



National Transportation Safety Board

Washington, D.C. 20594

Safety Recommendation

LOG# 325

Date: February 18, 1987

In reply refer to: M-87-1 through -4

Admiral Paul A. Yost
Commandant
U.S. Coast Guard
Washington, D.C. 20093

On May 14, 1986, the U.S. sailing vessel PRIDE OF BALTIMORE capsized and sank in the Atlantic Ocean, about 250 nmi north of Puerto Rico while en route from St. John, U.S. Virgin Islands, to the Chesapeake Bay, Maryland. The vessel, a replica of a Baltimore clipper, was returning to Baltimore, Maryland, after an extended European good will tour promoting the port of Baltimore.

The PRIDE OF BALTIMORE left St. John about 1100 on May 11, 1986, and after clearing the harbor, set sails and proceeded out to sea. After experiencing some calm periods during the first night, the wind filled in during the nights of May 12 and 13 and by the morning of May 14, the wind had increased to about 25 to 28 knots. The sails were shortened accordingly and all hands, except for the cook, were on deck coiling lines, clearing away gear, and securing all but two of the sails.

Shortly after noon, a sudden gust of wind struck the PRIDE OF BALTIMORE heeling it to port until it was on its beam end with the masts and sails lying on the water. Crewmembers were thrown into the water and the cook managed to escape from below. Two inflatable liferafts deployed but did not remain inflated. One raft was damaged by the ship's rigging while the second raft deflated through the open topping-off valves. The PRIDE OF BALTIMORE, valued at \$1,080,000, flooded and sank in a matter of minutes.

After about 6 hours, the eight surviving crewmembers managed to inflate one of the six-man liferafts by mouth. After drifting for over 4 days, the survivors were rescued on May 19, 1986, by the crew of the M/V TORO, a Norwegian tanker, who notified the Coast Guard of the accident. 1/

The two manually activated EPIRB transmitters aboard the PRIDE had been stowed below deck adjacent to hatch openings which made them inaccessible from the deck in this emergency. The unit stowed inside the aft cabin hatch was secured by a metal clasp and was prevented from floating free. The other unit, stowed in an open box inside the main hatch, was not fastened to the ship and could not float free because the main hatch was secured at the time of the knockdown. Even if the main hatch had been open, it is uncertain if the unit would have floated out of the interior of the ship; in addition it would had to have been manually switched on to function. EPIRBs carried by Coast Guard

1/ For more detailed information read Marine Accident Report—"Capsizing and Sinking of the U.S. Fishing Vessel PRIDE OF BALTIMORE in the Atlantic Ocean, May 14, 1986" (NTSB/MAR-87/1).

inspected ocean-going merchant vessels are required to be a Class A type, self activating in a float free stowage. A Class A EPIRB, mounted in the required manner on the PRIDE, would have provided a more timely distress notification and for the initiation of the search and rescue operation. Although the amendment to Title 46 U.S. Code Section 4102 now requires uninspected fishing vessels to be equipped with an EPIRB, other vessels in the uninspected category are still not included in the requirement. The Safety Board believes that all uninspected vessels should be equipped with EPIRBs and therefore, the Board urges the Coast Guard to seek authority to require those remaining uninspected vessels that operate offshore to carry EPIRBs.

The PRIDE was equipped with more than the minimum equipment required for uninspected vessels (life preservers, fire extinguishers, and back fire flame arrestors on gasoline engines); the PRIDE's operators could have legally sent it anywhere in the world, although a prudent sailing ship master would not consider such a voyage, without navigation equipment or additional lifesaving equipment. While there are no regulations for ocean voyage equipment requirements for uninspected vessels, there are regulations (33 CFR Part 177) which allow the Coast Guard to terminate a voyage that they consider unsafe for those on board. In the case of the PRIDE, the Coast Guard would be precluded from terminating such a voyage because the vessel is owned by the city of Baltimore and as public vessel, is exempt by regulation from 33 CFR Part 177.

There is no requirement for uninspected vessels to have a compass, fathometer, electronic position fixing device, visual distress signals, or a primary lifesaving device that prevents immersion of survivors in the water (liferaft) which the PRIDE was equipped with. The PRIDE's lifesaving and navigational equipment exceeded that required for inspected vessels under 100 gross tons operating offshore. Realizing the necessity and the importance of this equipment, the operator of the PRIDE equipped the vessel accordingly, despite the lack of Coast Guard regulations in these areas. If a vessel operator, such as Pride of Baltimore, Inc., can recognize the shortcomings of the uninspected vessel regulations, it is clear that these regulations need to be upgraded. However, the weakness in the uninspected vessel regulations did not necessarily contribute to the loss of the PRIDE. The regulations for uninspected vessels, 46 CFR Parts 24, 25, and 26, only list fire extinguishers, life preservers, and gasoline engine safety devices as required equipment. Recreational boats on coastal waters and the high seas are also required to carry visual distress signals but uninspected vessels on the same waters are not required to do so. Presently, 46 U.S. Code Chapter 41 does not contain authority to require this additional equipment on uninspected vessels. This law should be expanded to include primary lifesaving equipment (liferrafts, etc.) and navigation equipment aboard uninspected vessels that operate offshore.

An inspected passenger vessel of the same size as the PRIDE (67 gross tons) would be required to have the following safety and navigation equipment: a life preserver for each person on board, three ring buoys, a lifefloat or buoyant apparatus or inflatable liferaft for all persons on board, a Class A EPIRB visual distress signals, six portable fire extinguishers, and a magnetic compass.

The manner in which life preservers were stowed aboard the PRIDE, below deck in the crew's quarters, precluded their availability following the knockdown and rapid sinking of the vessel. At the time of the accident, only four life preservers were available to the crew on the deck, and they were stowed and secured in the inflatable, rigid-hulled, rescue boat.

This below deck stowage of life preservers prevented their retrieval by the crew, since all but one crewmember were on deck when the knockdown occurred. Their retrieval from below, as generally agreed by the survivors, would require a minimum of 30 seconds to accomplish--time which was not available to the crew during the emergency. Although there were a total of 28 life preservers (16 Type I and 12 Type III) aboard the vessel, none were easily accessible or unsecured so as to float free, and therefore, the equipment sank with the vessel.

According to the builders and former masters of the vessel, life preservers had not always been stowed in this manner aboard the PRIDE. Wooden deck boxes previously had been used for stowing life preservers which enhanced their availability. At the time of the accident, these deck boxes were used for stowage of other equipment. The accessibility of life preservers in the severe environmental conditions that existed at the time of the knockdown is considered critical to the ability of the crewmembers to survive the accident. The loss of at least one crewmember, the carpenter, and possibly all who perished, may have been avoided if life preservers had been stowed on deck and readily accessible.

The stowage of life preservers at muster station locations or close to the exterior of all vessels, not only passenger vessels, would improve access to them during emergency situations. In addition, the life preservers could float free in case of a rapid sinking. The application of such stowage should be considered for all vessels, regardless of size or service.

Therefore, the National Transportation Safety Board recommends that the United States Coast Guard:

Seek authority to require uninspected vessels on voyages offshore to carry a Class A Emergency Position Indicating Radio Beacon (EPIRB) and in the interim period, continue to encourage their use. (Class II, Priority Action) (M-87-1)

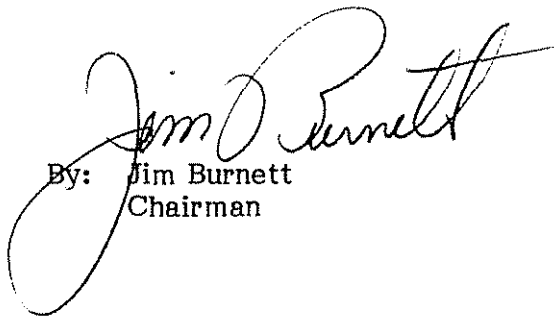
Publicize the advantages of stowing Emergency Position Indicating Radio Beacons (EPIRB) that are not required to float free (Classes B and C) in such a manner to afford immediate access and/or float-free deployment in the event of a sudden, catastrophic event. (Class II, Priority Action) (M-87-2)

Seek legislation to amend Title 46 U.S. Code Section 4102 to require uninspected vessels that operate offshore, in addition to the equipment listed therein, to carry navigation equipment, visual distress signals, and liferafts; in the interim period, pursue all available means to encourage their use. (Class II, Priority Action) (M-87-3)

Require stowage of life preservers close to or at emergency stations, if designated, or close to the exterior of each uninspected vessel to facilitate immediate access in the event of a sudden, catastrophic event. (Class II, Priority Action) (M-87-4)

Also, as a result of its investigation, the Safety Board issued Safety Recommendations M-87-5 to Zodiac of North America, Inc., M-87-6 to the Society of Professional Sailing Ship Masters, M-87-7 and -8 to Pride of Baltimore, Inc., and M-87-9 and -10 to the National Weather Service.

BURNETT, Chairman, LAUBER and NALL, Members, concurred in these recommendations. GOLDMAN, Vice Chairman, did not participate.



By: Jim Burnett
Chairman