

MVI
1 October 1953
(GULFTRADE -
LOIDE-PANAMA - a-3 Bd)

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

Subj: Marine Board of Investigation; collision involving the tanker
SS GULFTRADE and the SS LOIDE-PANAMA (Brazilian) off Barnegat
Lightship on 28 June 1953, with loss of life

1. On 28 June 1953, the SS GULFTRADE, a tanker of 10195 g.t. was bound from Philadelphia to Sewaren, N. J., and the LOIDE-PANAMA, a Brazilian freighter of 5408 g.t. was bound from New York to Philadelphia. When in the vicinity of Barnegat Lightship, both vessels sighted each other approximately one and one-half miles apart. Upon sighting, a crossing situation existed, the LOIDE-PANAMA being the privileged and the GULFTRADE the burdened vessel. The GULFTRADE gave way by changing course to her right and the LOIDE-PANAMA instead of maintaining course and speed, changed course to her left. A collision resulted in approximate position two miles SE of Barnegat Lightship at about 2049, 28 June 1953. One crew member from the LOIDE-PANAMA died as a result of injuries incurred at the time of the collision. Neither vessel caught fire or sank. The damage to the LOIDE-PANAMA was approximately \$229,420.00 and to the GULFTRADE, \$114,600.00.

2. Pursuant to the provisions of Title 46 C.F.R. Part 136, the record of the Marine Board convened to investigate subject casualty, together with its Findings of Fact, Opinions and Recommendations, has been reviewed and is forwarded herewith.

3. In HQ's opinion, the Board should have more appropriately recommended that an admonition be addressed to the master of SS GULFTRADE for inattention to duty or negligence rather than misconduct.

4. Subject to the foregoing remark it is recommended that the Findings of Fact, Opinions and Recommendations of the Marine Board of Investigation be approved.

(signed) P. A. Ovenden
P. A. OVENDEN

FIRST ENDORSEMENT ON MVI memorandum of 1 October 1953
From: Chief, Office of Merchant Marine Safety
To: Commandant

M
6 October 1953

Forwarded, recommending approval.

(signed) H. C. Shephard
H. C. SHEPHEARD

APPROVED: 7 October 1953

(signed) A. C. Richmond
A. C. RICHMOND
Rear Admiral, U. S. Coast Guard
Acting Commandant

Address Reply to:
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29 July, 1953
A25 (MIS-01717)

From: Marine Board of Investigation
To: Commandant (MVI)

Subj: Marine Board of Investigation of collision between the SS
GULFTRADE and the SS LOIDE PANAMA on 28 June 1953

- Findings of Fact -

"1. The SS GULFTRADE and SS LOIDE PANAMA were in collision at about 2049 EDST, 28 June, 1953, in approximate position two miles southeast of Barnegat Lightship.

"2. The SS GULFTRADE is a T-2 tank vessel built in 1943, at Chester, Pennsylvania. It was under enrollment and license at time of collision. It is owned and operated by the Gulf Oil Corp. of 17 Battery Place, New York, N.Y. The vessel was last inspected at

Port Arthur, Texas on 15 November, 1952, and was certified for carriage of cargo of Grade "A" and all lower grades. The main machinery is of steam turbine-electric motor type. Measurements and other data of vessel are as follows: net tonnage - 6107; gross tonnage - 10,195; dead weight tonnage - 24,325; displacement - 21,890; O.B. - 244,699; SHP - 7240; pitch of propeller 17' 6"; L.O.A. - 523.6'. Vessel is of single screw type with machinery aft. Vessel was equipped with a gyro compass but no radar. On the day of collision, the master was Hilbert C. Kaiser of 461 South Mobile Avenue, Fairhope, Alabama, who holds unlimited master's license issue number 3,6.

"3. The SS LINDA-BNAM is a freight vessel built in 1947 at Pascagoula, Mississippi. It is under Brazilian registry, is owned by the Brazilian Government, and is operated by the Lloyd Brasileiro Company of Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. The New York agent is Mr. Robert E. Zumsteg, c/o Lloyd Brasileiro, 17 Battery Place, New York, N.Y. Master reports vessel was last inspected by the Brazilian authority during January, 1953. Vessel was inspected by U.S. Coast Guard in New York on 24 April, 1953, and certificated to carry seven persons in addition to crew of 54 under the provisions of Sec. 26 of the Merchant Marine Act of 1920, (46 USC 822). The main propelling machinery is of the 2 cylinder steam turbine type. Measurements and other data of vessel are as follows: net tonnage - 3129; gross tonnage - 5408; dead weight tonnage 7870; displacement - 12,180; pitch of propeller - 19'; SHP - 6600; L.O.A. - 443' 6". Vessel is of single screw type with machinery amidships. On the day of collision master was Cesar De Freitas E. Silva of Rua Uruguaia 49, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.

"4. The SS GULFTRADE sailed from the Gulf Oil Terminal, Girard Pt., Philadelphia, Pa. for Sewaren, N.J. at 1:25 P.M. 27 June, 1953. Sailing draft was 30' 7" fwd and 31' 1" aft. Vessel carried a cargo of approximately 100,000 bbls. Bunker "C" oil. Vessel encountered fog while en route to sea and anchored about six miles north of Overfalls Lightship for approximately 16 hours, 36 minutes. Departure was taken at Overfalls Lightship at 1445, 28 June, 1953. Visibility was estimated to be four or five miles. On taking departure master set course of 094° gyro and true with engine on full speed ahead. Vessel passed Five Fathom Bank Lightship 1.2 miles on port beam at 1615. At 1638, course was changed to 033, visibility estimated at seven to eight miles. RDF bearings were taken on

Barnegat Lightship and at 19:27 P.M. course changed to 025°. At 20:20, course was changed to 360° in approximate position 175°, 2-1/2 miles from Barnegat Lightship. About 20:44 the SS LOIDE-PANAMA was sighted about 1-1/2 points on starboard bow, approximately two miles distance. Visibility was estimated to be two to three miles. Fog signals had not been sounded since departure was taken and no special orders had been given to the engineer on watch. The GULFTRADE was proceeding at full speed, estimated to be making approximately 14-1/2 knots through the water. The collision occurred about four or five minutes after the LOIDE-PANAMA was sighted, according to estimates of GULFTRADE witnesses.

"5. The LOIDE-PANAMA sailed from 30th Street Pier, Brooklyn, New York for Philadelphia, Pa. at 0900, 28 June, 1953. Sailing draft was 14' 3" fwd and 14' 6" aft. Vessel's cargo consisted of 3,000 bags of coffee and 59 bales of skins stowed in #3 hold. Departure was taken at 1555, 28 June, 1953, with Ashrose Lightship bearing approximately 056°, distance approximately 3/4 mile, and course was set as 180° gyro and true with engine on slow speed ahead. Vessel proceeded southward in dense fog with speed varying from slow to half ahead. RDF bearings were taken on Barnegat Lightship from time to time and minor course changes made en route toward destination. Fog signals were sounded regularly. About 20:18 course was changed to 206° true with Barnegat Lightship bearing approximately 228°. At 20:41 Barnegat Lightship bore approximately 284°, distance approximately two miles. About 20:45 the SS GULFTRADE was sighted about 15° on the port bow, approximate distance two miles. Visibility was estimated as two to three miles. The LOIDE-PANAMA was proceeding at slow speed, estimated to be about seven knots through the water. The collision occurred about four or five minutes after the GULFTRADE was sighted.

"6. The time of collision as reported by master of the GULFTRADE was 20:49, and as reported by the master of the LOIDE-PANAMA was 20:50. The radio operator of the GULFTRADE reported the time of collision as 20:47.

"7. The two vessels sighted each other at approximately the same time. At time of sighting the vessels were approaching each other in a crossing situation, and on or near collision courses. The course lines extended would intersect at an angle of 26 degrees.

"8. Shortly after sighting the LOIDE-PANAMA, the master of the GULFTRADE concluded his was the burdened vessel, and ordered right rudder, followed immediately by order of hard right.

"9. Shortly after the order for right rudder the 3rd mate of the GULFTRADE suggested a one blast whistle signal to the master. On receiving master's approval the 3rd mate gave a one blast whistle signal of four to six seconds duration.

"10. After the GULFTRADE began swinging to the right her master observed the LOIDE-PANAMA swinging to left and the 3rd mate reported hearing a two blast whistle signal. The master of the GULFTRADE immediately rang full astern on the engine telegraph and about 1/2 minute later the 3rd mate jingled the telegraph for emergency astern. The GULFTRADE failed to indicate full astern by the required three blast whistle signal.

"11. The 3rd assistant engineer of the GULFTRADE promptly reversed the engine and the maneuver was completed by the 1st assistant engineer who had proceeded to the engine room on hearing whistle signals. The engine was fully reversed about 1-1/2 minutes after order was given by the bridge.

"12. The master and other witnesses of the GULFTRADE testified that no further orders were given to the helm or engine room until after the collision. The GULFTRADE witnesses testified that their vessel continued to reduce speed and to swing right until collision took place. The master of the GULFTRADE estimated his vessel swung approximately 50 degrees to the right by the time of collision. He also estimated his vessel would swing approximately 25 degrees per minute under full rudder. Speed of the GULFTRADE at time of collision was estimated to be about three or four knots.

"13. The relative bearing of the LOIDE-PANAMA remained nearly constant ahead of the GULFTRADE until vessels collided as result of GULFTRADE altering course to starboard and LOIDE-PANAMA altering course to port.

"14. About two minutes after the GULFTRADE was sighted, the master of the LOIDE-PANAMA heard a two blast signal. Other witnesses from the LOIDE-PANAMA also testified they heard a two blast signal. Although no alteration of course of the GULFTRADE was observed, the master of the LOIDE-PANAMA ordered hard left rudder and gave

a two blast whistle signal. After the LOIDE-PANAMA began to swing left the master heard a one blast whistle signal and observed the GULFTRADE altering course to starboard. The master of the LOIDE-PANAMA testified he then gave a second whistle signal of two blasts and shortly thereafter gave a third signal of two blasts. As the two vessels approached, the master of the LOIDE-PANAMA reversed the rudder and attempted to alter course to starboard. Witnesses of the LOIDE-PANAMA testified that their vessel began to swing right less than a minute before the collision. The course recorder record of the LOIDE-PANAMA indicates vessel altered course from 205° to 160° in approximately one minute, and during the following one minute altered course from 160° to about 200°. The LOIDE-PANAMA failed to sound a one blast whistle signal when the course was directed to starboard. The master of the LOIDE-PANAMA testified he was in doubt about the origin of the one blast signal which he heard after his first two blast signal.

"15. The bow of the GULFTRADE struck the starboard side of the LOIDE-PANAMA abaft the amidship structure between #4 and 5A hatches. The angle between the bow of the LOIDE-PANAMA and stern of the GULFTRADE at time of collision was about 65°. The bow of the GULFTRADE penetrated the hull of the LOIDE-PANAMA to a distance of about 15 feet.

"16. The damage to the GULFTRADE extended from the stem to a point approximately 20 feet abaft the stem and from the forecastle head deck to the lower forepeak. The collision bulkhead was undamaged. No cargo was damaged. No crew members were injured. There was no fire although flashes of light were observed at bow of vessel after the collision, and it was thought they were caused by severed electric cables. Cost of repairs to this vessel was estimated as \$114,600.00.

"17. The damage to the LOIDE-PANAMA extended inward from hull plating at starboard side of #4 and #5A cargo holds to a distance of about 20 feet, and over a distance of about 30 feet in a fore and aft direction. The damage extended from the upper deck to the bottom hull plating. Estimated cost of repairs to this vessel was \$229,420.00.

"18. Aristides Bispo Dos Santo, c/o Lloyd Brasileiro, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, deckhand of the SS LOIDE-PANAMA, died as a result of injuries incurred at time of collision. He was reported to have been running

down the starboard side of the dock toward the crew quarters amidships when the vessels collided. His head and both legs were injured and he died about ten minutes after vessels collided. He was not on watch. The remaining 52 crew members have been accounted for, although several received injuries. The list mate of the LOIDE-PANAMA testified that injuries to crew members were as follows: Aristides Banto De Rocha, 2nd boatswain, injured knee-cap, now returned to duty; Vani De Carvalho, medical attendant, injured chest, now returned to duty; Renato Jose De Barros, deep cuts on back, now in hospital ashore; Miguel Agalico Dos Santos, 3rd engineer, a broken finger, now returned to duty; Jose De Lima Dias, electrician, minor injury, now returned to duty; Otavio Ferreira Da Silva, oiler, suspected skull fracture, now in a hospital ashore; Antonio Rodrigues Dos Santos, steward, deep cut on left arm, now returned to duty; Hernan Rodrigues Viana, mentally upset, now in a hospital ashore. No persons in addition to the crew were aboard at the time of the collision.

"19. Due to language difficulties, the GULFTRADE did not communicate with the LOIDE-PANAMA after the collision. Efforts to exchange information with the LOIDE-PANAMA by blipper and radio were unsuccessful. The GULFTRADE did standby the scene of the casualty until cleared by the COC TAMARCA about 0330, 29 June, 1953.

"20. The bow of the GULFTRADE remained securely in the hole in the hull of the LOIDE-PANAMA. Sparks and flashes of light were observed at the point of contact of the two vessels; and the master of the GULFTRADE fearing a fire would break out, forced the vessels apart by reversing the engines of his vessel full speed. The LOIDE-PANAMA had a 25° starboard list while the vessels were together, and this list did not change appreciably after the GULFTRADE backed away.

"21. The master of the GULFTRADE broke physical contact with the LOIDE-PANAMA after the collision, as he considered a fire hazard existed. He did not, however, issue orders to have fire stations manned or pumps started. He did not issue orders to have the boats prepared for launching. The chief mate on his own initiative led out a fire hose on the foredeck and an engineer on his own initiative prepared the firepump for use.

"22. On orders from the master, the radio operator of the GULFTRADE sent an S.O.S. immediately after the collision. He also contacted other vessels in the vicinity including the SS AFRICAN ENDEAVOR. The AFRICAN ENDEAVOR proceeded to the scene and lowered a motor lifeboat. About 25 crew members of the LOIDE-PANAMA were transferred to the AFRICAN ENDEAVOR about an hour after the collision. The AFRICAN ENDEAVOR proceeded to New York with these crew members.

"23. Various Coast Guard vessels and boats proceeded to the scene and stood by or assisted in search for crew members thought to be in the water. Coast Guard vessels assisting included CGC TAMAROA, CGC GENTIAN, CG-83382, CG-38625, CG-38611, and CG38395. The area was searched for survivors until about noon 29 June, 1953, at which time it was determined that all crew members were accounted for.

"24. The LOIDE-PANAMA sent a distress message about 55 minutes after the collision. The master of the LOIDE-PANAMA explained the delay by testifying that he thought the vessel's condition was getting worse, several crew members were injured, and he wished to calm down the crew.

"25. After the collision the GULFTRADE proceeded to New York under its own power and without assistance.

"26. The LOIDE-PANAMA was towed to New York by commercial tugs."

- Opinions -

"1. The proximate cause of the collision was failure of the SS LOIDE-PANAMA to maintain course and speed as required by Art. 21 of International Rules of the Road. (33 USC 106).

"2. The two blast whistle signal heard by crew of LOIDE-PANAMA was not made by the GULFTRADE.

"3. The GULFTRADE and LOIDE-PANAMA sighted each other about four minutes before the collision.

"4. At the time of sighting, the two vessels were approximately 1-1/2 miles apart.

"5. At time of sighting, visibility was approximately 1-1/2 miles.

"6. Both vessels altered course from their base courses about two minutes prior to time of collision.

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- "7. The two vessels were not in extremis when the two blast signal was heard on the LOIDE-PANAMA.
- "8. The collision would not have occurred if the LOIDE-PANAMA had maintained course and speed regardless of whether the GULFTRADE made a significant change of course either to port or starboard when the first maneuver of the GULFTRADE was made.
- "9. The LOIDE-PANAMA was the privileged vessel and that vessel's master used poor judgment in altering course to port, even if he heard a two blast signal, without first ascertaining that the GULFTRADE was actually altering course to port.
- "10. Under the circumstances the LOIDE-PANAMA was not obligated to answer a two blast signal or to alter course or speed from base course.
- "11. The master of the LOIDE-PANAMA used poor judgment in that he failed to make appropriate alteration of course and speed at the time he heard the one blast signal and observed the GULFTRADE altering course to starboard.
- "12. The failure of the LOIDE-PANAMA to sound a one blast signal when course was altered to starboard was in violation of Art. 26 of International Rules of the Road, (33 USC 113), however, it is doubted that said failure contributed to the collision.
- "13. The GULFTRADE was the burdened vessel and alteration of course to starboard was in compliance with the International Rules of the Road.
- "14. The master of the GULFTRADE used good judgment in reversing the engine under the circumstances.
- "15. The sounding of a four to six second whistle signal, by the GULFTRADE for a turning signal was in violation of Art. 26 of International Rules of the Road, (33 USC 113). A prolonged blast could be mistaken for a fog signal. A prolonged blast could, if intensity of sound varied, be mistaken for two short blasts by a vessel some distance away. The testimony does not, however, indicate this prolonged signal contributed to the collision.

"16. The failure of the GULFTRADE to sound a three blast signal when engine was reversed was a violation of Art. 28 of International Rules of the Road, (33 USC 113). Said violation might have contributed to the collision inasmuch as the LOIDE-PANAMA was deprived of timely information of a very important nature.

"17. The judgment of master of the GULFTRADE, in separating his vessel from the LOIDE-PANAMA, is not questioned under the circumstances. However, he used poor judgment in that he failed to have fire stations promptly manned and lifeboats prepared for use, inasmuch as he broke connection with the LOIDE-PANAMA as a result of his fear of fire.

"18. Although there was mist in the atmosphere sufficient to materially limit the range of visibility, the visibility was such that vessels could safely maneuver in accordance with the Rules of the Road at the speeds at which they were proceeding. The master of the GULFTRADE was, however, at fault in not sounding fog signals and in failure to have the engineer on watch standby for maneuvering. Prudent navigation would require such precautionary measures with existing conditions of visibility and speed.

"19. The failure of the master of the GULFTRADE to sound appropriate whistle signals on reversing engine and his testimony that turning signals were not required indicate he has neglected to keep himself familiar with the Rules of the Road.

"20. It is the opinion of this board that the collision occurred approximately two minutes after the GULFTRADE altered course. This is based on information derived from course recorder of LOIDE-PANAMA, sketches drawn by both masters indicating angle of collision, estimate of master of GULFTRADE that his vessel swung about 50 degrees and his estimate that vessel would swing about 25 degrees per minute. Testimony of master of the GULFTRADE that his vessel swung rapidly to the right under hard right rudder and continued to swing to right for four minutes is inconsistent with the fact that vessel altered course only about 50 degrees. Had the GULFTRADE altered course four minutes before the collision, as described by the GULFTRADE witnesses, vessel's course should have changed far more than 50 degrees and sufficient to avoid collision.

"21. No Coast Guard personnel nor any representative or employee of any other Government agency caused or contributed to the casualty.

"22. There was no failure of equipment involved in, or which contributed to the casualty."

- Recommendations -

"1. The Board recommends that the master of the SS GULFTRADE, Hibbert G. Kaiser, be admonished for misconduct, in that he:

- a. Failed to sound a three blast whistle signal when his engines were reversed shortly before the collision;
- b. Failed to have fire stations manned and lifeboats prepared for launching, when, through fear of a fire, he forced the bow of his vessel out of the hole in the SS LOIDE-PANAMA;
- c. Failed to keep himself familiar with the International Rules of the Road.

"2. The Board recommends that the master of the SS AFRICAN ENDEAVOR be interviewed on vessel's next arrival at New York in order that any commendable acts of members of his crew may be acknowledged.

"3. It is recommended that case be closed with no further action other than that recommended above. This recommendation is premised on the following facts:

- a. That the personnel of the SS LOIDE-PANAMA are not subject to proceedings under R.S. 4450, as amended, (46 USC 239);
- b. That there is no penalty provided under the International Rules of the Road for violations thereof."

/s/L. H. SHACKELFORD,
L. H. SHACKELFORD, CAPT., USCG, Chairman

/s/F. K. ARZT
F. K. ARZT, CDR., USCG, Member

/s/A. J. GROGARD
A. J. GROGARD, LT., USCG, Member and Recorder