

LOG 4-8

NOT. 194

M-69-27-28

GROUNDING AND BREAKING UP OF LIBERIAN SS OCEAN EAGLE
AT ENTRANCE OF SAN JUAN HARBOR, PUERTO RICO, MARCH 3, 1968

ACTION BY NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

This casualty was investigated by the United States Coast Guard under the authority of R.S. 4450 (46 USC 239) and the regulations prescribed by 46 CFR 136. The Marine Board of Investigation convened at San Juan, Puerto Rico, beginning March 11, 1968. A Member of the National Transportation Safety Board attended the proceedings. The Marine Board's report and the Commandant's Action thereon are included in and made a part of this report. The National Transportation Safety Board has considered only those facts in the Coast Guard report which are pertinent to the Board's statutory responsibility to make a determination of cause.

PROBABLE CAUSE

The National Transportation Safety Board finds that the cause of this casualty was faulty navigation on the part of the master in that he failed to utilize properly the aids to navigation which were available to him and navigated his vessel into shoal water while approaching the entrance to San Juan Harbor, Puerto Rico. A contributing cause was insufficient capability of the pilot boat, insofar as it concerns size, to enable the pilot to board the vessel under the existing conditions. Further, it is apparent that the pilot communication facilities were inadequate and that the misunderstanding of the pilot's shouts and the lack of an understandable system of hand signals were factors in this casualty.

Causal factors contributing to the breaking in half and loss of the vessel were the effect of the surge of the sea on the grounded vessel, and the overloading and improper distribution of the cargo.

RECOMMENDATIONS

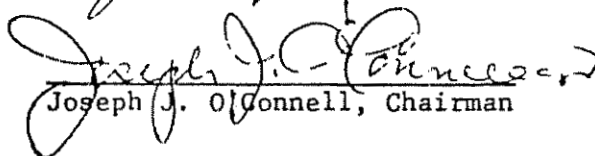
M-69-27 The Safety Board concurs with the Commandant relative to the recommendations of the Marine Board. In addition the Board recommends that the Coast Guard, in its research and development program, give consideration to the design of equipment which could be quickly and easily rigged and would provide a safer and more efficient means for boarding a vessel from small craft during unfavorable sea conditions, and that information on a successful design be forwarded to the Maritime Safety Committee of the Intergovernmental Maritime Consultative Organization for their consideration.

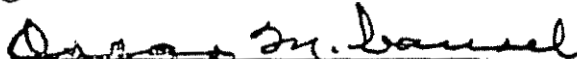
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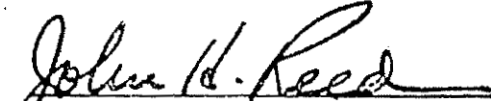
It is further recommended that the Coast Guard study the development of internationally recognized hand signals, for backup communications between ships and pilots. It may be expected that hand signals will be attempted to be used in similar situations in the future, and this accident demonstrates that the results of misunderstanding are a positive hazard.

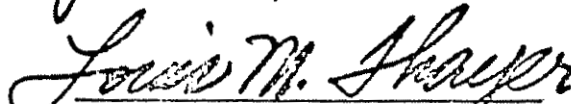
BY THE NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD:


Adopted this 16th day of January, 1969:


Joseph J. O'Connell, Chairman


Oscar M. Laurel, Member


John H. Reed, Member


Louis M. Thayer, Member


Francis H. McAdams, Member