

Survival off of Rhode Island

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Content:

Survival Off Of Rhode Island, When Judith Point Ferry to Block Island Was Hit By a Coast Guard Cutter, at Morro Bay July 3, 2008 It was my husband's first trip from his home state of California to New England. Part of our plans included a day off of Rhode Island on Block Island. We boarded our Ferry Boat from Judith Point, Rhode Island mid morning to enjoy our great day of the high sees and to the beautiful Block Island Rhode Island, which neither my husband nor I had ever been to. Excitement was very high. Once aboard our Ferry we reveled in the fun of seeing the fish boats, the docks on the bay, the beautiful blue ocean. Then, in probably the most surreal and frightening event my life, in the dense fog our Ferry boat started to sound its horns what seemed non-stop; in fear of why. We were on the top deck of the boat. We knew not why our Ferry was sounding off its horns, but it took not long to see why; as we were on the port side of the Ferry. Finally, about ten minutes into this, in the dense fog we could see the 140 foot Coast Guard Cutter heading straight for our Ferry.(And our Ferry was

only 170 feet long) The two vessels were so close that we knew that we were going to collide; it was how damaging that impact was going to be we did not know. Literally, like a ghost out of nowhere, the Coast Guard Cutter appeared in our site, and it was evident a collision was going to take place. I do remember, as being on the top deck, that I spoke loudly hoping the parents would here me, of a few young children that were leaning way over the side of our Ferry as the two vessels were about to collide. In the few seconds before that collide, I feared greatly for both vessels survival. It was so very frightening. We tried to brace ourselves, brace ourselves physically but also spiritually; as I and many aboard thought that this may be fatal. It was the most frightened I had ever been in my life at the possibility of going down with a ship into the cold waters of the sea. So surreal there really is no way to explain it. The two vessels collided. After the initial shock of "Oh my God" all on our vessel looked around to see if anyone needed help. It was very rocky waters and walking on the boat to try to get to anyone to help them was very hard as the seas were rough. Many a folk, including my cousin, who used to be in the Coast Guard, and myself, fell against many structures and were bruised. The first moments after this collision; it was truly a Titanic moment. Everyone began looking for where the life vests were; as there was no explanation of that on our Ferry. I was looking to all the sides of the Ferry for dinghy's to carry us to safety if needed. Thelife vests,life jackets life vests and where they were located was very obvious on the vessel. Many people put them on, put them on their children etc. Those who felt that the possible impending danger, found their way to those life vests and they felt confident they would be fine. The life vests were clearly labeled on the Ferry as to where there were. After the initial shock, I began to walk around the Ferry, looking for damage, looking for family and also witnessing many people in the helm of the boat sick, vomiting, grown men shaking for fear of their lives etc. That only added to the fear. I must say that the Ferry liner did not help at all. They did not come around with medics, with ice chips or water, or cold wash cloths etc. In fact, they never handed out the life vests; we had to figure out where they were. I do repeat, where the vests were was obvious and that brought no fear to anyone. I again repeat, this is the most Titanic moment or frightening moment in my life I have ever experienced. I thought, as did many on our Ferry that we were going to go down into the seas. Scarily, our Ferry boat captain did not speak overhead until what seemed like hours later. He stated that our Ferry had bit hit by a Coast Guard Boat. NO new info as we saw it hit. They said that they thought no major damage was done to our vessel, but that another Coast Guard Investigator vessel was on its way to take pictures of our damage. All this time, for about two hours; we were rocking and rolling on the sees and many people were sick. On the lower deck a few vehicles and cycles fell into the ocean. And there were some injuries from the owners of those trying to save them. So, a few hours later a Coast Guard boat arrives to take pix, and then it left. It was as if we felt sinking alone again. But within probably an hour or so, two Coast Guard boats came to guide us to our destination, Block Island. We knew that at this point we had been on the national news. We became a spectacle when we arrived at Block Island. The bottom line for me is that the adults and caring souls on that Ferry took over. They took care of getting the life vests for their loved ones. They got water for the sick. We took care of each other; another great American story of pride and preservation. We survived, we did it. I know that the delay in getting help for our vessel is that the Coast Guard investigators took control of both vessels, doing blood and urine testing, and taking depositions. All tuned out well, at least for our vessel. I do believe that the CGT at the helm took a huge burden of the wreck, and I have heard there have been demotions. That does not matter; we all survived; thanks to the many caring adults on the vessel and the very well labeled flotation devices. Janet Michael

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About the Author:

A true story of survival at sea and how all adults should consider themselves responsible for the minors on any boat as far as life preservers and life boats are concerned.