

Coast Guard Email
Results of Panther II Drydocking

January 3, 2003

Three (3) pages including this cover

Bowling, Larry LCDR

From: Allain, Ryan LT
Sent: Friday, January 03, 2003 10:54 AM
To: Bowling, Larry LCDR; DeJesus, Marcos CWO
Cc: Holland, Michael LCDR
Subject: FW: Press Clips 30 DEC 02 C/B SAR Case

LCDR Bowling/CWO DeJesus,

Below are the results of our drydock on the PANTHER II, that we conducted yesterday, forwarded per my CO's request. You can contact myself or CWO Hammond for more information.

We plan to discuss with you the issue of how these boats should be configured, open boat, cockpit, or well deck. Our opinion is that it should be configured as an open boat.

v/r,

Ryan Allain
 Lieutenant, US Coast Guard
 Marine Safety Detachment
 FT Myers, FL
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-----Original Message-----

From: Farley, James CAPT
Sent: Friday, January 03, 2003 9:36 AM
To: Allain, Ryan LT
Subject: RE: Press Clips 30 DEC 02 C/B SAR Case

Good work Ryan. Please pass along your finding on the Panther II to Miami.

Thanks.

-----Original Message-----

From: Allain, Ryan LT
Sent: Friday, January 03, 2003 8:43 AM
To: Farley, James CAPT
Cc: Holland, Michael LCDR; Ferguson, Scott CDR; McLaughlin, Patrick; Neptun, Daniel CAPT
Subject: RE: Press Clips 30 DEC 02 C/B SAR Case

Captain Farley,

CWO Hammond and myself conducted a drydock exam yesterday on the Panther II, a sister to the Panther. The exam was scheduled over two weeks ago so the sinking did not prompt the inspection (the Panther was also scheduled for its drydock at the same time). The Panther II is 4 years newer than the Panther, built in 1972.

One major item we discovered during the inspection of the Panther II and perhaps should be shared with MSO Miami since I believe the Panther was configured the same way: The vessel has scuppers to drain the deck that are located on the port and starboard sides of the transom, the bottom of the scuppers are 5-6 inches above the scum line on the vessel, when the vessel was loaded I believe these scuppers were much closer to the waterline. In addition, none of the hatches or openings on the deck were weather tight and amazingly on the after portion of the deck approximately 12 inches from the transom the deck stopped and the bilges were exposed. This means that any water shipped on the deck drained to the bilge through the hatches or through that opening, not overboard through the scuppers, setting up a progressive flooding condition, especially if passengers moved to the stern as Captain Neptun described. The owner claims that this vessel has always been configured this way and that the Panther was the same way.

Here is a list of requirements we issued for the vessel to complete credit drydock:

1. Correctly configure vessel as an open boat. Permanently close off scuppers in transom. (We will need to talk to Miami on this one to find out what the originally stability was done as.)
2. Provide opening in vessel to provide access to sideshell.

3. Clean and remove water from vessel bilge and make available for inspection.
 4. Replace rotted main stringers in bilge tunnel, port and starboard sides.
 5. Replace rotted wood on vessel's toe rail.
 6. Securely affix vessel's bilge pumps, provide positive closure shutoff valves at sideshell, hose clamp discharge hoses, and correctly install/repair high water bilge alarm.
 7. Replace control console due to deteriorated condition.
 8. Reconfigure storage of lifejackets to provide unfettered access to passengers.
 9. Correctly configure deck rails in accordance with CG regulations.
 10. Grind out marked areas on vessel's exterior sideshell and make wood underneath available for inspection.
 11. Replace mounting board for rudder.
 12. Double nut or affix a cotter pin on securing pin for rudder.
 13. Remove rubrail and make wood underneath available for inspection.
- ** Call MSD FT Myers when items #2, #3, and #10, are completed to schedule inspection.

After yesterday's inspection we were interviewed by the local NBC station out of Naples. We told them the Panther II would be required to make repairs prior to returning to service and that we referred all questions on the Panther to MSO Miami.

v/r,

Ryan Allain
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-----Original Message-----

From: Farley, James CAPT
Sent: Thursday, January 02, 2003 10:33 AM
To: Neptun, Daniel CAPT
Cc: Allain, Ryan LT; Holland, Michael LCDR; Ferguson, Scott CDR
Subject: RE: Press Clips 30 DEC 02 C/B SAR Case

DAN - Agree with your observation that drawing everyone's attention to the stern may not be the best thing to do from a safety standpoint if there are any stability implications. The operators of T-boats are required ensure compliance with the Stability Letters aboard and any notations made on the Certificate of Inspection regarding the loading/placement of passengers.

I think this incident will allow us to raise this issue with our operators in hopes of preventing another swamping. I'll look for ways to get this info out to our inspected T-boat fleet.

Mike

-----Original Message-----

From: Neptun, Daniel CAPT
Sent: Wednesday, January 01, 2003 11:44 AM
To: Farley, James CAPT
Subject: FW: Press Clips 30 DEC 02 C/B SAR Case

Mike,

I have been on the wildlife tour boats running out of the NPS concession in Everglades City several times during the past few years. I don't think I was aboard PANTHER...seems to me it was MANATEE (and a number). The maneuver described in the second article is ops normal for these guys. They slowly cruise throughout the Ten Thousand Islands looking for ospreys/wood storks, and other flora & fauna. When they get to deeper water, they run it up to cruising speed with hopes of getting a few dolphins to jump the stern wake. Of course, they tell everyone to watch, so almost everyone heads to the stern to catch a peek at jumping/surfing dolphins. I can see why PANTHER likely swamped by the stern! Everyone was probably in the aft half of the vessel...not a good idea!

When I was on the MANATEE tour boats, they were larger, and fewer people were on board each day (probably 20 or less), because it wasn't tourist high season. I was also one of those tourists on the stern snapping photos whenever the dolphins jumped. Each time for my cruises, there was no swell in the channel, winds were nominal, and I never felt we were doing anything unsafe. I recall the feeling that this wouldn't be a good idea with a boat packed full of similarly-minded tourists! I would have felt the same way, much sooner, aboard a smaller vessel.

V/r, Dan Neptun

-----Original Message-----

From: Neptun, Daniel CAPT