



# National Transportation Safety Board

Washington, D.C. 20594  
Office of Marine Safety

## Interview Summary

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October 28, 2010

**Accident Number:** DCA-10-MM-025

**Date and Time:** October 25, 2010, 1100 -1130

**Location:** By telephone

**Person Interviewed:** Commander Stephan Billian, USCG Retired

**Conducted By:** Larry D. Bowling, Senior Marine Investigator

Commander Billian was interviewed in connection with the allision of the sludge barge *The Resource*, which was being towed alongside the towing vessel *Caribbean Sea*, with the anchored small passenger vessel *DUKW 34*, on the Delaware River in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania on July 7, 2010 (DCA-10-MM-025). The text that follows has been developed from my handwritten notes of the conversation, and is correct to the best of my knowledge. Commander Billian was provided a copy of the interview summary for review and correction.

### INTERVIEW

- Served as Chief, Inspection Department, (CID) Coast Guard Sector (Marine Safety Office) Philadelphia from 1999 to 2004.
- Retired in 2004 at the rank of Commander.
- Currently remains active in Naval Architecture and Marine Engineering, though he is employed in the defense sector.
- As CID, responsibilities included ensuring domestic and foreign flag vessels in unit's zone complied with applicable laws, international treaties, regulation and policy.
- Served under the command of Captain Greg Adams up until mid 2002, and then Captain Jon Sarubbi to 2004.
- Recalled reviewing CG Marine Board of Investigation and NTSB accident report on the *Miss Majestic*, and Navigation and Vessel Inspection Circular (NVIC) 1-2001, *Inspection of Passenger Carrying Amphibious Vessels*, after the documents were released.
- Oversaw the new to zone (NTZ) inspections of Ride the Ducks amphibious vessels in 2003.

- Recalled placing requirements upon the fleet during the NTZ, beyond those called for in the NVIC 1-2001 and the regulations, which included:
  - A requirement for each vessel to carry an anchor with appropriate scope of line.
  - And required the company to demonstrate/perform a successful operational test of one of the vessels in the river in the fully loaded condition, using sand bags to simulate full load (passenger weight), with significant weather and tidal conditions (not to be confused with the simplified stability proof test).
- Monitored DUKW operations during the first several months of operation in 2003, and determined the addition of a deckhand to the fleets required manning level was needed to provide an added level of safety to vessel operations upon the river, in addition to further restricting the vessels' authorized route.\*
- Generated the unit's response to Ride the Ducks request for an appeal of the requirement for a deckhand in early 2004.\*
- Recalled a request or inquiry coming into the unit from an another operator planning to run a different type amphibious vessel, such as a LARC or Stalwart, in the zone, but nothing materialized in that regard while he was stationed there.

**END OF INTERVIEW**

A black rectangular redaction box covering the signature of Larry D. Bowling.

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Larry D. Bowling

\* The NTSB has obtained historical vessel inspection records and letters regarding Ride the Ducks operation from CG Sector Philadelphia which date 2003 and later. Several of those documents contain CDR Billian's specific concerns noted during the first year of the DUKW amphibious vessel operations and these records are available for review.