

Witness statement

1/8/24

Hunter Hames

On Thursday, 4 January 2024, I woke up at 1100 and was on watch by 1130. The tug ROYAL ENGINEER and barge Stevens 1471 were at Nexans conducting crane ops, and I was on standby until 1430 when work was finished. I completed a written voyage plan to proceed downriver to Pierside and made sure we were good to go. We got underway at 1450. I attempted radio contact with dredge BRUNSWICK at 1530, and again at 1545, but did not establish contact until 1605. The dredge leverman advised, "we'll swing over and give you 300' between us and the wall [of the North Charleston Container Terminal], not including the width of the ship" berthed there. I then sent our deckhand Malik Deas out to the barge as a bow lookout and continued on. I slowed down and attempted to ease by between the dredge, ship, and the North Charleston terminal. I was in constant radio contact with the lookout on deck, who called out distances from other vessels to assure safe passage. Asked if we would clear under the STS crane boom, Malik radioed, "Yeah, we're good." However, once we were too close to stop, I realized we weren't going to clear underneath the STS crane. I immediately went full astern and attempted to abort the passage. But as the tide was then ebbing, we made contact with the gantry of the crane on deck of barge Stevens 1471 and the jib of the STS crane on the terminal. This occurred at approximately 1625, while I was full power astern but still making slight headway. Once we started making sternway, I backed out fully. I immediately called the Master to the bridge and then called our office to report the incident. I also re-established contact with dredge Brunswick and instructed them to break the dredge pipeline and shift fully out of the channel. We then proceeded downbound without further incident and secured the tug and barge at Pierside.

Hunter Hames

Mate, ROYAL ENGINEER

8 January 2024

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PRIVACY ACT STATEMENT

The Investigating Officer conducting this Marine Casualty Investigation wishes to obtain your name, address, telephone number and place of employment. In order for the Investigating Officer to collect this information, the Privacy Act [5 U.S.C. 522(e)(3)] requires that you be informed concerning the authority of the Investigating Officer to collect this information; any secondary purposes for the information; whether your disclosure of this information is voluntary or required by Federal Law.

1. **AUTHORITY.** The Investigating Officer, as a Federal Law Enforcement Officer [14 U.S.C. 93(3)] is requesting this information pursuant to the authority contained in 46 U.S.C. 63 and regulations written to enforce this law.
2. **PRINCIPAL PURPOSES FOR THIS INFORMATION.** The statement which you provide the Investigating Officer will be used in determining the cause of this Marine Casualty. Your name, address and other personal information is needed to enable the Investigating Officer to contact you if more information is needed or clarify aspects of your statement. Your identity and contact information is needed in order to use your statement at the civil, criminal and or administrative proceedings under 46 CFR 5 which may result from this Investigation.
3. **OTHER PURPOSES FOR THIS INFORMATION.** No other uses for this information are intended.
4. The disclosure of your personal information is voluntary, unless Subpoenaed by the Investigating Officer under the authority of 46 U.S.C. 6304(a).

I have been informed by the Investigating Officer of his/her authority to collect information provided by me in regard to this Marine Casualty Investigation. I am aware of the intended purpose of this information and that the disclosure of this information is voluntary.

Signature: _____

Witness: _____