



U.S. COAST GUARD SUMMARY OF INVESTIGATING OFFICER ACTIVITY

Matter Investigated: Fire onboard the M/V IRON MAIDEN on 16 April 2020.
Vessel: IRON MAIDEN O.N. 600827

Interview Of: LIST WHEN SUMMARY IS COMPLETE

Date/Time: 20 April to present

Location: Houma & Larose, LA

Interviewed By: CWO2 [REDACTED]

In 1978, the M/V KATHY CANDIES was built. Approximately 1998 the vessel was renamed the RAPID RIVER. Approximately 2006 the vessel name was changed to THRUSHER. In 2008 the vessel name changed to JOSEPH BISSO. In December 2019, the vessel was purchased by Blue Marlin LLC and the vessel name was changed to MARLIN RESPONDER. The company who purchased the vessel bought it for approximately \$1.2 million dollars and intended to use the vessel as an offshore dive support vessel. The vessel had a Certificate of Inspection (COI) but did not have a current or active COI and could not operate for hire. In March of 2019, the vessel name was changed to the IRON MAIDEN and a Certificate of Documentation was issued on March 12, 2020 with a registry endorsement for Coastwise Trade.

When the vessel was purchased, it was in docked at Bisso Dock in New Orleans where it was moored for approximately three years. The vessel was on shore power while at its shipyard in New Orleans. When the vessel was purchased in December 2019, it was dead ship towed to a shipyard in Dulac, LA. On March 31, 2020, the Motor Vessel (M/V) IRON MAIDEN was dead ship towed to Allied shipyard in Larose, LA. It arrived at 1300 and it was moored up to the west dock with shore power by 1330. The shore connection cables that were wired into the vessel were never disconnected when the vessel left New Orleans or Dulac. When the M/V IRON MAIDEN arrived at Allied Shipyard in Larose, LA the vessels approximately 300' shore connection cable that has been connected shipside and used for years had its bitter end connected to Allied shipyards 100' shore power cable through a junction box onshore by the shipyards electrician. The remaining end was then connected to the shipyards power source.

Work started on the vessel by the vessels crew and by shipyard workers. On April 3rd, 6th, and 7th, a marine chemist inspected several spaces throughout the vessel. Some space tested on April 3rd were designated not safe for hot work. Subsequent tests showed Marine Chemist Certificates reflecting that the spaces did become designated as atmosphere safe for workers and safe for hot work. All three certificates indicated that local shifting of the vessel within the facility was authorized.

On the morning of April 15, 2020, the shipyard wanted to make room for another vessel. The M/V IRON MAIDEN had to shift slips to make room for this vessel and moved back, to the west, approximately 100 yards. To do this, the shore connection was disconnected by the shipyard electrician at the junction box and the vessel was towed into place. Once the M/V IRON MAIDEN was shifted and moored securely, the shipyard electrician reconnected the shore power and work



resumed on the vessel. The vessel completed its shifting and power was restored between 0700 and 0800. The same electrician completed all disconnecting and reconnecting of the cables.

On April 15, 2020, two Allied Shipyard workers worked on the starboard smokestack: Antonio Flores and Nefali Blanco. They worked on an overlap approximately 7' above the deck to repair an area that had rust and pitting. The crew used a cutting torch to prepare the area for repair. A fire cloths was in place on the #1 generator. The fire cloth was put over the generators from a previous shipyard and was in place already when the vessel arrived at Allied Shipyard. Above the #1 generator was the fan at the base of the starboard side smokestack that was being worked on. Two of the vessels crew members, Matt Simkin and Ryan Robbie were in the generator room and posted as fire watch until about 0900 when the work on the stack was done. The Shipyard Foreman, James Authement, left the generator room space around 0930 and all was satisfactory.

On April 15, 2020, two Allied Shipyard workers, Larry Herbert and Silverio Castillo, worked in the generator room from approximately 1000 to 1400 removing woodwork near the base of inboard doorway of the generator room. Once the woodwork was removed, the workers found wastage in the deck near the inboard door. On the opposite side of this area of the deck was the sewage tank. Removing the wood exposed the sewage tank. The shipyard workers were removed since there was no Marine Chemist Certificate for the sewage tank because it was in the process of being cleaned by Port Marine. Port Marine started cleaning the sewage tank on April 14th. Port Marine finished cleaning the sewage tank on the afternoon of April 15th. They left the sewage tank in a condition that they anticipated a Mariner Chemist certifying on a certificate to be safe to all work. A marine chemist was contacted and scheduled to arrive on the morning of April 16, 2020.

On April 15, 2020, at approximately 1630, all shipyard workers were off the M/V IRON MAIDEN. The company representative left the vessel at 1735 and stated the two vessel crewmembers remained onboard to finish eating dinner and after they ate, they were leaving the vessel at about 1800 to go to their hotel.

On April 16, 2020, at 0110 the LaFourche Parish Fire District #3 received a phone call from the Larose Bridge tender that there was smoke and flames coming from a vessel at Allied Shipyard. The local fire department arrived and extinguished the fire with water and CO2. Black smoke was reported on the starboard side of the vessel forward. At 0445 the fire was extinguished with no injuries. No persons were reported onboard and no evidence lead to believe that anybody was onboard. There was damage to the generator room, passageway, galley, bunk room, and pilot house and exterior damage to the



vessel around the starboard smokestack and pilot house area. The most severe damage was observed in the generator room on the forward bulkhead near frame 20 where the battery charger, alarm panel, sound powered phone and generator starter were located. On the same bulkhead near the outboard area of the bulkhead was a 70-gallon diesel fuel tank, with approximately 35 gallons of diesel in it, to supply fuel to the generators which were functional but not operating before the fire. At approximately 0900 there was a reflash fire in the generator room behind the fuel tank but was quickly extinguished with a portable CO2 extinguisher.

On Monday, April 20, I spoke with M/V IRON MAIDEN representative George Drury and Allied Shipyard representative Tony Boudreaux. A third-party fire expert was hired to arrive to the M/V IRON MAIDEN on April 21. On April 21st, I arrived at Allied Shipyard and went onboard the M/V IRON MAIDEN and met Howard Held, who represents Liberty Mutual which is the insurance company for Marlin Oil Field Divers, the vessel owners. I also met with Glen Lawson from Southern Forensic Services, LLC which represented the shipyard and Michael Mcentee from Marine Survey and Appraisals who was Allied Shipyard insurance representative. An electrical engineer was decided to be brought in to look at the damage. The next day, the vessel representative, Captain George said the gangway was removed and nobody was going on board the vessel without representation from both the shipyard and vessel per Mr. Held request. An electrical engineer was unable to be agreed upon by all parties. The vessel owners wanted a fire expert representing the vessel when the shipyard fire expert, Glen Lawson, was investigating. All parties agreed and decided to meet on May 18th when all parties were able to have equal representation.

On May 1, 2020, at approximately 1100, I met with M/V IRON MAIDEN representative Captain Drury. He gave me an old fire control plan he had when he worked on the M/V IRON MAIDEN years ago when the vessel was named M/V RAPID RIVER. The fire control plan is stamped by Morgan City Coast Guard June 7, 2001. He said over the years as the vessel changed owners, conversions were made. One is that the lounge area was converted to crew berthing.

On May 18, 2020, I arrived at Allied shipyard and met all previous parties expect, Mr. Held, he was out of town but had replacement, Mr. Quackenbos. Mr. Lawson had an assistant, Cody Cleutat, and the vessel had their hired fire expert to work with Southern Forensic Services, LLC. The vessels hired fire expert was Jeff Stark from U.S. Forensics. Mr. Lawson said they are going to sift through the debris starting from the bunk room and work their way back to the Generator Room because they start in spaces with the least damage and follow the damage path. Mr. Lawson said that depending on their findings and if anything must go to a laboratory for further analysis, he should have a report possibly by end of June or sometime July.



On May 22, 2020, I spoke with Mr. George Drury and he said that the fire experts told him they were leaning towards the start of the fire being an electrical source; possibility around the battery charger or transformer. However, they have to finalize their findings and draft a report which could take a month or two.

██████████, CWO2, USCG
28 March 2020

CWO2 ██████████
SIGNATURE OF INVESTIGATOR

28 March 2020
DATE