

UNITED STATES COAST GUARD

ADDRESS STAMP TO:



FILE: MVI

3 MAY 1955

(DORIS GERTRUDE-a-1 B1)

Commandant's Action

On

Marine Board of Investigation; F/V DORIS GERTRUDE, foundering off New England Coast subsequent to 13 January 1955 with eleven crew members on board

1. Pursuant to the provisions of Title 46 C.F.R. Part 136, the record of the Marine Board of Investigation convened to investigate subject casualty, together with its Findings of Fact, Opinions, and Recommendations, has been reviewed.
2. On 11 January 1955 the F/V DORIS GERTRUDE, of 60 g.t., built in 1936, with a crew of eleven persons on board, departed from New Bedford, Massachusetts, for Georges Bank for fishing purposes. The DORIS GERTRUDE was observed fishing on the south side of Georges Bank and at about 0300 13 January she secured her fishing gear and because of bad weather began jogging. The weather continued rough for several days but was not unusual for the location and the season of the year. An extensive search was conducted for the DORIS GERTRUDE with negative results, and it is presumed that the DORIS GERTRUDE foundered with the loss of all persons on board sometime subsequent to 0300 13 January 1955.
3. The Findings of Fact, Opinions, and Recommendations of the Marine Board of Investigation convened to investigate subject casualty are approved.

(signed) A. C. Richmond  
A. C. RICHMOND  
Vice Admiral, U. S. Coast Guard  
Commandant

R E P O R T

of a

B O A R D O F I N V E S T I G A T I O N

convened at

New Bedford, Massachusetts

To inquire into the loss of the FV DORIS  
GERTRUDE, O. N. 235 766, with all hands,  
subsequent to 13 January, 1955, Vicinity  
Georges Bank

On 26 January, 1955 Captain Joshua Murphy, the owner of the Fishing Vessel DORIS GERTRUDE, telephoned the Rescue Coordination Center and stated that he thought his vessel was overdue, as other fishing vessels had arrived in port, and that his information indicated that the DORIS GERTRUDE had not been seen since the 13th of January. Communication search followed by an extensive air and surface search failed to locate the DORIS GERTRUDE. Accordingly, a Marine Board of Investigation designated by the Commandant convened in New Bedford, Massachusetts on 9 February, 1955, to inquire into the loss of the DORIS GERTRUDE.

After full and mature consideration the Board made the following findings:

"1. That FV DORIS GERTRUDE, Official No. 235 766, of 60 gross tons, 40 net tons, length 73.3 feet, width 17.5 feet and depth 7.3 feet, was built in 1936 of wood, at Cape May, New Jersey.

"2. That FV DORIS GERTRUDE was owned by Joshua W. Murphy, of 37 Campbell Street, New Bedford, Massachusetts, and operated by Captain Joshua Murphy, Jr., of 34 Gilbert Street, Fairhaven, Massachusetts.

"3. That on 11 January, 1955 the FV DORIS GERTRUDE departed New Bedford, Massachusetts for Georges Banks to drag for scallops, with eleven men on board, in the crew, namely:-

JOSHUA MURPHY, JR. - MASTER	34 Gilbert Avenue, Fairhaven, Mass.
DOUCETTE, HERBERT V	23 Garrison Street, Fairhaven, Mass.
DEMORANVILLE, WILLIAM	132 Pontiac Street, Natick, R. I.
VIERA, JOSEPH, JR.	73 Gifford Avenue, North Dartmouth, Mass.
TUPPER, DONALD	403 Cottage Street, New Bedford, Mass.
BOUSE, JOHN E.	27 Bluefield Street, New Bedford, Mass.
SHORT, ROBERT L.	213 Middle Street, New Bedford, Mass.
ROMANOFF, JOHN F.	98 Sconticut Neck Road, Fairhaven, Mass.
VIERA, JAMES C.	965 Purchase Street, New Bedford, Mass.
ZALEWSKI, HENRY	10 Raymond Street, Fairhaven, Mass.
GOULDING, CLARENCE H.	Bryant Street, Assonet, Mass.

"4. That the FV DORIS GERTRUDE was contacted by phone at 11:30 A. M., and again at 5:30 P. M., on 12 January, 1955 by the FV MARMAX.

"5. That it was agreed that the Master of the FV DORIS GERTRUDE and the Master of the FV MARMAX would talk again after the 11:00 P. M.

weather report. Captain Maurice A. Cornell of the FV MARMAX called several times and could not raise him.

"6. That at the time of the 5:30 P. M. call, on the 12th of January, 1955 the FV DORIS GERTRUDE was on the north side of the Banks and the FV MARMAX was on the south side.

"7. That on 13 January, 1955 the FV LINUS A. ELDRIDGE was in company with the FV DORIS GERTRUDE on the south side of the Banks from 12:00 M. to 3:00 A. M., the 13th January, at which time the FV DORIS GERTRUDE stopped fishing because of weather conditions.

"8. That the FV DORIS GERTRUDE was seen to take in the fishing gear at 3:00 A. M., on the 13th of January, 1955 and jog in location approximately 150 miles E x S of Pollock Rip Lightship. The FV DORIS GERTRUDE then drifted out of sight of the FV LINUS S. ELDRIDGE and was not seen again.

"9. That at about 1118 local time, 26 January, 1955, Captain Joshua Murphy, owner of the FV DORIS GERTRUDE, reported to the Coast Guard Rescue Coordination Center, Boston, Mass., that the DORIS GERTRUDE was overdue.

"10. That the report of Captain Murphy that the vessel was overdue was made approximately 13 days after the DORIS GERTRUDE was last seen.

"11. That a diligent and extensive air and surface search was carried out for several days with negative results. The search began within one hour after word was received from Captain Murphy and continued until 3 February, 1955.

"12. That a check was made concerning the seaworthiness of the vessel, this being done by taking sworn testimony from reliable persons having knowledge of her condition.

The Board expressed the following OPINIONS:

- "1. That the FV DORIS GERTRUDE was in a seaworthy condition when she departed on 11 January, 1955 from New Bedford, Massachusetts.
- "2. That the vessel did reach the Fishing Grounds, Georges Banks, and did fish until the weather became too rough on 13 January, 1955.
- "3. That the rough weather lasted several days.
- "4. That there was no indication of the vessel being in any difficulty.
- "5. That the DORIS GERTRUDE disappeared some time subsequent to 0300, 13 January, 1955.
- "6. That as no trace of the vessel or bodies has been found the entire crew may be presumed dead.
- "7. That a prompt, diligent and extensive search was instituted when word was received that the FV DORIS GERTRUDE was overdue, and continued until it was positively ascertained that the vessel was lost.
- "8. That there was no concern over the vessel until she was normally due in port and failed to arrive.
- "9. That the weather was not unusual for that location and season of the year.
- "10. That the loss of this vessel could possibly have been caused by fire; drifting onto a shoal spot, of which there are many on Georges Banks; that vessel could have, while dragging in rough weather with one drag out, be pulled down to a considerable list by her own gear and swamped; or the more remote possibility, could have been struck by a large vessel.

The Board made the following recommendations:

"1. That the fishing fleet, through various associations or by agreement among owners and masters, exert some concerted effort among themselves toward checking on each other, so that an immediate search can be undertaken when vessels are reported to be overdue, or fail to answer radio calls or signals when any such calls or signals have been prearranged.

"2. It is recommended that no further action be taken and that the case be closed.

(signed) W. W. Storey  
W. W. STOREY  
Captain, U. S. Coast Guard

(signed) R. C. Foutter  
R. C. FOUTTER  
Captain, U. S. Coast Guard

(signed) L. W. Raynes  
L. W. RAYNES  
Commander, U. S. Coast Guard

The Board then adjourned to await the action of the convening authority.

(signed) W. W. Storey  
W. W. STOREY  
Captain, U. S. Coast Guard, CHAIRMAN

(signed) L. W. Raynes  
L. W. RAYNES, Commander, U. S. Coast Guard  
Member and Recorder