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This form is in response to your inquiry. I am answering you in this manner to reduce costs and to service a larger number of requests.

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may be acquired through a local photography firm. See the enclosed information for details.

requires research that cannot be undertaken by our limited staff. If you wish to research material in the USCG Historian's Office, please make an appointment.

is not available from the USCG Historian's Office.

Information may also be available from these alternative sources:

National Archives
7th and Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20408
www.archives.gov

National Archives II
8601 Adelphi Road
College Park, MD 20740
www.archives.gov

National Personnel Records Center
Military Records
9700 Page Avenue
St. Louis, MO 63132-5100

National Personnel Records Center
Civilian Records
111 Winnebago Street
St. Louis, MO 63118-4126
www.archives.gov/facilities/mo/st_louis.html

Naval History & Heritage Command
805 Kidder Breese Street, SE
Washington Navy Yard
Washington, D.C., 20374-5060.
www.history.navy.mil

US Lighthouse Society
9005 Point No Point Rd. NE
Hansville, WA 98340
www.uslhs.org

Comments:

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Christopher B. Havern".

CHRISTOPHER B. HAVERN
Historian
By direction

ACTION OF THE FINAL REVIEWING AUTHORITY ON THE INVESTIGATION INTO THE CAPSIZING AND SUBSEQUENT LOSS OF MLB 44363 AND THE DEATH OF THREE COAST GUARD MEMBERS THAT OCCURRED AT COAST GUARD STATION QUILLAYUTE RIVER ON 12 FEBRUARY 1997.

12 February 1997 was a very tragic day for the U. S. Coast Guard. On that date, the Coast Guard lost three fine crewmembers from our service. Their loss occurred when they responded to the call to rescue people in distress. All of these men gave their lives as heroes, and our nation has formally recognized their supreme sacrifice. As we assess the circumstances of that stormy night, let it be clear that nothing we say or conclude in the aftermath will ever diminish the bravery and dedication of Petty Officer David Bosley, Petty Officer Matthew Schlimme, and Seaman Clinton Miniken.

The call came in the dark of night during very rough weather conditions. In the finest traditions of the "lifesavers", the crew of MLB 44363 responded to a call for help, and left the safety of Coast Guard Station Quillayute River to rescue the crew of the sailing vessel GALE RUNNER. Unfortunately, the weather conditions were extremely dangerous, beyond the capability of the assigned crew. As we can best determine, the motor lifeboat was not safely navigated, resulting in the loss of life for three of the four crewmembers assigned. The two occupants of the sailing vessel were rescued by a Coast Guard helicopter after taking on water, rolling over, losing their mast, and just prior to foundering in the surf on the rocky shoreline. The fourth crewmember from MLB 44363 was also rescued by a Coast Guard helicopter assisted by a civilian rescue team.

Rescuing mariners in dangerous sea conditions presents immense challenges to the judgment and seamanship of our Coast Guard people. In the aftermath of this incident, it appears that there were other factors that may have contributed to the final outcome, and certain procedures could have been done differently. Our procedures need to be reviewed, and changes made if warranted. To that end, I directed an immediate review of our lifeboat operations, nation-wide. This assessment, and our earnest efforts to refine our procedures even more, will hopefully save lives in the future, and serve as a fitting legacy in honor of our fallen shipmates.

Subject to the actions and comments set out herein, the findings of fact, opinions, and recommendations of the investigating officer, as modified by the convening authority are approved as follows:

A. CORRECTIVE ACTIONS

1. I direct that the Chief of Staff order a Coast Guard wide safety shutdown for all small boat stations and ensure full compliance with all of the directions set forth below:
 - (a) all small boat crew members attend Team Coordination Training (TCT), and add that this training shall receive systematic support from both G-O and G-W;
 - (b) clear, reasonable policy guidance be published regarding the wearing of safety belts, helmets, and protective clothing;
 - (c) personnel in the BM rating who are E-6 and who hold the surfman (HW, SJ, or SK) enlisted qualification codes and have remained qualified are considered to have met the 12 month sea duty requirement for advancement to BMC;
 - (d) a Waterway Analysis and Management System (WAMS) study of Quillayute River approach and entrance be conducted to determine the appropriate navigation aids;
 - (e) the bar lights be restored to operational status;
 - (f) G-OCS and G-SEN evaluate adding or relocating the dogging handle for the forward main deck watertight hatch to an above deck location;
 - (g) G-O clearly define the terms "rough bar conditions," "extreme offshore sea conditions," and "excessive river current conditions," and the terms and their definitions and the restrictions and conditions associated with them be fully distributed throughout all small boat stations;
 - (h) G-OCS reevaluate MLB crew helmet design; and
 - (i) that headquarters program, rating, work force, and assignment managers work with CGD13 to establish a clear policy on the number of surfmen required at all CGD13 stations based on individual unit circumstances.

B. ADMINISTRATIVE COMMENTS

1. Enclosure 54 is accepted as part of Finding of Fact #8 only to the extent that it denotes the presence of Dr. Noble at the Station on the night in question.
2. I concur with the Board's first sentence in Finding of Fact #79; I do not concur with the second sentence. There is no assurance that SA Wingo would have been able to enter the forward cabin main deck hatch even if a dogging handle had been stored above decks.

3. Finding of Fact #122 is clarified by adding Commandant Instruction M16114.9B (Boat Crew Training Manual) as a cross-reference to Enclosure 29 as supporting criteria.
4. I make the following additional finding as Finding of Fact #183. Coast Guard policy existed prior to this incident to ensure that the crew, when transiting surf, wear protective clothing, helmets, and safety harness. Prior to transiting the surf, the operator is to "Ensure the dodgers are rolled up, the main diesel engines are physically checked, and the crew is in protective clothing, helmets, and safety harnesses." Enclosure 53.
5. I concur with Opinion #3. I am also of the opinion that the weather forecast provided by the coastal marine forecast was accurate, including the occurrence of gale force winds and waves of 18-20 feet. I am also of the opinion that the information was provided in a timely manner. Neither the timing or the content of the weather forecast was a factor in the incident. Enclosures 16 and 52.
6. I do not concur with Opinion #5. There is insufficient information to form an opinion concerning whether the comment meant "let's turn around," "let's get across the bar," "let's get out of this confinement of the river," or any other number of possible meanings.
7. I concur with Opinion #11 except for the last sentence of the Convening Authority's endorsement. The last sentence is modified to state that I am of the opinion that, had a surfman been at the wheel of CG-44363 that morning, the casualty may not have occurred.
8. I concur with Opinion #18, as modified by the Convening Authority, to the extent that it states that the crew should have worn helmets in this case. However, I do not concur with the remainder of Opinion due to the absence of supporting documentation. While the overall quality of this investigation report is good, there is an absence of detail on the issue of boat crew safety belts and helmets. The record is also devoid of any objective criteria regarding exact usage of the belts and helmets, and to the extent that they had been properly used, whether the outcome would have been different.
9. I partially concur with Recommendation #3. I concur that there should always be a sufficient number of qualified surfmen assigned to the Station to ensure that the OINC or XPO will be available to coordinate every case. However, while I believe that the Station should strive to train as many surfmen as possible, I concur with the findings of CGD13 Quality Action Team (QAT) Report, Enclosure (75). The QAT recommended that the minimum requirements for Station Quillayute River should be four qualified surfmen (including the OINC). Therefore, I reject the recommendation that the Station should have a minimum of four surfmen in addition to the OINC.

10. I concur with Recommendation #6, except for the last sentence of the Convening Authority's Endorsement. I have considered and rejected the propriety of establishing a numerical qualification code for surfmen billets.

Robert E. Kramek
14 June 1997.

ROBERT E. KRAMEK
Admiral, U.S. Coast Guard
Commandant