. ██████; and, that the Chief Mate reported to the bridge. The evidence indicates that Mr. ██████ did report to the bridge that he saw the loom of the light of the Light Vessel almost dead ahead; that Captain ██████ heard the fog signal from the bridge and sighted the loom of the light approximately dead ahead; and, that Captain ██████ ordered hard right rudder to 090° T. The GREEN BAY at this time was proceeding at half speed ahead (7.5 knots). In a matter of seconds and in rapid succession speeds of full ahead and full astern were signalled on the engine room telegraph.

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9. At approximately 0411 $\frac{1}{2}$, the GREEN BAY struck the RELIEF on the starboard side between the letters "R" and "E". Shortly thereafter, the GREEN BAY picked up sternway and backed clear of the RELIEF into the fog. Visual contact with the RELIEF was lost. The GREEN BAY stopped engines at approximately 0417, and let go the port anchor at 0421.

10. On board the RELIEF [REDACTED] BM3, relieved the deck watch at approximately 0345, 24 June 1960. No material condition with respect to watertight integrity was set or maintained aboard the RELIEF. After making routine checks of the light and fog horn signal, [REDACTED] went to the bridge to make log entries pertaining to his watch. While writing in the log on the bridge [REDACTED] heard a fog signal close aboard the RELIEF. About one minute later he heard another fog signal and sighted a white light and the black shape of a vessel approaching on the starboard side. [REDACTED] then called to the man on watch in the engine room, [REDACTED], EN3, to come topside. When [REDACTED] arrived topside he saw the ship bearing down on the RELIEF. [REDACTED] then sounded the general alarm (a siren), and seconds later at approximately 0411 $\frac{1}{2}$, the RELIEF was struck on the starboard side by the GREEN BAY.

11. [REDACTED], BMC, Acting Officer in Charge of the RELIEF, was awakened by the general alarm. As he was making his way from his bunk through the passageway, the collision occurred. After the impact, [REDACTED] went forward to determine whether all hands had been awakened and whether or not anyone had been injured. All hands were accounted for and there were no injuries. Then [REDACTED] checked to ascertain the extent of damage and discovered that the engine room was flooding. Shortly thereafter, the generator ceased operation. [REDACTED] then passed the word to abandon ship. After all hands were mustered, a self-inflating rubber raft was put over the side and inflated. The life raft was used because the vessel's motor boat was damaged by the collision and [REDACTED] felt it would take too long to put the pulling boat over the side. At about 0416 the crew boarded the raft one at a time, under the direction of [REDACTED], who boarded last. The RELIEF, at this time, was down by the stern. The raft was propelled away from the RELIEF by the crew. A few minutes later the RELIEF sank stern first.

12. After the RELIEF sank, [REDACTED] and the crew attempted to raise attention by firing flares and blowing whistles. At about 0530, the crew of the RELIEF was picked up by the No. 1 motor lifeboat from the GREEN BAY, in the charge of Chief Mate [REDACTED]. While returning to the GREEN BAY, the CGC-95308 arrived on the scene and took the survivors on board. They were taken to St. George Base, Staten Island and arrived there at approximately 0745.

13. On the 24th of June 1960, the CGC FIREBUSH, under the command of Lieutenant [REDACTED] USCG, located the sunken RELIEF in the position indicated on C&GS Chart #1215 for Ambrose Light Vessel. The

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RELIEF was located by the sight of the extreme tip of its foremast showing above the water surface. The sunken vessel was marked by a suitable lighted gong wreck buoy.

14. On 5 July 1960, [REDACTED] MM1 (Diver), United States Navy, stationed at the Naval Ammunition Depot, Earle, New Jersey, made a dive to the RELIEF. Without entering the RELIEF, his underwater inspection indicated a jagged hole in the shell plating aft of frame 29 extending from the weather deck toward the keel. The largest part of this hole was right below the weather deck and down to the second deck. This portion of the hole was at least two feet wide. Below the second deck, the hole narrowed and ranged in widths from approximately one foot six inches down to approximately five or six inches for a distance downward of approximately 12 feet. The rivets holding the frame, to which the watertight bulkhead at frame 29 was secured, had let go resulting in the frame parting from the shell plating. This separation left an aperture between the frame and the shell plating of up to six inches for an undetermined distance vertically.

15. Since section 0601(d), Coast Guard Supplement to the Manual for Courts-Martial, respecting survey of a damaged Coast Guard vessel, cannot be followed as long as the RELIEF remains in a sunken condition and, since section 0601(f) of the aforesaid Supplement has no application to this casualty, inasmuch as the RELIEF was anchored at the time of the collision and could have caused no damage, the following estimates of the damages and losses resulting from the casualty were obtained from appropriate personnel of the Office of the Commander, Third Coast Guard District, and from the Report of Marine Casualty or Accident, Form CG-2692, submitted by the Master of the GREEN BAY:

(a) If the RELIEF is abandoned by the Coast Guard in her present sunken condition and a substitute vessel is built to replace her, the estimated cost of building the replacement vessel is \$1,600,000.

(b) If the RELIEF is abandoned by the Coast Guard and the vessel is required to be removed as a menace to navigation, the cost, depending on method and degree is estimated to range between \$7,000. and \$35,000.

(c) If the RELIEF is raised and restored, the cost of salvage and repair is estimated to range between \$525,900. and \$674,700.

(d) Monetary value of clothing, monies, and other personal property claimed to have been lost by Coast Guard personnel, aboard the RELIEF at the time of the casualty is estimated to be \$4,800.

(e) Damage to the GREEN BAY was confined to the stem and is estimated to be \$3,000.

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- Opinion -

1. The evidence indicates that, although the GREEN BAY was equipped with a radar, Captain [REDACTED] on 24 June 1960 made no attempt to use this radar, after departure of the Pilot, to secure the bearing and range of the RELIEF before proceeding to navigate his vessel at half speed ahead in a dense fog. This neglect of Captain [REDACTED] contributed to the collision between the GREEN BAY and the RELIEF and the subsequent sinking of the latter vessel.
2. The evidence indicates that although Captain [REDACTED] heard a fog signal of a vessel forward of the beam of the GREEN BAY on 24 June 1960, the position of which was not ascertained, he did not stop the engines of his vessel and thereafter navigate with caution until danger of collision was over. Captain [REDACTED] actions in this regard were negligent and contributed to the collision between the GREEN BAY and the RELIEF and the subsequent sinking of the latter vessel.
3. The evidence indicates that Captain [REDACTED] was aware that, when the Pilot departed his vessel on 24 June 1960, the GREEN BAY was in the vicinity of Ambrose Light Vessel. It further indicates that, although zero visibility existed at the time, Captain [REDACTED] permitted his vessel to be navigated at half speed ahead. It is considered that half speed ahead under the existing visibility was an immoderate speed and that Captain [REDACTED] was negligent in permitting his vessel to be navigated at such speed. This negligence contributed to the collision between the GREEN BAY and the RELIEF and the subsequent sinking of the latter vessel.
4. That although material condition Yoke as required by the Casualty Control Manual of the RELIEF (Board Exhibit 19/5) was not set on 24 June 1960, strict compliance with said Manual and the accompanying closing of the watertight door in the watertight bulkhead between the engine and compressor rooms would not have prevented the vessel from sinking.
5. That the evidence adduced indicates that neither Warrant Boatswain [REDACTED] the regularly assigned Officer in Charge of the RELIEF, nor Chief Boatswain's Mate [REDACTED], Acting Officer in Charge of the RELIEF, took adequate measures to insure that the crew of that vessel understood and followed the requirements set forth in said vessel's Casualty Control Manual.
6. That the evidence adduced indicates that Engineman First Class, [REDACTED] while on duty as the senior engineer on board disobeyed, and permitted subordinate personnel to disobey, the standing

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night orders of the Officer in Charge of the RELIEF, that at night time, while the RELIEF was "on station," the watertight doors in the engine room be closed and dogged from 2000 until morning.

7. That after being struck by the GREEN BAY the decision to abandon the RELIEF and the actual abandonment thereof by the crew under the supervision of Chief Boatswain's Mate [REDACTED] Acting Officer in Charge, were proper, timely and effective.

- Recommendations -

1. That in view of the opinions expressed herein, appropriate action under R.S. 4450, as amended (46 U.S.C. 239) be instituted against Captain [REDACTED] Master of the S/S GREEN BAY.
2. That in view of the opinions expressed herein, appropriate disciplinary action under UCMJ be taken against [REDACTED] EII, USCG.
3. That in view of the opinions expressed herein, non-punitive admonitions be addressed to Boatswain, W-1, [REDACTED] and to [REDACTED] ([REDACTED]) BMC(P), USCG.

[REDACTED]
Walter B. Millington
Captain, U. S. Coast Guard, Chairman

[REDACTED]
C. B. Lambert
Captain, U. S. Coast Guard, Member

[REDACTED]
F. K. Arzt
Commander, U.S. Coast Guard, Member
and Recorder

Encl: (1) CG Form #2692 - GREEN BAY