



Summary Report

Contact with Wharf

General Villa

5 March 2006



NARRATIVE

General Villa arrived at Napier pilot station at 0442 hours on 5 March 2006, having sailed from Bluff two days earlier. The Pilot boarded at 0457 hours. The Master and Pilot held a briefing and agreed on a passage plan. The vessel was to enter the Port and swing bow to port before berthing starboard side alongside. There was 10 knots of Westerly wind.

Two harbour tugs were made fast, **Ahuriri** on the port quarter and **Maungatea** on the port bow. The ships bow thruster was running and was fully operational.

In addition to the Master and Pilot, the bridge team consisted of the Third Officer and a helmsman.

According to **General Villa's** movement log, the vessel's engine was put to slow ahead at 0523 hours, and the tugs were made fast at 0534 hours. The engine was put to Dead Slow Ahead at 0535 hours and was stopped at 0538 hours. The engine was put slow astern at 0538 hours, half astern at 0539 and full astern at 0540 hours.

At 0539 hours, the Pilot order the forward tug to "Tow Full" which was acknowledged. Shortly afterwards, the Master of **Maungatea** informed the Pilot that the vessel was closing on No. 2 wharf.

At approximately 0540 hours, the vessel's bulbous bow made contact with concrete wharf pilings on Higgins North Wharf in the vicinity of the 358 metre mark.

At 0543 hours, the Ports' mooring gang boarded **General Villa** from the pilot boat.

General Villa ran her first mooring line ashore at 0548 and was all fast at 0612.

The vessel suffered minor damage to her bulbous bow consisting of a dent measuring approximately 200mm in length, 70mm in width and a depth of 30mm. There was significant damage to three wharf pilings.

FINDINGS

Subsequent to the incident, the Master of **General Villa** claims to have seen a swell wave enter the harbour just prior to the vessel contacting the wharf. He believes that this wave may have been a contributing factor in the incident.

Other contributing factors are poor visibility from the bridge of the **General Villa** and the lack of distance information passed on to the Pilot from the **Maungatea**, and the Chief Officer on the forecastle (via the Master).

Based on Port of Napier's internal investigations, it appears clear that the incident was caused by a miscalculation in the piloting of a relatively heavily laden vessel. Probably because of its draught, the vessel proved to be less manoeuvrable than might otherwise be the case. It closed in on the wharf at a speed which could not be reduced in time, and because of its speed and draught it did not respond to efforts to turn it before contact was made.

After Port of Napier reviewed the incident on CCTV footage, it was apparent that the vessel closed at a speed which made it unlikely that any distances called to the pilot would have averted the contact.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The following Recommendations were made by Port of Napier following their investigation into this accident:

1. Pilots are reminded to keep control of the vessel throughout berthing manoeuvres with reference to speed and the available closing distance.
2. Pilots are to request agreed reporting procedures from bow station especially on vessels with forward view obscured by gantry cranes.
3. The passage plan agreed upon between the Master and the Pilot should highlight possible swell surge and its possible effect on clearing margins.
4. The ships' bow station party to take into account the bulbous bow extension ahead of the visible waterline when reporting clearing distances.
5. Pilots to take way off a vessel before commencing the swing in the turning basin with heavy laden vessels.

VESSEL DETAILS

Ship Name:	<i>General Villa</i>
Ship Type:	Bulk Carrier
Certified Operating Limit:	International
Port of Registry:	Limassol
Flag:	Cyprus
Construction Material:	Steel
Length Overall (m):	174.8
Moulded Breadth:	27.5
Gross Tonnage:	19 510
Ship Operator:	General Shipmanagement Inc
Accident Investigator:	Andrew Hayton



General Villa