

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

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Investigation of: *

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COLLISION BETWEEN USCG CUTTER *

WINSLOW GRIESSER & F/V DESAKATA * Accident No.: DCA22PM034

OFFSHORE OF DORADO, PUERTO RICO *

ON AUGUST 8, 2022 *

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Interview of: CS1 [REDACTED] [REDACTED]
USCG Cutter *Winslow Griesser*

US Coast Guard Facilities
San Juan, Puerto Rico

Friday,
August 12, 2022

APPEARANCES:

MARCEL MUISE, Marine Accident Investigator
National Transportation Safety Board

■■■■ Investigating Officer
United States Coast Guard

I N D E X

ITEM

PAGE

Interview of CS1 [REDACTED] [REDACTED]

By Mr. Muise

4

I N T E R V I E W

(11:30 a.m.)

1
2
3 MR. MUISE: This is Marcel Muise with the National
4 Transportation Safety Board. It's Friday, August 12th, at 11:30.
5 We're in San Juan, Puerto Rico interviewing Specialist [REDACTED] from
6 Coast Guard *Winslow Griesser*. Is that right?

7 CS1 [REDACTED] Yes. That's correct.

8 MR. MUISE: Okay. I keep checking on that.

9 With me is [REDACTED] [REDACTED] from Coast Guard Sector San Juan.

10 Do you want to introduce yourself?

11 MR. [REDACTED] Yeah. It's [REDACTED] [REDACTED], [REDACTED],
12 from Sector San Juan, investigating officer.

13 MR. MUISE: And Specialist [REDACTED] can you give us your full
14 name and spell your last name for us?

15 CS1 [REDACTED] My full name is [REDACTED] [REDACTED] My last
16 name is spelled [REDACTED].

17 INTERVIEW OF CS1 [REDACTED] [REDACTED]

18 BY MR. MUISE:

19 Q. Specialist [REDACTED] what do you for -- what do you on a patrol
20 boat?

21 A. I'm the CS1, the food service officer. My main role is to
22 balance the budget and paperwork for the food that's brought in
23 and the budget for all those things. I also have a secondary
24 role. In the past, years ago, I was an EMT. My -- it lapsed, my
25 certification. But because of that, I help people when they have

1 questions about, you know, medical treatments and stuff like that.

2 Q. So how long have you been attached to the PB?

3 A. This specific -- the *Griesser*, I've been there since June 3rd
4 of 2021, so last year. I've been there a little over a year.

5 Q. How long have you been in the Coast Guard?

6 A. I got in May 19th, 2015, I believe. So almost 8 years, 7½
7 years.

8 Q. So tell us about your EMT training. Where did you do that?

9 A. My first boat I was selected because there was a spot open to
10 do the EMT training. It's a course in Petaluma, California. So I
11 got sent there, I believe, in 2017 or 2018. It is a condensed
12 course, so it's not -- it is nationally certified, but I believe
13 it was 6 weeks. And you do ride-alongs, you go through an entire
14 course studying every day, and then you have to take a test. If
15 you pass the test, then you're certified an EMT for, I believe, 1
16 to 2 years. So when I was at my last unit, it expired. It had
17 been -- yeah, it's been 2 or 3 years since the --

18 Q. And this is a Coast Guard school?

19 A. It's a Coast Guard school, but it's with the national -- the
20 NREMT.

21 Q. National Registry?

22 A. Yes.

23 Q. Okay. So to maintain that you have to have continuing ed
24 credits?

25 A. Correct.

1 Q. Does the Coast Guard let you do that or facilitate that
2 anyhow?

3 A. It's kind of on your own. The reason I didn't -- when I was
4 at Station Chicago when it lapsed, the reason I didn't do it more
5 is because as a cook I can't -- I'm not supposed to interact with
6 a lot of our mission here, which is interdicting migrants from
7 Haiti, Cuba, Dominican Republic, for sanitary reasons. So there
8 was a lot of conflicts that we didn't think through when we first
9 commissioning the boat. So that's the reason I didn't follow up
10 with it.

11 Q. Okay. All right. Is there a billet for any -- is there a
12 collateral duty or someone supposed to be an EMT on each PB?

13 A. From what I've heard, and I don't know if this policy or not,
14 they would like someone to be an EMT. And I believe someone -- I
15 believe they have like a slot. It's just if the timing is right
16 someone can go. But I don't know if it's mandatory.

17 Q. Okay. So it's not necessarily required. Or you don't know
18 if it's required?

19 A. I don't know. And from what I heard, I think they were going
20 to try to send a BM.

21 Q. Okay.

22 A. But it's just they weren't able to. Or maybe the date is
23 coming up.

24 Q. Okay. Tell me about -- and actually let me back up. This is
25 basic EMT, not advanced EMT, right?

1 A. Right.

2 Q. Okay. Tell me about equipment. What do you have for medical
3 equipment on board?

4 A. We have bags placed throughout the boat. These bags are like
5 hard nylon material. When you open them up, there's bandages,
6 there's tourniquets. We have an EMT bag that I believe has, you
7 know, the pulse oximeter, some nasopharyngeals so they can help in
8 opening up an airway or keeping an airway open. We also have a
9 litter for people with -- who can't move well, you know, we can
10 strap them to a litter. Or in case you have to exfil someone by
11 helicopter or something like that, the helicopter will bring it
12 down and we can use that litter to help facilitate that movement
13 to get exfil.

14 Q. Okay. Is there an instruction or something that says what
15 you have to have on board for equipment?

16 A. If there is, I haven't seen one.

17 Q. Okay. How about medications, oxygen, Epi --

18 A. There is oxygen in the EMT bag, but I was -- I remember from
19 school specifically like to know your role as an EMT. So
20 technically I'm not allowed to give oxygen unless a flight surgeon
21 tells me. I'm not a -- like I'm saying, I'm not an EMT anymore,
22 but even as -- when I was an EMT, everything has to go through a
23 flight surgeon. So medication, I'm not allowed to give
24 medication, not allowed to administer an EpiPen. You want -- from
25 what I remember, you want the patient, if they're able to, to do

1 as much of that stuff as they can.

2 Q. Okay. What do you have on board? Like if the flight surgeon
3 said that it's okay, do you have Narcan or nitro or aspirin, any
4 of that stuff?

5 A. Do not have Narcan. Just aspirin, you know, like -- or
6 Naproxen sometimes. And usually that's up to, you know, an
7 individual. They can bring that on board. For example, say, they
8 have seasickness or something like that, they can take Dramamine.
9 But I don't -- I'm not like the gatekeeper that holds that stuff.

10 Q. Okay. How about do you have everything you need to take
11 vitals, BP cuff and --

12 A. Yeah. Yeah. BP cuff and pulse oximeter.

13 Q. How about capnography, can you do that?

14 A. What's that?

15 Q. Capnography, it's measuring CO2.

16 A. No. I don't have that --

17 Q. Is there a life pack or monitor that you can do an EKG with
18 or --

19 A. I believe -- yeah, there is one. I believe so.

20 Q. There's a monitor on board?

21 A. Yeah, yeah. I think so.

22 Q. How about an AED?

23 A. What's that?

24 Q. Is there an AED on board?

25 A. I believe so, in the EMT bag. So we just had a transfer of

1 personnel, and the last person who left, they were -- they kind of
2 kept that stuff in check, you know, just because I am a cook.

3 Q. Okay.

4 A. So -- but I've looked through it a little bit, you know.

5 Q. So you talked about the flight surgeon a little bit. How
6 would you get ahold of him?

7 A. In the past, the bridge has usually talked to him. Someone
8 has called him on the radio.

9 Q. And this is a Coast Guard flight surgeon or Public Health
10 Service or --

11 A. I believe it's Coast Guard, but I don't know the details of
12 that.

13 Q. And the protocols you follow are they Puerto Rico protocols
14 or are they Coast Guard protocols or --

15 A. Honestly, I'm not sure. Every time in the past that it's
16 happened, it's just been relayed by someone talking to the flight
17 surgeon, whether it be the CO or someone on the bridge, and then
18 relaying that information to myself or someone else. So, for
19 example, when I was on the *Donald Horsley* someone had a problem
20 with their gall bladder and I was just relaying information and
21 symptoms from the patient to the person talking to the flight
22 surgeon. In this example, we had to medevac them. But that was
23 all -- none of that was due to me. I can give a recommendation
24 saying I think we should medevac him just because the risk
25 outweighs the -- or the (indiscernible) outweighs the risk, you

1 know.

2 Q. So how about trauma training, have you had that class, a
3 pre-hospital trauma life support or --

4 A. When I did the EMT training, yes. And then in the Army I did
5 a lot of trauma training.

6 Q. Okay. Is there -- I saw some trauma bags on the cutter
7 yesterday. Do those stay in the boat? There was -- I saw a
8 tourniquet; there were some SAM splints, chest seals. Does
9 that --

10 A. Yes. Those -- I think -- I believe you're referring to the
11 bags that I mentioned earlier, the green nylon --

12 Q. Somebody called them gun bags.

13 A. Yes.

14 Q. Okay. Are those scattered throughout the cutter or just --

15 A. Yeah. They're in multiple locations: one near the generator
16 room, one on the bridge, one in the forward (indiscernible) and
17 the second deck, one by climate control, which is below, and then
18 I believe one right before forward auxiliary space.

19 Q. Okay.

20 A. They're throughout the ship.

21 Q. All right. And just, I just wanted to sort of go back this,
22 but I just want to confirm you don't have any other meds on board
23 like morphine or fentanyl or --

24 A. No, nothing like that.

25 Q. Nothing like that. Or does the CO have that stuff locked up,

1 do you know?

2 A. No. No.

3 Q. Nothing at all? Okay.

4 A. Yeah, I don't -- no medication is, from what I know, allowed
5 to be given to anybody except if a doctor.

6 Q. Okay. All right.

7 MR. MUISE: Do you have anything else, [REDACTED]

8 MR. [REDACTED] No.

9 BY MR. MUISE:

10 Q. So can you walk us through a little bit of what happened on
11 Monday, as much as you remember?

12 A. Yeah. Yeah.

13 Q. I'll just let you talk, too. I'm not going to interrupt you.

14 A. Okay. We got underway. I was in the galley. Excuse me.
15 From what happened, there was like a loud bang. It felt like a
16 wave. I don't know. But we were going down a swell, so it didn't
17 make sense. I didn't really think about it. And --

18 Q. Oh, no rush. You can take your time.

19 A. Yeah. I'm sorry.

20 Q. That's fine. Do you want to take a break?

21 A. No, it's cool. I want to get this over with.

22 Q. Okay.

23 A. So stuff fell from the floor -- or from the ceiling. You
24 know, because there's so much -- there's only so much space in the
25 galley to keep food. So it was like some bread or like a box of

1 chips or something that fell to the ground. And me and the CS3
2 were like, you know, what the hell was that? We heard people
3 outside, you know, like curious to what it was. And then, you
4 know, we were boiling like pasta and stuff, so we have like
5 boiling water and stuff. It's -- on a patrol boat, it sucks
6 because you want to do a good job and make good food, but if
7 there's any rough seas, you know, it gets a little dangerous. We
8 try to keep it safe, you know.

9 But someone said I think we hit something. So I heard people
10 on the mess deck running down below to, I assume, check for
11 damages to the hull. Because, you know, if were taking on water,
12 that could be an emergency, right? Everything was happening
13 really fast. And the water started splashing out of the pots, and
14 it's boiling water, you know, for pasta and stuff. So my
15 immediate thought was like, okay, I got to help CS3, because he
16 was standing over there cooking and was holding it steady.

17 And then I hear people coming. I don't know if they were
18 coming from up above or down below. They couldn't find anything,
19 maybe. But someone peeked out the window, I guess, or it was
20 passed to them. I heard someone say man overboard, you know?
21 Someone said before that, maybe we hit a whale or something. And
22 then someone said man overboard.

23 So the CS3, he left, and I had to grab the stuff, the --
24 because I didn't want that to be a danger, you know. The stove is
25 electric. So I turned the burners off and I grabbed the stuff.

1 All this water came out. I burned my wrist and hand and my
2 stomach area. But, you know, I wasn't wearing this so I didn't
3 get burned too bad. It's just red and stuff. I just dumped all
4 the food in the sink because I was like, you know, it's better
5 that -- we got to figure out what's going on.

6 The boat had slowed by this time and I believe they were
7 turning around because then it got really bad, you know, the sea
8 state. And I heard CS3, I think, confirm to me that there was a
9 man overboard. I think he said we hit something or we hit
10 someone. So I don't know if he was the one to grab the EMT bag,
11 but he grabbed it. He helped me grab another gun bag. I tore the
12 cover off the metal table that's on the mess deck. In case of an
13 emergency, you know, you can put someone there. I wasn't thinking
14 that maybe that we would bring him in, but I wanted it ready.

15 And then the XO, I don't know if he came down from above or
16 from outside, he said, hey, I think we're going to need an EMT.
17 And, you know, even though I'm not certified, they know that I
18 was. So in my mind I can only think of like trauma, like what do
19 I need, what is -- what are going to be the biggest things to
20 control. So I started grabbing dressings. I grabbed tourniquets.
21 And then I grabbed the EMT bag, and I went out there out of the
22 side.

23 I saw a guy holding onto I think the ladder well of the boat
24 and he was talking. You know, that's all I could see. He was
25 like on his -- the crook of his elbow. They had released the boat

1 already, I think, or they were getting ready to. So my thought
2 was, okay, I first need to get out of the way. Because I didn't
3 know if they were bringing the guy up the ladder or on the boat.
4 The boat got underway and they went to pick him up.

5 And then I -- you know, I didn't know how long this had been,
6 how long this took. Maybe 5 minutes, maybe 10 minutes. The time
7 felt weird, so I didn't know. And they pulled the guy up.
8 Apparently he was hanging onto his brother. And when they pulled
9 his brother onto the boat, it was just -- you know, you could
10 tell -- I don't know if you could tell if he was dead, but I mean
11 the wounds were so bad. Like I've been to, I've been to
12 Afghanistan three times. I've been at war and I've never seen
13 anything like this.

14 So they got him on the front of the boat and they started
15 bringing him in. They got to line up the boat correctly to safely
16 come in and it took a while. I believe two or -- maybe three or
17 four tries to get the boat in the notch, but I don't know why. I
18 think it was just everybody's, you know, super stressed.

19 Once they got the boat in the notch and they had it secured,
20 I wanted to go out there, but they still hadn't put the cable, the
21 winch to winch them in. They winched them in eventually, closed
22 the stern gate. We took the chains off to get in there and then I
23 jumped in the front and I saw the guy. I heard his brother in the
24 back and his brother was just pointing, pointing at him. I think
25 he wanted, he wanted his brother to be helped. People were

1 saying, you know, he's dead, he's dead, he's dead, not to his
2 brother, but just the chatter.

3 But I remember in EMT school, you know, they teach you don't
4 assume someone's dead, because if you just assume someone's dead
5 then you can't help them. In your mind you have it made up that
6 they're dead. When I saw the body, he was -- the front of the
7 small boat has a bench with storage compartments. It's a big box.
8 It looks like a big square, cube. And his torso was supported by
9 that. It was a bumpy ride and the boat's going fast, I assume, to
10 get back. I yelled that we needed a medevac because I didn't want
11 to assume he was dead or I didn't want to believe it. I'm sorry.

12 Q. Yeah, we'll take a break. Want to take a break?

13 A. No, no, I'll get through it. So I started looking for signs
14 of life, right? I had my tourniquets. His arm was barely
15 connected, his shoulder. The bone was completely severed. You
16 know, you could see inside the bone. It's -- you know, you could
17 see that it's hollow. And then I saw his leg. If I remember
18 correctly, his hip socket was completely torn out and his
19 intestines were everywhere.

20 I started looking for blood and it's like he wasn't even
21 bleeding. Like there was residue of blood and I don't know if it
22 was seawater or something. But he had no pulse. I checked his
23 pulse. I even put the -- I even -- I yelled at someone to get the
24 pulse oximeter because I didn't trust, I didn't trust myself
25 like -- and he -- you know, nothing came up. I tried to feel for

1 breath. I was talking to him. I said, señor, (untranslated);
2 señor, (untranslated), talk to me. But, you know, he's not there.
3 So I kept on trying to feel for breath and I checked his chest,
4 checked for any sign of breathing. I really couldn't see any
5 blood. Like, it's like, I don't know if he bled out. I don't
6 know what happened.

7 I started asking for abdominal dressings and they got me some
8 stuff. Nothing was big enough. Like it was completely out. His
9 leg, it was -- I don't know if there was just -- I've seen people
10 bleed a lot more than that in the Army and stuff. The blood
11 looked different, like it was like mixed with water or something.
12 I don't know. I didn't want to believe he was dead, but after
13 going through everything, everything, even -- I was going to start
14 CPR, but his spine was so twisted, it didn't seem like -- it
15 seemed like I could do more damage, you know.

16 I checked his airways. I couldn't even recognize -- inside
17 there was smashed teeth and just tissue. I moved his lips. Parts
18 of his body were rigid that I wasn't used to being rigid. After
19 doing as much things I could think of, I kind of sat back and just
20 realized what had happened. I didn't want, I didn't want anything
21 to -- I didn't -- I wanted to do everything I could, but there's
22 nothing I could do.

23 And I heard his brother, so I told the people, hey, you have
24 to get him out of here, bandage his head. He was talking to them.
25 He was -- it didn't seem like he had any life-threatening

1 injuries. I said take him over here, bandage his head. He had a
2 gash on his head. I told -- I don't know if it was the MK2 or the
3 chief or one of the officers we had on board. I said you need to
4 do a thorough check. Start from his head through his arms, all
5 his cavities, make sure there's no blood. If there is blood,
6 assess it, bandage it. If it's profuse arterial, put a tourniquet
7 on it. We need to make sure he's good.

8 He was speaking to me -- or other people, so I knew there was
9 no airway issues or things like that. Eventually they took him up
10 to the -- to outside the bridge and sat him down in a chair, you
11 know. So he was comfortable, I assume. They had water ready. I
12 told them, hey, don't force him to do anything. Let him be
13 comfortable, try to soothe him. I think I accepted, you know,
14 that his brother was dead, and I started crying.

15 As I was talking with the other people like, hey, are we en
16 route to base? Are we -- like we need to do something, right?
17 They said we're en route to base. So we got to base.

18 Right before we got to base, I got some linens. Someone had
19 said, hey, do we need to put this guy in a body bag? It was -- I
20 don't know how we could've in a sanitary way to ourselves or the
21 boat, you know, because there was just organs collected inside a
22 body bag. So I just draped some linens over him. This was after
23 a while, you know, and I knew he was dead at that point but, you
24 know, just out of respect, covered him up. I said a prayer for
25 him. I had -- I'm never on the bridge, but I still feel guilty.

1 I don't know. I don't know why. But just prayed that he'd go to
2 heaven and for forgiveness. Yeah.

3 When we got back, they immediately talked with the brother to
4 see that the brother was okay. We had some local ambulance, you
5 know, so they could speak Spanish. MK2 was consoling him the
6 whole time, you know. He took charge and tried to make the guy
7 feel as safe as possible. And they took him into the ambulance.

8 I saw the EMTs go to the body. They looked at him, you know.
9 I didn't want to go back there, interfere with anything. It
10 seemed like they just knew as soon as they saw what had happened.

11 We had to -- we got called to the mess deck after that. We
12 had some of the higher officers on the base come in. They
13 started -- they were cool about it. They were -- they said, hey,
14 take some breaths. You know, we know everybody's been through a
15 lot. And we started writing up the last 72 hours. I don't -- you
16 know, tried to be accurate, but I was just bereft, you know. I
17 still am. I don't know why this, this is -- this one's really
18 hard, man.

19 So wrote our statements, and I know there's other people that
20 had to get medical stuff done. I don't know if it was the people
21 on watch or the people involved maybe on the bridge or something
22 like that. They had to go to medical and, you know, I assume drug
23 test and alcohol tests, that they got their blood drawn, maybe a
24 urinalysis or something.

25 And then came time for like 7 p.m. I called my wife. I said

1 I couldn't talk about what happened, but there was an emergency,
2 you know, we're going to be in tonight. And she came and picked
3 me up. She was running errands at the time. So I went home.
4 That was the day.

5 Q. Okay. I know it's hard. Thank you, Specialist [REDACTED] for
6 doing that.

7 A. You're welcome.

8 Q. Tell me about your burns.

9 A. They weren't too bad. They were just -- they hurt a lot but
10 they haven't gotten better over the last 3 or 4 days.

11 Q. Did you report that to anybody or --

12 A. No, I was -- I may have mentioned it to someone, but --

13 Q. You didn't have any treatment from the corpsman, though?

14 A. No, no. But I looked at them and they were -- they didn't
15 blister, so I know they're probably not second degree. I'll just
16 watch them, keep them dry and clean.

17 Q. Okay.

18 A. And they're doing better.

19 Q. Tell me some more about the challenges the boat had coming
20 back in.

21 A. I think --

22 Q. Was it seas or was there a mechanical problem?

23 A. The seas were bad.

24 Q. Okay. But was there --

25 A. No, the seas were bad because we were going west, and every

1 time we go west, we're downswell usually. So we had to turn
2 around and come back to port, and it's like boom, right, upswell
3 again. And you're upswell in a boat, it's like a ramp. You're
4 going up, and it's just -- and you can't get accurate vitals. You
5 can't. Like the sound of the engine is so loud you can't -- when
6 you're trying to listen to hear a difference in beats -- you know,
7 this is in the past; this isn't now. But --

8 Q. Sure. Sure. Yeah.

9 A. And, you know, it's hard to feel for pulses. You know, it
10 was just a rough ride.

11 Q. Okay. Were you headed upswell when they're returning the
12 small boat or downswell?

13 A. I don't know because the boat slows down a bit.

14 Q. Okay.

15 A. Usually it's in between the way the waves are coming,
16 because if the back end of the boat picks up, that can trap the
17 small boat as its coming in. And if the top of the boat picks up,
18 again the same thing, just from a different angle. So usually
19 they'll try to get it in between the waves and the trough because
20 at least if the boat is moving left or right, the coxswain can
21 maneuver it safely, you know.

22 Q. Okay.

23 A. But I think, I think they were just wrecked emotionally
24 maybe. Because I remember the guy who's driving -- I think it was
25 the BM2. He's a good driver, you know. He usually gets it the

1 first time, so --

2 Q. Okay. Do you remember what ambulance company it was that
3 came? Is it --

4 A. What company?

5 Q. The ambulance, what company they were from? Was it a local
6 fire department or was it a company --

7 A. No, it wasn't the fire department. It was an ambulance. I
8 think they had the red and -- not the red and blue -- the orange
9 and blue.

10 Q. Do you know the company's name?

11 A. No.

12 Q. No. Okay. Did you talk to the brother at all?

13 A. No. I just heard him talking with MK2.

14 Q. Okay. That's fine.

15 MR. [REDACTED] I got nothing right now.

16 MR. MUISE: Well, Specialist [REDACTED] again, thank you for
17 that. I know that was really, really challenging. I'm sorry you
18 had to go through this. Is there anything else you want to add
19 that I didn't ask?

20 MR. [REDACTED] No. I mean, it's tragic, man. I feel so bad.
21 There's nothing we can do now.

22 MR. MUISE: Okay. It's 12:02 and we'll secure this
23 interview.

24 (Whereupon, at 12:02 p.m., the interview was concluded.)

25

CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the attached proceeding before the
NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

IN THE MATTER OF: COLLISION BETWEEN USCG CUTTER
WINSLOW GRIESSER & F/V DESAKATA
OFFSHORE OF DORADO, PUERTO RICO
ON AUGUST 8, 2022
Interview of CS1 [REDACTED] [REDACTED]

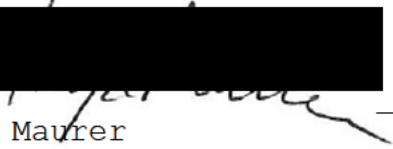
ACCIDENT NO.: DCA22PM034

PLACE: San Juan, Puerto Rico

DATE: August 12, 2022

was held according to the record, and that this is the original,
complete, true and accurate transcript which has been transcribed
to the best of my skill and ability.

[REDACTED]



Kay Maurer
Transcriber



NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD
OFFICE OF MARINE SAFETY
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20594

F/V Desakata **ERRATA**

Marine Investigation Report

Collision between *Winslow Griesser* and *Deskata*
DCA22PM034

Page/ Line	Original	Correction
4/19	Specialist	Petty Officer
8/17	life pack	Lifepak
9/25	(indiscernible)	reward
10/16	(indiscernible)	p-way
19/5	Specialist	Petty Officer
21/16	Specialist	Petty Officer