

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD
Vehicle Recorder Division
Washington, DC 20594

April 28, 2011

VHF Audio Transcript

Specialist's Factual Report By Christopher Babcock

1. EVENT

Location: Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
Date: July 7, 2010, 14:37 Eastern Daylight Time (EDT)
NTSB Number: DCA10MM025

2. GROUP

A group was not convened.

3. SUMMARY

On Wednesday July 7, 2010, the empty 250-foot sludge barge *The Resource*, towed alongside the 78.9-foot towing vessel *M/V Caribbean Sea*, allided with the anchored 33-foot amphibious small passenger vessel *DUKW 34* in the Delaware River near Philadelphia, PA. The *DUKW 34*, operated by Ride the Ducks, carried 35 passengers and 2 crewmembers. Five crewmembers were on board the *Caribbean Sea*. As a result of the allision the *DUKW 34* sank in approximately 55 feet of water. Two passengers aboard the *DUKW 34* were fatally injured and 26 passengers suffered minor injuries. No one aboard the *Caribbean Sea* was injured.

VHF audio from channels 13 & 16 was recovered and all communications to, from, or regarding the accident vessels were transcribed.

4. DETAILS OF INVESTIGATION

4.1. Channel 13

VHF channel 13 is intended for ship-to-ship communications. The channel 13 audio was recovered from the Tacony-Palmyra Bridge operating station which maintains a listening watch in order to raise a bridge section for vessels whose air draft exceed the bridge clearance. The audio was timestamped and synchronized to a US atomic clock every 1024 seconds and is accurate to 0.5 seconds. The Tacony-Palmyra Bridge is 6 nautical miles from the accident site. The audio from channel 13 can be found in the public docket for this accident.

4.2. Channel 16

VHF channel 16 is the international distress frequency. The US Coast Guard Command Center for Sector Delaware Bay continuously monitors and records channel 16 in the Philadelphia area. The audio files were timestamped with the Sector Command Center clock. According to the Coast Guard the antenna that received the transmissions from the accident was located in Swedesboro, NJ, and has a nominal reception range of 23.27 nautical miles. The antenna site (39.726°N 75.344° W) is 16.25 nautical miles from the accident site. The audio from channel 16 can be found in the public docket for this accident.

Christopher Babcock
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Transcript of radio communications recorded on VHF channels 13 & 16 in the Philadelphia area on July 7, 2010, surrounding the time of the accident.

LEGEND

DUKW34	Radio transmission from <i>DUKW34</i>
FREEDM	Radio transmission from the ferry <i>Freedom</i>
USCG	Radio transmission from the United States Coast Guard
?	Radio transmission an unknown vessel
*	Unintelligible word
#	Expletive
[]	Editorial insertion

Note 1: Times are expressed in Eastern Daylight Time.

Note 2: Generally, only radio transmissions to and from the accident vessels were transcribed.

Note 3: Words shown with excess vowels, letters, or drawn out syllables are a phonetic representation of the words as spoken.

**Source
and Time**

Channel 13 Communication

1400:00
BEGINNING OF CHANNEL 13 AUDIO

DUKW34

1436:11 to the northbound tug in front of Penn's Landing this is duck thirty four. I am at anchor. I am unable to maneuver. I am broken down. over.

DUKW34

1436:32 the northbound barge in front of Penn's Landing please come back.

DUKW34

1436:45 the northbound tug...

FREEDOM

1437:09 hey northbound barge. northbound barge at Penn's Landing. that duck boat is broken down.

?

1437:23 #.

FREEDOM

1437:29 northbound tug and barge going past Penn's Landing. this is Freedom.

**Source
and Time**

Channel 16 Communication

1207:55
BEGINNING OF CHANNEL 16 AUDIO

DUKW34

1436:54 hey ferry ferry ferry whoa whoa whoa whoa whoa. [sound of passengers in background]

FREEDOM

1439:31 Coast Guard Sector Philadelphia. this is Freedom.

USCG

1439:37 vessel Freedom this is Coast Guard Sector Delaware Bay. over.

**Source
and Time**

Channel 13 Communication

**Source
and Time**

Channel 16 Communication

FREEDOM

1439:40 yes sir uh one of the duck boats off Penn's Landing just got uh looks like they got run over by a barge. I'm going in to pick 'em up.

?

1439:58 ** Freedom.

USCG

1440:02 vessel Freedom this is Coast Guard Sector Delaware Bay.

FREEDOM

1440:09 yes this is Freedom. we got people in the water off Penn's Landing. eh uh looks like they got run over by a barge. one of the duck boats. I'm going in to pick 'em up.

USCG

1440:19 roger captain. how many persons are in the water? over.

FREEDOM

1440:22 no idea. I don't have time to talk to you right now. I'm going to get the people.

?

1440:27 ** Freedom.

USCG

1442:00 pan-pan pan-pan pan-pan. hello all stations this is United States Coast Guard Sector Delaware Bay. United States Coast Guard Delaware Bay. break.

**Source
and Time**

Channel 13 Communication

**Source
and Time**

Channel 16 Communication

USCG

1442:10

time one eight four seven Greenwich Mean Time. quote. at one four three seven local time the Coast Guard received a report of thirty people in the water off of Penn's Landing in Philadelphia Pennsylvania. all vessels in the area are requested to keep a sharp lookout assist if possible and report all sightings to the United States Coast Guard. signed commander United States Coast Guard Sector Delaware Bay. unquote. break. this is United States Coast Guard Sector Delaware Bay. out.