

Summary of Witness Statement: [REDACTED] Ens

Date Statement Given: 10 April 07
Witness Name: Ensign [REDACTED], USCG
Unit: MSST 91111 (Seattle)
Date/Time/Place of Incident: 25 Mar 07, Puget Sound, IVO Vashon, Washington
Crew Position at time of Incident: Det Chief for MSST Anchorage

During incident, [REDACTED] was ashore having lunch with Chief [REDACTED] in China Town. He had run the morning patrols, and [REDACTED] was running afternoon patrols. [REDACTED] went to Sector Seattle at around 1000 to take care of paperwork. Before they got underway, [REDACTED] prepared trip tickets and called the commcen for any additional assets, tasking, and weather. [REDACTED] gave trip tickets to PO [REDACTED] and PO [REDACTED] and stood by during the GAR assessment. While they occasionally use handhelds for comms between the DTL and the boats, due to range, they were using cell phones that day. Comms checks were still done with the Sector who had their Radio Guard. At lunch, [REDACTED] received the call from BM2 [REDACTED] who said PO Gill had been ejected and they were heading in for EMS. [REDACTED] called the Command Center and told them [REDACTED] was heading their way. The Command Center didn't have [REDACTED] cell number. [REDACTED] called [REDACTED] and left a message, spoke with [REDACTED] XO and left a message for [REDACTED] OPS. This was just prior to entering the Command Center. Then [REDACTED] was present for conference calls with the hospital, PAC AREA and Sector Seattle CO. [REDACTED] called the morning crews in to assist trailering boats. POs [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] returned to the base. [REDACTED] stayed with PO [REDACTED] since he appeared to be taking it the worse. Station coxswain identified him as being in the worse shape and brought him. Later RADM Houck, Capt Metruck, a Chaplain and EAP came aboard for an on sight brief/report. The CISM brief was scheduled for 2 days later. Then all 7 Anchorage Boat Crew Members went to medical for urine and blood tests. They also filled out 72 hour histories. After this was done, they were also told to draft a statement on what happened. At this time it was after 2200 and they had not eaten for at least 12 hours. [REDACTED] called Capt Metruck to see if they can come back in the Morning to complete statement. They were allowed and went back to the hotel.

[REDACTED] knew the NOK was being done by the unit in Anchorage. [REDACTED] was also aware that the parents were being notified. After this [REDACTED] made sure the rest of the crew was where they needed to be for the CISM, Investigation and pack out. CO and BOSN came in Monday night which was a relief.

[REDACTED] was given a DTL PQS upon reporting which had just been developed. [REDACTED] deployed at the beginning of the Seattle trip and was there the full two months. [REDACTED] shadowed LT [REDACTED] in February. Then the CO came down the last week of Feb, and he observed how [REDACTED] handled things. Then LTJG [REDACTED] came down with the new section. [REDACTED] was running the show under his supervision. When [REDACTED] went solo [REDACTED] had completed approximately 75% or so of the PQS, but had no formal board which is not required at the command. The CO knew [REDACTED] was going to be on [REDACTED] LTJG [REDACTED] was going home on March 19th, but was redirected to Portland to investigate two alcohol incidents. Chief [REDACTED] saw a couple of guys drinking (ST Patty's Day). This was a dry deployment. The plan for these two was to let the continue to Portland and deal with it

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on return to Anchorage. He went down to gather statements and start the investigation.

[REDACTED] felt pretty comfortable for normal day to day admin and ops.

[REDACTED] The long deployment was good for [REDACTED]. Getting to know the crew.

[REDACTED] was out with the crew the day before where [REDACTED] completed [REDACTED] survival swim.

[REDACTED] reported PO [REDACTED] was normally a very cautious coxswain. PO [REDACTED] is more aggressive. LTJG [REDACTED] enjoyed working with PO [REDACTED]. [REDACTED] said they would average 2 power turns per escort.

Pipelining through SMTC may help with confidence, but [REDACTED] felt DTLs we're mostly focused on Admin and logistics.

Summary of Witness Statement: [REDACTED] LT

Date Statement Given: 10 April 07
Witness Name: LT [REDACTED] USCG (Prior Warrant ET)
Unit: MSST 91111 (Seattle)
Date/Time/Place of Incident: 25 Mar 07, Puget Sound, IVO Vashon, Washington
Crew Position at time of Incident: XO of MSST in Anchorage

CO was on leave. He was acting during Mishap. But CO had returned Saturday night so as soon as the CO was notified, he assumed command. Actual message was sent Monday. The XO learned of the Mishap by a call from the DTL, Ens. [REDACTED]. The report was PO Gill had fallen off the boat. He was picked up, wasn't breathing and had no pulse. He then called PAC Command Center and back briefed CDR [REDACTED]. They had already been advised. He back briefed Cdr [REDACTED]. Then he called Ensign [REDACTED] for status. No new news. The fourth call to LCDR Bosau at his home (on leave) and explained situation. Then around 50 minutes he and the CO arrived at the office.

The DTL had also left messages with the CO and Ops.

LCDR [REDACTED] from Sector Seattle called to pass PO Gill was dead. They conducted a unit recall. LT [REDACTED] and LT [REDACTED] pulled the decedent affairs manual. They looked up PDR for next of kin info. CO and XO went in person to conduct the NOK with his wife [REDACTED] along with a Chaplain from Elmendorf AFB.

They also took the Command Senior Chief and his wife. The XO would take her two dogs to watch them for her for the next couple of weeks.

XO turned over XO duties to Ops and formed a decedent affairs team. This included the XO, LT [REDACTED], LTJG [REDACTED], and YNC [REDACTED]. They also contacted the Decedent Affairs officer in Ketchikan. They also confirmed NOK (parents) in Rhode Island. CACO - Casualty Assistance Calls Officer Handbook (Officer of Military Personnel Decedent Affairs branch) reference appears to be out of date. Benefits, etc have all changed. A second reference is the Coast Guard Casualty Assistance Guide which is also out of date. This reference is meant primarily for the family. The main reference they used was the Decedent Affairs instruction. This was helpful but broad. There needs to be clarification between CACO and DAO roles.

Brought the crew in and broke the news at 1800 on the 25th. They explained that CISM personnel would come in on Tuesday.

Morale events rarely drew folks, but they had a big turn out Tuesday night. Everyone brought in food.

Today was the first main day back to work, but several still on leave.

PO [REDACTED] and his spouse taking it hard. His orders to Sector will be effected early.

PO [REDACTED] is continuing mental health treatment.

Summary of Witness Statement: [REDACTED] LT

PO [REDACTED] is doing well.

PO [REDACTED] is still taking it pretty hard.

BM3 [REDACTED] and DC3 [REDACTED] are also taking it pretty hard. Were buddies with PO Gill.

[REDACTED]

XO's first hard night with Tuesday Night. Was too busy up to that point. When the Media came out and saw it on internet, that's when it effected him.

CO has been in the game and was proud of how he was handling this.

[REDACTED] He was selected a year ago for the XO job due to his maturity and experience. This is his 3rd Alaska tour. Love it or hate it. About the same morale wise at all these units including the MSST.

Morale issues: [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] He didn't need an intervention. Many folks extended, going to police, other MSST. [REDACTED]

LT [REDACTED] fleets up in June. [REDACTED] currently filling training officer which is a big job. When he fleet to Ops there is no backfill. Current Ops heading to D13 Command Center.

there upcoming schedule includes the first half of May in Seward in tents, second half in Anchorage for international whaling convention.

RFO runs from 4-8 June. PAC conducting. COC is currently scheduled 29th June. They had requested earlier and would like to bump it up to the week of the 11th.

Unit will transfer of 33 people. Moving up COC better than trying to get an interim person in there.

Summary of Witness Statement: [REDACTED] BMC

Date Statement Given: 10 April 07
Witness Name: BMC [REDACTED] USCG
Unit: MSST 91111 (Seattle)
Date/Time/Place of Incident: 25 Mar 07, Puget Sound, IVO Vashon, Washington
Crew Position at time of Incident: Det Chief for MSST Anchorage

During incident, he was ashore having lunch with Ensign [REDACTED] in China Town. He had run the morning patrols, Ensign [REDACTED] was running the afternoons. He had gotten up at 0430, then went down to check weather, tides, draft trip tickets, issue weapons. Then he checked in with the Sector Comms Center. While they occasionally use handhelds for comms with the boats, due to range they were using cell phones. Comms checks were still done with the Sector who had their Radio Guard. When they got the ambiguous call of a man overboard, they left the restaurant and proceeded to the Sector Comms Center. At first they thought it was just an ejection and PO Gill got wet. As more information came in, they briefed up. Ens [REDACTED] called the MSST Command Cadre from the Restaurant (CO, XO Ops). They primarily were interacting with the Chief at the Sector Command Center. He was having a one way conversation with the Hospital. They were asking for a lot of personal information but would not pass PO Gills status. After about 20 minutes they realized PO Gill had died. This was right at the time that the boats were returning. Most of the Mishap coordination was taking place by those on scene and the Sector Command Center. Their involvement was serving as a conduit of information to the Command. PO [REDACTED] came into the Command Center and he realized PO Gill had been killed. Chief [REDACTED] directed the team to head to the 2nd deck conference room. After this he assisted in securing equipment. The team was sent to medical where they provided blood and urine. Unfortunately the first stick couldn't be used as the Corpsman used alcohol to clean the site. This was a point of frustration. Then they were told to stand by and later write statements which included their activities over the last 72 hours. The Sector treated the event like a marine casualty. This extended well into the night. There was uncertainty of what to do and no one stepped up to serve as a proponent for the teams. He said that probably should have been him. He mentioned half of ISC were there including senior officers but no one had a good idea on how to proceed.

[REDACTED]

(b)(5)

[REDACTED]

(b)(5)

He said there is no DTL qualification process, but believes it may be a good idea to have a board. Based on staffing, he's not sure they could afford to do this.

Summary of Witness Statement: LCDR Steve Bosau

Date Statement Given: 29 March 07
Witness Name: LCDR Steve Bosau, USCG
Unit: MSST 91111 (Seattle)
Date/Time/Place of Incident: 25 Mar 07
Position: Commanding Officer of MSST 91111

LCDR Steve Bosau has been in command of MSST 91111 since its commissioning in 2004. His unit was the last of the 12 MSSTs to be commissioned. His previous experience included USCGC YACONA, PACTACLET, PSU 307, and the Coast Guard Academy. At the time of the MISHAP, he was on leave in Anchorage. Upon notification of the incident, he immediately assumed command.

We asked him what the top 3 contributing factors were to the incident:

[REDACTED]

(b)(2) and
(b)(5)

[REDACTED]

(b)(2) and
(b)(5)

The communications issue with the forward gunner was passed up the line and he was essentially in the standby mode awaiting clarification and resourcing from the program.

He also mentioned one of his specific challenges was Alaska's reduced operating seasons between 15 May and 15 Oct due to ice. He stated this significantly reduced his opportunity to train his personnel.

During the June 2006 Ready for Operations (RFO), the PACAREA Program Reps were trying to learn how to conduct an RFO. The RFO was constructed by materials taken from the PACAREA Training Team. No tactical drills were conducted as part of the RFO. LCDR Bosau stated that he did not find the RFO process informative. He stated he was never given a written report and only received an oral outbrief. He did not recall any discussion about safety belts being on the boats at the RFO. Nevertheless, as non standard equipment, they were not allowed to be onboard during this evaluation.

[REDACTED] In his discussion of doctrine regarding the forward gunner position, he stated that the only requirements were that the member be boat crewman and also qualified on the forward weapon.

Dated:

The summary above was reconstructed from notes and is factually accurate.

Supplemental Summary of Witness Statement: LCDR [REDACTED]

Date Statement Given: 19 Sep 07
Witness Name: LCDR Steve Bosau, USCG
Unit: MSST 91111 (Seattle)
Date/Time/Place of Incident: 25 Mar 07
Position: Prior Commanding Officer of MSST 91111

I conducted a follow up phone conversation with LCDR [REDACTED].

I asked if he believed his coxswains operated their small boats as they were training at SMTC. He stated he believed that they were following the training they had received. I asked if they had created any new doctrine or tactics that are currently not part of the SMTC training curriculum. He said that they did not. He said unit training is essentially practicing the techniques that were formally taught at the school house.

I asked him what formal direction did he provide his teams in regards to dealing with specific threats, how he directed his crews to maintain deterrence, and how they should conduct escorts. In the pre - deployment brief, he stated that he expected the boats to provide an overt presence, to not be complacent, to rely and operate based on their formal training, to change speeds and distance from the HVA/Ferry, but did not specifically mention turns.

I asked how he communicated the safety messages captured in COMDT COGARD WASHINGTON DC //O// 301916Z SEP 05, COMDT COGARD WASHINGTON //G-OCS// 162138Z DEC 05 and COMDT COGARD WASHINGTON DC //G-RCB// 182011Z SEP 06. He stated that with all safety messages his procedure was to pass this info to CWO [REDACTED] to pass to all coxswains and that this word would also be passed during quarters. He and the operations officer would also reinforce the policy guidance.

[REDACTED]

Dated: [REDACTED]

The supplemental summary above was reconstructed from notes and is factually accurate.

This information is being withheld under 5 U.S.C. Section 552(b)(2) and (b)(7)(C)