

FW: Axel Spirit

Page 1 of 1

Te

From: Dennis Wheeler <DWheeler@sandyhookpilots.com>
 To: rpouch@aol.com
 Subject: FW: Axel Spirit
 Date: Mon, 5 Nov 2007 3:54 pm

Rob Dombrowski
 Statement

From: pbnewyork
 Sent: Monday, November 05, 2007 1:02 PM
 To: Dennis Wheeler
 Subject: Axel Spirit

On November 3rd 2007, I relieved Capt. H.F. Cavagnaro and assumed 00-06 mate watch on the Pilot Boat New York. The staffing on my watch included motorboat operator M. C. Chambers, deckhand T. M. Murray and K. E. B assumed radio watch at 0300. Weather conditions were rough due to reminiscence of Hurricane Noel passing through the area. Specifically, the conditions were as follows: north-easterly wind 25-30 knots, 6-7 foot seas, overcast sky and visibility of 12 miles.

The tanker, Axel Spirit, anchored northeast of the Ambrose Light Tower on 11/2/07 at 14:36 and had orders to start in Sandy Hook Channel at 0200 on 11/3/07. The 18-24 watch gave the Axel Spirit 2 hour notice about their 0200 boarding as well as orders to proceed to Chevron PA via Sandy Hook Channel at midnight. The Axel Spirit was instructed to rig a port side ladder and heaved up anchor to be on pilot station at 0200. The tanker got underway around 0045, reporting to the pilot boat on channel 08.

When Axel Spirit got underway, I confirmed 0200 boarding time and that we would board them approximately 1 mile west of the Ambrose Light Tower and informed her about a passenger ship, Norwegian Spirit, due to arrive on the pilot station also at the same time and approaching from the East. Also, I asked Axel Spirit about its intended route of approach to the pilot station. Axel Spirit chose to pass to the East and to the South of the tower. The pilotboat New York and Norwegian Spirit were notified by the Axel Spirit of her intended approach.

Axel Spirit followed its intended route at approximately 4.5 knots. At that time, the pilotboat New York was stopped approximately 1.3 miles west of the Ambrose Light Tower waiting for the inbound ships to approach. After assuming boarding position, I spoke to three outbound vessels "Horizon Producer", "Atlantic Ocean" and "Palva" regarding current, sea and wind conditions and incoming traffic. All outbound vessels were aware about boarding inbound vessels before disembarking. When "Axel Spirit" was rounding the tower it was to be number one vessel on the pilot station about 2 miles ahead of "Norwegian Spirit" and before outbound vessels. I asked the tanker to leave the pilot cutter on its port side after it clears the tower. When "Axel Spirit" was close to the pilot boat, I sent pilot launch with pilot D.R. Sherwood to the vessel. Prior to the vessel being boarded the launch requested the Axel Spirit to come to starboard to make a better lee. The tankers was well west of the Ambrose Light Tower and comply with the request.

After disembarking pilots of the outbound vessels, I realized the Ambrose Light Tower was extinguished. I notified Vessel Traffic Services about it when requesting an anchorage report around 0400.

During whole operation, Axel Spirit never notified the pilot boat about hitting the tower or requesting pilot boat for assistance. Due to heavy vessel traffic and dark night, I did not witness the collision. The following morning, I was notified that the captain on the "Axel Spirit" reported to an agent about possible impact with the tower. The pilotboat New York was requested to survey the Ambrose Tower as per U.S. Coast Guard and pilot R.T. Miller. The extent of the damage was reported to the U.S. Coast Guard.