

Summary of Witness Statement: [REDACTED], GM3

Date Statement Given: 28 Mar 06 /
Witness Name: [REDACTED]
Unit: MSST 91111 (Anchorage)
Date/Time/Place of Incident: 25 Mar 07, Puget Sound, IVO Vashon, Washington
Crew Position at time of Incident: Boat Crew, CG 25493

On 24 Mar 2007, PO [REDACTED] conducted routine patrols in CG 25493 between 1300 and 2000. PO [REDACTED] turned in at approximately 0000, after dinner.

On 25 Mar 2007, the two afternoon crews mustered in the hotel lobby at 1200. After driving to Sector Seattle, they changed out and retrieved their weapons on board USCGC POLAR STAR (WAGB 10). The held a brief with the DTL, ENS [REDACTED] on the pier at the boats. During the brief they received tasking and conducted GAR Model. After getting underway, CG 25493 and CG 25501 met up off Sector to do a face to face where the coxswains discuss the tasking. On that day, CG 25493 was tasked with communications with the ferries.

The two boats then proceeded to Vashon to complete a couple of escorts before stopping for lunch. At Vashon, the boats picked up the ferry, M/V KITSAP, and escorted it from Vashon to Fauntleroy without incident. During this escort, CG 25493 conducted figure eights with power turns.

Upon arrival in Fauntleroy, the boats picked up the ferry, M/V TILLIKUM, the ferry notified CG 25493 that they would be conducting a casualty drill during the transit including the lowering of their small boat. PO [REDACTED] passed this information to CG 25501 via the radio.

During the passage there was one sailing vessel off the port quarter of the ferry and CG 25501 turned and trained on the S/V. PO [REDACTED] was on the forward gun in 25493. As the Ferry began to resume her transit following the casualty drill, PO [REDACTED] was watching CG 25501. PO [REDACTED] saw datum being thrown off CG 25501 and heard a man overboard call on the radio including a position. CG 25493 immediately proceeded to the CG 25501. At approximately 10 yards, PO [REDACTED] observed someone in the water and then recognized PO [REDACTED] swimming with PO Gill. After PO Gill was brought on board CG 25501, PO [REDACTED] asked PO [REDACTED] if there was an EMT kit on the boat. PO [REDACTED] checked and reported there was no EMT kit on board.

The CG 25493 stood off of CG 25501 because PO [REDACTED] remained in the water while POs [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] provided initial assistance to PO Gill. Shortly thereafter, when PO [REDACTED] had been brought back on board CG 25501, the MSST Seattle boat with PO [REDACTED] on board arrived on scene. PO [REDACTED] took charge of first aid efforts and PO [REDACTED] transferred to CG 25501 to assist after PO [REDACTED] relieved him. The boats then proceeded to Fauntleroy to transfer PO Gill to EMS.

PO [REDACTED] has been at MSST 91111 for three years.

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His first priority was inserting a patent airway. The next thing he asked for was shears to remove PPE. But had to containly remove airway due to blockages, blood bone and brain matter. He was breathing, had a carotid pulse initially and sort of focused on [REDACTED]. Eventually he became unconscious. Then he went into CPR. He had a tact vest weapon, body armor ...that had to be cut away. The bunny suit was also a problem and then the collar of the dry suit. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] He did not have the tear away cabled vest. [REDACTED]

They then proceeded to the ferry ramp. He asked for suction, but due to liquid volume it wouldn't have been effective. He continued to do CPR, Then transferred to Seattle EMS. They assessed on the ramp, put him on the short board and cut rest of his gear off. Then they had paramedics take over chest compressions. They went to a bag with oxygen and put in IVs. [REDACTED] went in Ambulance to continue to do the bag. Then he was relieved by a paramedic.

He then went back to the boats. Gathered the 25501 crew and sent them with PO [REDACTED]. He asked another crew member to account for weapons and take positive control. [REDACTED] had been through CISM training and stayed with the crew. PO [REDACTED] got bio hazard bags from the fire department and started to recover PO Gill's PPE. PO [REDACTED] was holding radio guard and watching both boats.

Then he took 25501 in side tow to allow ferry to get underway. Then moored alongside ferry terminal and then PO [REDACTED] took it back to Sector Seattle.

[REDACTED]

Gunner Straps – [REDACTED] ..in the beginning the his understanding was they were needed and you must wear them. Then his understanding after the capsizing that you can't, and finally that wearing the belt is up to coxswain discretion. [REDACTED]

In late 2002 and early 2003, he recognized the need for a belt system and designed a two point belt...essentially using a repelling harness. Then the connection straps were a bungy cord with a cable. This allowed for some shock absorption and mobility, while securing the gunner to the boat. They even had a quick release with beads. Because it had two points, it will prevent the gunner from being dragged over the side. Same set up for the rear gunner. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]. Not sure that the concept made it out of the unit. They did bring this up numerous times. Previous MSST Seattle CO was beleaguered trying to move these issues forward. They made this belt system/repelling harness with gear from

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REI sporting goods. They used their own money.

Comms – Currently Coxswain tells navigator to pass via loud hailer to gunner. [REDACTED]

Having folks in the Cabin: [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] When making turns, he will not normally take the boat to the limit. If he does a power turn, he will pick flat water. Maybe once a day. The crew is already strapped in. The gunner doesn't have the belt. [REDACTED]

As a coxswain or EMT he attacks problems to solve problems. Type A personality. This is why the Gill situation was so disturbing. He uses all levels of force to accomplish his mission..

[REDACTED] Not proposing increasing recerts which currently is done every 6 months. They operate day in day out and rarely use boat time to train. They have carved out a training staff. Their goal is to always have the status board in the green for Ops, [REDACTED]

He tends to want to solve all problems; that's why he's a qualified Coxswain, [REDACTED] BM1 – Supervisor. [REDACTED]

Seattle – COs really cared for people. Give crews time off to take classes, events for the

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families. Seattle has high demands but is a two way street. The Coast Guard is giving something back as well.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

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