

MARINE OCCURRENCE REPORT

COLLISION

**BETWEEN THE BULK CARRIERS
"ALGONORTH" AND "RIXTA OLDENDORFF"
CANAL DE BEAUHARNOIS
02 AUGUST 1994**

REPORT NUMBER M94L0021

The Transportation Safety Board of Canada (TSB) investigated this occurrence for the purpose of advancing transportation safety. It is not the function of the Board to assign fault or determine civil or criminal liability.

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in the Canal de Beauharnois
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SYNOPSIS

On 02 August 1994, the bulk carriers "RIXTA OLDENDORFF" and "ALGONORTH" were in transit in the Canal de Beauharnois section of the Seaway. The "ALGONORTH" swung to port and yawed toward the downbound "RIXTA OLDENDORFF" while taking action to come back on course. The two vessels were in a collision situation. Evasive action was taken, but it was not sufficient to avert the collision. Both vessels sustained minor damage, but no injury or pollution was reported as a result of the occurrence.

FACTUAL INFORMATION

Name	«ALGONORTH»	«RIXTA OLDENDORFF»
Port of Registry	Sault Ste. Marie	Hong Kong
Flag	Canadian	Hong Kong
Official Number	341240	708751
Type	Bulk carrier	Bulk carrier
Gross Tons	18,496	18,121
Length	222,56 m	195 m
Draught	F: 7,93 m A: 7,95 m	F: 6,29 m A: 7,39 m
Built	Steel	Steel
Propulsion	Two diesel engines producing 8,948 kW	One diesel engine of 7,870 kW
Owners	Algoma Central Marine	Egon Oldendorff Hong Kong Inc.

At or about 0812¹, the "RIXTA OLDENDORFF", downbound for Sorel, Quebec, under the conduct of a pilot with a cargo of bentonite, started to pass under the Valleyfield, Quebec, lift bridge. She was proceeding along the south shore at an average speed over the ground of 8.8 knots. At approximately 0814, the "ALGONORTH", bound for Hamilton, Ontario, with a load of iron ore, passed under the Saint-Louis lift bridge at an average speed over the ground of 7 knots. In the approaches to buoy C22, the officer in charge of piloting the "ALGONORTH" ordered a course of 265.5° true (T). Shortly thereafter, the assistant officer informed the officer in charge of piloting the vessel that the course being followed was incorrect. Heavy rain was falling at the time, reducing visibility to almost zero. The master came up on the bridge and learned of the developing situation. A few moments later, red buoy C24 appeared on the port bow of the "ALGONORTH"; the order was given to take evasive action, and the helm was put hard a port. The personnel on the bridge saw the "RIXTA OLDENDORFF" close to on the starboard bow. The "ALGONORTH" contacted the "RIXTA OLDENDORFF" and, with two blasts of the whistle, asked for a starboard-to-starboard passing, but the "RIXTA OLDENDORFF" had already put her main engine to full astern to avert the collision. The master of the "ALGONORTH" put the main engine to astern to reduce the vessel's speed and lessen the force of the impact between the two vessels.

Despite this evasive action, however, collision was inevitable between the two vessels; the starboard bow of the "RIXTA OLDENDORFF" struck the starboard side of the "ALGONORTH".

¹ All times are Eastern daylight time (Coordinated Universal Time (UTC) minus four hours).

ANALYSIS

The "ALGONORTH" was exempted from compulsory pilotage because the master and the navigation officers in charge of piloting the "ALGONORTH" had met the conditions imposed by the Great Lakes Pilotage Authority for such an exemption. The navigating officer in charge was making his first transit of the season in this part of the Seaway. The officer in charge was assisted by another similarly qualified officer.

Mariners transiting this section of the Seaway usually refer to a chart that indicates the courses to follow on specific ranges. The course between buoys C22 and C24 is 260°(T). When the "ALGONORTH" came abreast of buoy C22, the officer in charge of piloting the vessel ordered the helmsman to steer a course of 265.5°(T). The officer responsible for piloting the vessel was informed by his colleague that the course was incorrect. Despite this intervention of the assistant officer, the vessel kept the course of 265.5°(T).

Although the weather conditions made the echoes more difficult to assess and less visible on the screen because of heavy precipitation, the master of the "ALGONORTH" was able to detect the "RIXTA OLDENDORFF" at a range of more than 0.75 nautical mile. Shortly thereafter, buoy C24 was sighted on the port bow. To bring the vessel back into the canal and avoid grounding, the master ordered the helm hard a port and held it steady until the "RIXTA OLDENDORFF" was seen visually. This action not only prevented grounding but also helped to reduce the force of the impact between the two vessels.

FINDINGS

1. The vessels were hampered by heavy rain, which considerably reduced visibility.
2. This was the first transit of the season in this part of the Seaway for the officer in charge of piloting the "ALGONORTH".
3. The radars in use on board the "ALGONORTH" were ineffective at times because of the heavy precipitation in the area.
4. The two vessels communicated with each other during the evasive action taken to avert the collision.
5. The "RIXTA OLDENDORFF" took action to avert the collision and to limit its effects.
6. The master took command of the "ALGONORTH" to avoid grounding.
7. The bridge watch personnel of the "ALGONORTH" had not had any accurate position since passing buoy C22.

CAUSES

The officer in charge of piloting the "ALGONORTH" ordered a course that took the vessel off course. The actions taken to bring the "ALGONORTH" back into the canal caused the vessel to yaw. The downbound "RIXTA OLDENDORFF" was close to when this situation occurred.

This report concludes the Transportation Safety Board's investigation into this occurrence. Consequently, the Board, consisting of Chairperson, John W. Stants, and members Gerald E. Bennett, Zita Brunet, the Hon. Wilfred R. DuPont and Hugh MacNeil, authorized the release of this report on 23 March 1995.