

MVI

7 January 1934

(MARYLAND - C-9 Bd)

From: Chief, Merchant Vessel Inspection Division
To: Commandant
Via: Chief, Office of Merchant Marine Safety

Subj: Marine Board of Investigation; grounding of the freighter
SS MARYLAND, vicinity of Marquette, Michigan, 12 September 1933

1. The SS MARYLAND, a bulk freighter of 6071 g.t. and 1800 h.p., departed without cargo from Ashtabula, Ohio, for Marquette, Michigan, on 10 September 1933. About an hour after passing Grand Island in Lake Superior and due to worsening weather conditions the MARYLAND at about 0755 12 September 1933 changed course right 90° to the northward to head into the sea. At about 0615, due to the trim of the vessel being high by the bow, low propulsive power, and the strength of the wind and state of the sea, the bow of the MARYLAND fell off and could not thereafter be brought into the sea on a northward heading. Aside from a short period of time when the MARYLAND proceeded with her stern to the sea to secure hatches and to make an attempt to turn into the sea with a left rudder, she headed westward in an attempt to head into the sea with a full right rudder. The MARYLAND made very little advance and due to the force of the wind on the bow and the force of the propeller action on the hard right rudder, considerable leeway was created and the MARYLAND drifted rapidly, grounding in a position approximately 5 miles 125° from Marquette Breakwater Outer Light. The grounding occurred at 0750 after the vessel had proceeded since 0730 at full power with a full right rudder. No loss of life occurred as a result of this casualty but the vessel was damaged to an amount estimated in excess of \$125,000.

2. Pursuant to the provisions of Title 46 U.S.C. Part 134, the record of the Marine Board of Investigation convened to investigate subject casualty, together with its Findings of Fact, Conclusions and Recommendations, has been reviewed and is forwarded herewith.

REMARKS

3. The Board made the following Conclusions and Recommendation with respect to the Master's ineffectiveness in handling of the SS MARYLAND which resulted in her grounding:

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"CONCLUSIONS

"7. "

"7. That the vessel would probably have remained off the beach several hours longer if the master had attempted to back her into the sea and wind. This action might even have prevented the grounding, inasmuch as the storm was of short duration.

"9. "

"9. That there is no evidence of misconduct, inattention to duty, negligence or willful violation of the law on the part of any licensed officer or certificated man contributing in any way to this casualty. However, the master did not exhibit prudent seamanship and exercise the best judgment in his control of the vessel under the circumstances."

"RECOMMENDATIONS

"1. It is recommended that the master of the SS MARYLAND be admonished for his unskillfulness in:

- a. Failing to attempt to back into the wind and sea.
- b. Failing to take shelter at Hauling when the opportunity to do so existed.
- c. Manuevering his vessel in severe weather.
- d. Failing to maintain a proper plot of the position of his vessel.
- e. Failing to use the anchors sooner with full scope of chain."

Conclusions, paragraphs 7 and 9, and Recommendation, paragraph 1, are approved only to the extent that the Master did not take or attempt to take alternative action for the control of his vessel in the heavy weather encountered subsequent to 0615 to the time of grounding at 0750, 12 September 1953. The alternative courses of action stated in the Board's report which the Master failed to take, if made a part of an admonishment to the Master, may be protested, whereupon under 46 C.F.R. 137.05-5(a)(2) charges and

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specifications would have to be served for hearing in suspension and revocation proceedings. Any action in approving or disapproving the failures specified in the Board's report would create confusion and interfere with the orderly procedures of any probable subsequent administrative suspension and revocation proceedings for the proper consideration of such specified failures.

4. Recommendation, paragraph 3, of the Board's report that ship owners be encouraged to install more modern hatches of the type currently in use on newer vessels is concurred with, and in this connection the Commander of the 9th Coast Guard District having jurisdiction is to take every action possible in the direction of the recommendation.

5. Subject to the foregoing remarks, it is recommended that the Findings of Fact, Conclusions and Recommendations of the Marine Board of Investigation be approved.

P. E. SAVCHIS

Acting

FIRST ENDORSEMENT OF MWI memorandum of 7 January 1954

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From: Chief, Office of Merchant Marine Safety
To: Commandant

Forwarded, recommending approval.

(signed) H. C. Shephard
H. C. SHEPHERD

APPROVED: 13 JAN 1954

(signed) Merlin O'Neill

MERLIN O'NEILL

Vice Admiral, U. S. Coast Guard
Commandant

REPORT

of a

MARINE BOARD OF INVESTIGATION

convened at

Marquette, Michigan and Cleveland, Ohio

To inquire into the stranding of the

SS MARYLAND

on 12 September, 1953.

After full and mature deliberations, the Board finds as follows:

FINDINGS OF FACT

1. That the SS MARYLAND (Official Number 205285) a bulk freighter owned by Gasparillo Dock Company and operated by the Bethlehem Transportation Company, departed from Ashtabula, Ohio, on 10 September, 1953 with 32 men on board, enroute to Marquette, Michigan, without cargo. The SS MARYLAND is 330 feet long, 56.2 feet in breadth and 32 feet in depth, with 2,100 H.P., gross tonnage 6871 tons. She was built at Ecorse, Michigan in 1908.
2. That on this voyage the SS MARYLAND was properly manned and had aboard a valid certificate of inspection for Great Lakes service issued by the Officer in Charge, Marine Inspection, at Cleveland, Ohio, on 1 April, 1953.
3. That on departure from Ashtabula the cargo hatches were covered and dogged, with tarpaulins on hatches 2, 4, 6, 8, 10, 12, 14, 17, 19, 21, 23, 25, 27 and 29. The MARYLAND has thirty cargo hatches on 12 foot centers.
4. That the SS MARYLAND passed Au Sable Point on the south shore of Lake Superior at approximately 0048 on 12 September, 1953 and passed Grand Island at approximately 0256 and assumed that the vessel was on the normal Lake Carriers' upbound course. The weather entries in the log at both places indicate north wind, fresh, with clear skies.
5. That at 0355 on 12 September, 1953, the SS MARYLAND changed course 90 degrees to starboard to a course of approximately 345⁰T. heading into the wind and sea. The log entry at that time was north wind, strong, with rain. At 0500 the vessel slowed to 3/4 speed to reduce the pounding.
6. That the SS MARYLAND continued on a north northwesterly heading until approximately 0615 when the wind and the seas on the starboard bow forced the vessel's head to fall off to the left.
7. That the master then called the engine room for full power, and maneuvered to port and to starboard on full rudder attempting to get the bow into the wind. In the course of these maneuvers the SS MARYLAND shipped considerable heavy spray and some solid water across her deck and rolled heavily.

8. That at about 0655 the first mate noted that some hatch leaves had fallen into the cargo hold on No. 1 hatch and that some others had broken loose (No. 11 and 30) and were laying on deck, he reported this fact to the master who ordered the mate to call out all hands forward to secure same. The master then slowed down to 1/2 speed and held the vessel on a southerly or southwesterly heading until hatches No. 11 and 30 were secured and all other dogs were tightened. No. 1 hatch remained open.

9. That there was approximately 3 to 5 feet of free water in cargo-hold No. 3 at the time that Hatches were secured and that cargo-holds Nos. 1 and 2 had a slight amount of free water which entered the cargo-hold from the leaky tank tops and through the open hatches.

10. That at 0730 another attempt was made to bring the vessel to the right into the wind and sea under full power with full right rudder. The vessel would not go up into the wind but continued in a westerly direction in the trough of the sea. With the wind on the starboard bow and with full right rudder, the vessel made considerable leeway and relatively little headway until she grounded at about 0950.

11. That the master, at about 0720, contacted the CGC WOODRUSH via radio telephone and reported that he was 20 miles west of Grand Island and was in danger of going ashore because he could not get the bow of the SS MARYLAND up into the wind. The WOODRUSH at that time was approximately 70 miles northwest of the stricken vessel and proceeded toward her in a rough sea with winds up to 55 miles per hour.

12. That the Officer in Charge, CG Group, Marquette, BOEN John Kinnunen contacted the SS MARYLAND via radio telephone at about 0721 to ask if he could be of any assistance and was told that he could not.

13. Shortly before grounding appeared inevitable, the master ordered both anchors let go. There was approximately forty to fifty fathoms scope on both chains when the vessel grounded, on a sand beach, 125 degrees true, 4 1/2 miles from Marquette breakwater outer light.

14. That the master, Captain Adrian P. Goodrow, directed the movements of the vessel from the time course was changed to 345°T. at 0355 until the vessel grounded. The first mate, Mr. Loren A. Falk, remained in the pilot house except as noted above and assisted in the navigation of the vessel and the handling of the radio telephone.

15. That the chief engineer, Mr. Clifford L. Cheney, stood throttle watch in the engine room from 0615 until the stranding, with a short break at about 0700 when the vessel was running downwind.
16. That the master of the SS MARYLAND requested the Officer in Charge, CG Group, Marquette, at about 1000 to remove the crew of the MARYLAND.
17. That the combined crews from Marquette and Munising Lifeboat Stations removed 21 crew members of the MARYLAND via breeches buoy safely, with considerable assistance from civilians.
18. That a Coast Guard helicopter from CG Air Station, Traverse City, removed the remainder of the MARYLAND crew, 11 men, safely.
19. That none of the officers and crew of the MARYLAND were lost or injured seriously, during the entire episode.
20. That the SS MARYLAND was refloated on 17 September, 1953, with the assistance of the salvage vessel FAVORITE, and the CGC MACKINAW, and was later permitted to proceed to Superior, Wisconsin, under tow and escort, to effect necessary repairs.

CONCLUSIONS

1. That the machinery and navigational equipment of the SS MARYLAND were in good condition and in proper operating order, prior to stranding.
2. That no accurate fix of the vessel's position was maintained on 12 September, 1953, after passing Grand Island.
3. That the SS MARYLAND was fully ballasted prior to 0300 with an estimated draft of 8 feet forward and 17 feet aft.
4. That had all the MARYLAND's hatches been battened down with tarpaulins, the vessel would not have had to run before the wind for approximately 40 minutes.
5. That the MARYLAND ran on a southerly heading for approximately 40 minutes between 0615 and 0950 at approximately half speed with a strong following wind and heavy sea bringing the vessel much nearer the lee shore and jeopardizing her chance of reaching Marquette.

6. That the weather reports available to the master prior to 0615 on 12 September, caused him to underestimate the severity of the storm which his vessel encountered.

7. That the vessel would probably have remained off the beach several hours longer if the master had attempted to back her into the sea and wind. This action might even have prevented the grounding, inasmuch as the storm was of short duration.

8. That the vessel did not drop her anchors until very very close to the beach and that the anchors did not assist in preventing the vessel from grounding.

9. That there is no evidence of misconduct, inattention to duty, negligence or wilful violation of the law on the part of any licensed officer or certificated man contributing in any way to this casualty. However, the master did not exhibit prudent seamanship and exercise the best judgment in his control of the vessel under the circumstances.

10. That no actions or omissions on the part of any Coast Guard personnel caused or in any way contributed to this casualty.

11. That the damage to the SS MARYLAND resulting from this grounding originally estimated at \$125,000 has since been revised upwards.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. It is recommended that the master of the SS MARYLAND be admonished for his unskillfulness in:

- a. Failing to attempt to back into the wind and sea
- b. Failing to take shelter at Munising when the opportunity to do so existed.
- c. Maneuvering his vessel in severe weather.
- d. Failing to maintain a proper plot of the position of his vessel.
- e. Failing to use the anchors sooner with full scope of chain.

2. It is recommended that proper recognition be made of the rescue operations of Coast Guard personnel involved.

3. It is recommended that ship owners be encouraged to install more modern hatches of the type currently in use on newer vessels.

(signed) Harold C. Moore
HAROLD C. MOORE
Captain, U. S. Coast Guard,
Chairman

(signed) George P. Kenney
GEORGE P. KENNEY
Captain, U. S. Coast Guard
Member

(signed) Louis F. Sudnik
LOUIS F. SUDNIK
Lt. Commander, U. S. Coast Guard
Member

(signed) Arthur A. Fontaine
ARTHUR A. FONTAINE
Lieutenant, U. S. Coast Guard
Recorder