

**REPORT OF THE INVESTIGATION
INTO THE COLLISION BETWEEN
THE IRISH FISHING VESSEL
MFV “*STELIMAR*” AND THE
BAHRAIN REGISTERED TANKER
MV “*ALMANAMA*” OFF THE
SOUTH WEXFORD COAST ON 13TH
JUNE 2000.**

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1. SYNOPSIS

On the 13th June 2000, off the south Wexford Coast a collision occurred between the Irish Fishing Vessel MFV “*Stelimar*” and the Bahrain registered tanker MV “*Almanama*”. Damage was caused to both vessels.
No injuries were sustained.

2. DESCRIPTION OF THE “*STELIMAR*”

2.1 Particulars of the Vessel MFV “*Stelimar*”

Built: 1981 by Maritime Industries Ltd.,
Cobh, Co. Cork.

Owner (from new): Richard Power, Dunmore East, Co. Waterford.

Registered Length: 59.00 feet.
Registered Breadth: 20.20 feet.
Registered Depth: 9.15 feet.
Gross Tonnage: 61.69 tons.
Register Tonnage 26.18 tons
Port of Registry: Waterford.
Official Number: 401918.

Machinery: One Kelvin 8 Cylinder Main Engine.
B.H.P. 375. Engine made in 1980.
The engine gives an estimated speed of 10 knots.

Description of Vessel: Carvel build, steel fishing vessel with a
transom stern and raked stem. The vessel
has two watertight bulkheads fitted. The
vessel was being used as a beam trawler.

2.2 Lifesaving Appliances available on board.

Lifejackets: Six.
Lifebuoys: Two.
Pyrotechnics: Twelve parachute flares.
Line throwing apparatus: One.
Liferafts: Two, one fitted with a hydrostatic release
unit.

2.3 Navigational aids provided on board.

One Magnetic Compass.
One Auto-pilot.
One Raytheon R71 Radar.
One Raytheon R41X Radar.
One SIMBAD EC 222 Colour sounder.
One SIMBAD EC 205 Colour sounder.
One Sodena Compact 2000 Plotter with Electronic Admiralty Charts.
One Racal Decca CVP 35000 Plotter.
One Raystar 920 GPS Navigator.
One MLR Valsat 2008 M2 GPS Navigator.
One ICOM M120 VHF Installation.
One ICOM M56 VHF Installation.
One LR Radio HF SSB RE2100.
One WA 9 Watch alarm (3 minutes).

2.4 The crew of the MFV “*Stelimar*” on 13th June 2000 consisted of:

1. Mr. Liam Power of Dunmore East, Co. Waterford. Mr. Power is the holder of an Skipper Limited Endorsement on a Second Hand Full Certificate of Competency No. 1252, which he obtained in 1990.
2. Mr. Brendan McGee of Howth, Co. Dublin.
3. Mr. John Kelly of Dunmore East, Co. Waterford.
4. Mr. Liam Kiely of Bunmahon, Co. Waterford.

Mr. Power was the Skipper of the vessel and his qualifications are in excess of that required by the regulations for a fishing vessel of the MFV “*Stelimar*’s” length when operating in the limited area. None of the remainder of the crew, in so far as is known, had any formal marine qualifications. However all are accepted as being experienced fishermen.

3. DESCRIPTION OF THE MV “ALMANAMA”

3.1 Particulars of the Vessel MV “*Almanama*”

Flag:	Bahrain.
Port of Registry:	Bahrain.
Classification Society:	Det Norske Veritas.
Call Sign:	A9GB
IMO Number:	8908222.
Keel Laid:	June 1990.
Class:	+1A1 Tanker for Oil. EO PP1
Length:	248.80 Metres.
Breadth:	42.00 Metres.
Depth:	19.50 Metres
Gross Tonnage:	52664.
Net Tonnage:	28137.
Main Engine:	One 6 cylinder Mitsubishi Sulzer 6RTA72.

Description of Vessel: Steel, single screw tanker, motor vessel with two longitudinal and eleven transverse bulkheads, flush deck with machinery aft. The vessel was on passage from Sture, Norway to Whitegate in Cork Harbour with 83,675 metric tonnes of Crude Oil on board. (see photos at Appendix A).

3.2 Main Navigation Aids provided on board.

Magnetic Compass:	One Osaka Nunotani Skiki KN-R165.
Gyro Compass:	One Yokogawa Navitec KM-008.
Auto-pilot:	One – included in gyro compass.
Radar:	One ARPA JRC JAS 800CM11.
Radar:	One JRC JMA 850-7CAII.
Course Recorder:	One Yokogawa Navitec KR208.
VHF:	Two sets JRC JHS-21.
Direction Finder:	One JRC JLD-10.
GPS:	Two Shipmate.
Echo Sounder:	One JRC.

3.3 There were 29 crewmembers on board and the vessel was manned in accordance with the Safe Manning Document on board the vessel.

4. FACTUAL REPORT OF THE COLLISION AS TAKEN FROM THE TESTIMONY OF THE SKIPPER (MR. LIAM POWER) OF THE MFV “STELIMAR”

- 4.1 The MFV “*Stelimar*” sailed from Dunmore East on 13th June 2000 at about 0930 hours (local time) for the Celtic Deep fishing grounds.
- 4.2 The Skipper Mr. Liam Power was on watch. After eating breakfast the other three crewmembers went to bed.
- 4.3 After clearing the coast, the vessel was put on autopilot steering on a course of 145(c) and at a speed of about 8.5 knots. The two Raytheon Radars were on. The R71 was on the 6 miles range and the R41X was on the 3 mile range. Visibility was estimated at about 6 miles. Winds were from the South west force 3 to 4 with a moderate seastate. (See Met. Eireann weather report at Appendix B).
- 4.4 On the R41X Radar the Skipper noticed a target about 30 degrees on the port bow at a distance of 3.2 to 3.4 miles off. He also recalls seeing the vessel, which was a tanker, by sight. At a distance of 1.5 to 2.0 miles Mr. Power realised that the tanker, had not altered course. The MFV “*Stelimar*” maintained its course and speed.
- 4.5 When the target was 1 mile off, Mr. Power realised that the tanker was not going to alter. When the MV “*Almanama*” was 0.50 to 0.75 of a mile off, the engine on the MFV “*Stelimar*” was declutched. The intention of Mr. Power was to let the tanker pass ahead.
- 4.6 The two ICOM VHF’s were switched on all the time. One was on Channel 16 with the other V.H.F. hunting. Around this time Mr. Power states that he saw someone running into the wheelhouse from the starboard bridge wing of the tanker.
- 4.7 Mr. Power states that the tanker definitely appeared to alter course to starboard by about 10 or 20 degrees. He also stated that if the MV “*Almanama*” had not altered to starboard at this time she would have passed ahead of the fishing vessel.
- 4.8 When it appeared that a collision was about to happen, Mr. Power sounded the whistle. He also called the tanker on Channel 16 but got no reply. When the “*Almanama*” was about 0.25 of a mile off Mr. Power sounded the General Alarm.

- 4.9 Also when it appeared that the tanker had altered to starboard by the 10 to 20 degrees, the fishing vessel went full astern. Mr. Power knew that this action would pull the stern to port. Mr. Power stated that the fishing vessel was going astern when contact was made.
- 4.10 The starboard side of the bow of the tanker made contact with the port side of the MFV “*Stelimar*”. Mr. Power was thrown across the wheelhouse to starboard with the impact. The vessel went over to a large angle. There was two major impacts followed by one smaller one. The fishing vessel’s bow was thrown to starboard. All of the crew were up at the time of impact.
- 4.11 Mr. Power recalls that he never heard a sound signal or radio message from the tanker. The fishing vessel made a Mayday call on Channel 16. He thinks that the VHF was not transmitting properly after the collision.
- 4.12 The fishing vessel MFV “*Loradon*” was 4.5 miles astern of the MFV “*Stelimar*” and she picked up the Mayday and broadcast a Mayday relay. The collision position was 51° 55.5N 06° 43.1’W. (See position in Appendix C). The GPS locked after the collision. Mr. Power stated in the Mayday call that the fishing vessel had been hit by an oil tanker.
- 4.13 The tanker turned to port and came back to the *Stelimar* after some time. Mr. Power was not sure that the Mayday call had been heard, so he rang home and informed his mother of the incident.
- 4.14 One of the crew, John Kelly, checked the bulkheads below. All the crew had lifejackets on and they commenced to get a liferaft ready. The engine of the MFV “*Stelimar*” stopped as the MFV “*Loradon*” was approaching.
- 4.15 Mr. Power established that they had not been holed. The tanker stood by the fishing vessel for some time. He recalls that the MFV “*Stelimar*” failed to establish V.H.F. contact with the tanker at any time after initial name exchanges.
- 4.16 The MFV “*Stelimar*” got a tow back to Dunmore East from the MFV “*Loradon*”. They arrived at 1530 hours and docked with the aid of the lifeboat.
- 4.17 The damage sustained by the MFV “*Stelimar*” consisted of a broken mast, severe damage to the wheelhouse and accommodation structure, substantial damage to the port side of the vessel incorporating under water hull damage, ship side rails and mooring bits. (see photographs in Appendix D). Subsequently it was discovered that there was damage to the propeller, which may have occurred in the incident.

5 FACTUAL REPORT OF THE COLLISION AS TAKEN FROM THE TESTIMONY OF THE OFFICER OF THE WATCH OF THE MV “ALMANAMA”, - MR. RACHED MAHMOUD MARAACHLI

- 5.1 On 13 June 2000, Mr. Maraachli, the Third Officer, arrived on the bridge at 0755 hours B.S.T. to take over the 8 – 12 watch. Mr. Maraachli is the holder of an Arab Republic of Egypt, 2nd Mate Navigation, Certificate of Competency No. 3285, which was issued in October 1995. He is also the holder of an ARPA certificate.
- 5.2 At 1115 hours, when the MV “*Almanama*” was in position Coningbeg bearing 330° (T) at a distance of 5.9 miles, the Third Officer altered course to 256°(T) 254°(G). (see position in Appendix C). The vessel’s speed was about 13.8 Knots.
- 5.3 At about 1120 hours Mr. Maraachli recalls observing a small target around 40 to 50 degrees on the starboard bow at a distance of 5 or 6 miles.
- 5.4 He acquired and plotted this target on the ARPA(J.R.C JAS 800CM11) which was on the 12 mile range. The CPA given was between 1 mile and 1.5 miles with the target passing ahead.
- 5.5 He also took a series of visual bearings on the central gyro repeater (Yokogawa Navitec) which indicated that the vessel was passing ahead. Mr. Maraachli recalls that these visual bearings were changing very slowly.
- 5.6 When the fishing vessel was between 2.5 and 3.5 miles off and about 1.5 to 2.5 points on the starboard bow, Mr. Maraachli tried to call it on V.H.F. Channel 16. There was no reply from the MFV “*Stelimar*”.
- 5.7 Mr. Maraachli estimated that the fishing vessel was heading on a course of about 150° at about 10 or 11 Knots. The third mate altered course to starboard with about 10° of helm to a course of approximately 270°. The fishing vessel was still to starboard and Mr. Maraachli states that the MFV “*Stelimar*” then altered its course to port to about 120° and possibly reduced speed also.
- 5.8 The MFV “*Stelimar*” was now about 1 mile off and fine to starboard. Mr. Maraachli made a long blast on the forward whistle. He then altered hard to port to try to avoid the fishing vessel. He states that the fishing vessel altered course to starboard and then contact was made between the starboard bow of the tanker and the port side of the fishing vessel.
- 5.9 The MFV “*Stelimar*” went out of Mr. Maraachli’s sight just before impact. He called the Master, set off the General Alarm and called on the Public Address System.

- 5.10 The fishing vessel appeared to be stopped in the water after the collision. Mr. Marrachli did not hear any sound signal from the fishing vessel. The MFV “*Stelimar*” was displaying no day shapes and was not fishing at any time.
- 5.11 The fishing vessel bounced along the side of the Almanama and passed about 15 metres off the bridge wing. The fishing vessel made a Mayday Call and the tanker responded but the fishing vessel did not answer.
- 5.12 The Master arrived on the bridge and the vessel which was turning hard to port continued the turn to port and returned to the fishing vessel to ensure that she did not require assistance. The tanker stood by the fishing vessel until the Coastguard allowed them to proceed. A towline was made fast from the MFV “*Stelimar*” to another fishing vessel and the tow was commenced. Visibility was about 8 miles.
- 5.13 Mr. Marrachli stated that he was alone on the bridge prior to the incident as the lookout was calling the next watch.
- 5.14 The damage suffered by the tanker consisted of an indent approximately 30 cm in length and 5 cm deep above the water line on the side of No 1 starboard ballast water tank.

6. DIFFERENCES NOTED BETWEEN THE STATEMENTS OF THE SKIPPER OF THE MFV “STELIMAR” AND THE THIRD OFFICER OF THE MV “ALMANAMA”.

- 6.1 The Skipper of the MFV “*Stelimar*” Mr. Power stated that the MV “*Almanama*” had ample room to pass ahead of his vessel after he had declutched the engine. Also he stated that the MFV “*Stelimar*” would not have passed ahead of the tanker if the fishing vessel had kept its course and speed.

The Third Officer on the MV “*Almanama*” Mr. Maraachli stated that the fishing vessel’s closest point of approach was between one and one and a half miles with the fishing vessel passing ahead of his vessel. However, he also stated that the visual bearings were changing very slowly.

- 6.2 Mr. Maraachli also stated that the fishing vessel altered course to port to a course of about 120 degrees and possibly reduced speed also after the MV “*Almanama*” had altered to a course of approximately 270 degrees.

Mr. Power maintains that he never altered course to port. He did declutch the engine but this was prior to the tanker altering course to starboard. His intention was to let the tanker pass ahead. He also stated that if the MV “*Almanama*” had not altered to starboard at this time she would have passed ahead of the fishing vessel.

7. INFORMATION OBTAINED FROM THE INSTRUMENTS ON BOARD THE MV “ALMANAMA”.

- 7.1 During the course of the investigation the course recorder on board the MV “*Almanama*” was examined and details of the various courses taken by the vessel were noted.
- 7.2 The courses taken were found to be similar to those indicated in the statement given by the Officer of the Watch on board the vessel and showed that the vessel had altered from 230° (T) to 256° (T) about 20 minutes prior to the incident. This course of 256° (T) was then maintained for about 17 minutes.
- 7.3 About 2 or 3 minutes prior to the collision the vessel altered to a course of 268° (T). It should be mentioned that this alteration of course was also commented upon in the statement given by the Skipper of the MFV “*Stelimar*”.
- 7.4 After the collision the MV “*Almanama*” altered course to port and came around to a Northeasterly course and was then manoeuvred on various courses including completing a round turn.
- 7.5 After 90 minutes it was noted that the vessel resumed on a steady course of 253° (T).
- 7.6 The engine movement recorder on board shows that the vessel was proceeding on full speed at the time of the collision.
- 7.7 All bridge navigation equipment, steering gear and engines were reported to be in good working order.

8. CONCLUSIONS

- 8.1 There are differences between the statements of the watchkeeper on each vessel as outlined in Section 5. However, this collision was caused because the International Regulations for Preventing Collisions at Sea, 1972, as amended, were not observed.
- 8.2 Both vessels were well equipped with navigational equipment in good working order and condition. The bridge / wheelhouse on both vessels was manned, both vessels saw each other before the collision and both vessels had their engines operative. The watchkeeper on each vessel witnessed the collision, but prior to it the necessary actions to avoid it were not taken. Both allowed a close quarters situation to develop.
- 8.3 When two power driven vessels are crossing so as to involve a risk of collision and are in sight of one another, Rule 15 of the 1972 Regulations requires that “the vessel which has the other on her own starboard side shall keep out of the way and shall, if the circumstances of the case admit, avoid crossing ahead of the other vessel”. (See Appendix E.) The MV “*Almanama*” should have kept out of the way of the MFV “*Stelimar*” and avoided crossing ahead.
- 8.4 The fact that the visual bearings of the fishing vessel from the MV “*Almanama*” were changing very slowly should have led the Third Officer on the tanker to conclude that a risk of collision with the fishing vessel existed. (See Rule 7 in Appendix E).
- 8.5 Rule 16 states that “every vessel which is directed to keep out of the way of another vessel shall, so far as possible, take early and substantial action to keep well clear”. (See Appendix E.) The MV “*Almanama*” did not adhere to the requirements of this rule as no early or substantial action was taken.
- 8.6 Rule 8 deals with action taken to avoid collision. (See Appendix E). The MV “*Almanama*” did not take positive, early action. The action taken did not result in passing at a safe distance but resulted in another close quarters situation developing.

- 8.7 Paragraph No. 2 of the MV “*Almanama*’s” Master’s Standing Orders from the Fleet Operation Manual deals with the requirement for compliance with the International Regulations for Preventing Collisions at Sea 1972 and the requirement for positive, early action when altering course for another vessel. (See Appendix F).
- 8.8 Rule 17 deals with the action to be taken by the stand on vessel (See Appendix 10.5). The action taken by the MFV “*Stelimar*” did not avoid the collision. It is recognised that the “*Stelimar*” had no way of anticipating what action the “*Almanama*” might take and that the “*Stelimar*” did not have sufficient time or opportunity to take adequate further action to avoid the collision. It would appear that both the give way vessel and the stand on vessel took action at about the same time with the result that both actions cancelled out each other and the collision subsequently occurred.
- 8.9 An alteration of course away from the direction of the other vessel will usually be the safest manoeuvre, if made in sufficient time.
- 8.10 Although both vessels state that they used sound signals, neither vessel heard any sound signal from the other vessel. However neither vessel used the required sound signals as prescribed by Rule 34 (a) and (d). (See Appendix E).

9. COMMENT.

- 9.1 The lesson to be learned from this collision is that it would not have occurred if the International Regulations for Preventing Collisions at Sea, 1972, as amended, had been complied with. Compliance with these regulations is a requirement for all vessels upon the high seas and in all waters connected therewith navigable by seagoing vessels.

10. LIST OF APPENDICES

Appendix A	Photographs of “ <i>Almanama</i> ”
Appendix B	Weather Report from Met Eireann.
Appendix C	Chart extract showing position of collision.
Appendix D	Photographs showing damage to F.V. “ <i>Stelimar</i> ”.
Appendix E	Extract from the International Regulations for Preventing Collisions at Sea, 1972, Rules 7,8,15,16,17 and 34.
Appendix F	Extract from the Fleet Operation Manual on the MV “ <i>Almanama</i> ”

Appendix A.

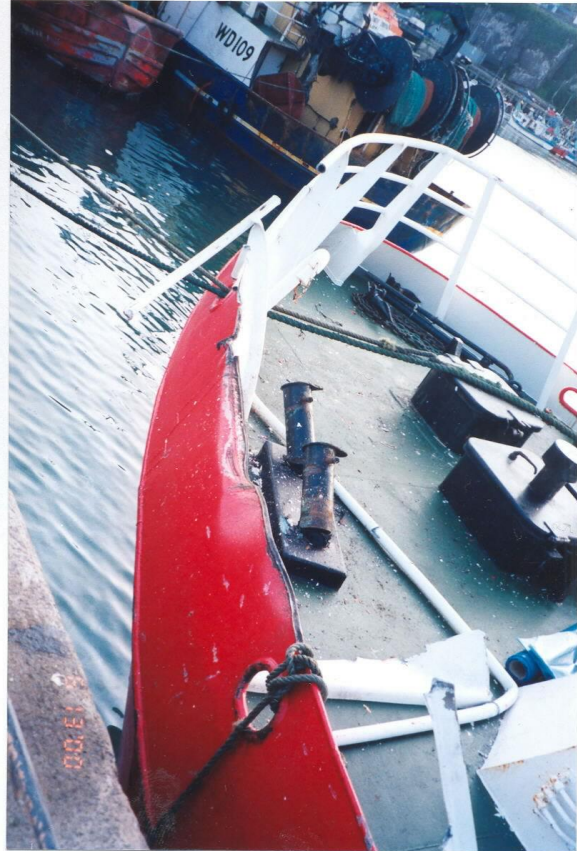


Photographs of m.v. "Almanama".

Appendix D.



Photographs showing damage to fishing vessel "Stelimar"



Photographs showing damage to fishing vessel “Stelimar”

10. LIST OF CORRESPONDENCE RECEIVED

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MCIB RESPONSE TO THE LETTER FROM MR. RICHARD POWER OF 04th APRIL, 2003

(i) **Mr. Power's observation - "*Almanama's*" navigation"**

It is not the function of the MCIB to apportion blame, the sole function of the investigation is to find fact and make such recommendations as are necessary to avoid similar casualties occurring in the future. The conclusion in the MCIB report should be read in their totality.

(ii) **Mr. Power's observation - "*Stelimar's*" navigation"**

These matters are adequately and clearly dealt with in paragraphs 7.3 and 7.5 of the report. As is stated in paragraph 7.3 and 7.6 of the report the give way vessel "*Almanama*" did not take the necessary precautions as required by the Collision Regulations under Rule 17(a ii) of the Collision Regulations, the "*Stelimar*" was permitted to take action by her manoeuvre alone and according to the Skipper, did comply with Rule 17(c) when carrying out its manoeuvre. The "*Stelimar*" did not alter course to port for a vessel on her own port side

(iii) Section 7.8 of the draft report has been amended in light of Mr. Power's comments.

(iv) **Mr. Power's observations - "Inconsistencies in the "*Almanama*" account"**

(A) These differences in the statement of the Officer of the Watch (OOW) of the "*Almanama*" are recorded in Section 5.1 of the MCIB Report, where the OOW stated that the closest point of approach was between one mile and one and a half miles with the fishing vessel passing ahead. However he also stated that the visual bearings of the "*Stelimar*" were changing very slowly. This is further recorded in section 4.5 of the MCIB report.

Section 7.4 of our final report states "the fact that the visual bearings of the fishing vessel from the MV "*Almanama*" were changing very slowly should have led the Third Officer on the tanker to conclude that a risk of collision with the fishing vessel existed.

(B) The MCIB is fully aware and has noted during the course of the investigation into this incident, the content of the initial assessments made by each vessel concerning the bearing and distance away from the other vessel, some of which have been highlighted in the various plotting sheets. From experience of accident investigations, it has been found that generally assessments become accurate as the vessels approach each other.

It is abundantly clear that a risk of collision existed in this case (See section 7.4 of MCIB report) and compliance with the International Regulations for Preventing Collisions at Sea, 1972, as amended, was required.

Section 6.7 of the MCIB report states that "All bridge navigational equipment, steering gear and engines were reported to be in good working order"

