

F/V Lady Cecilia Wreckage Found

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The F/V LADY CECILIA, which sank on Mar. 10 in the Pacific Ocean, has been located. The 70-foot trawler, also identified as the F/V LADY CECELIA, was found in 460 feet of water approximately 20 miles off the Washington coast. The bodies of its four-member crew have yet to be recovered.

FDS Marine International, the Portland-based marine salvage company hired by the Coast Guard to find the sunken vessel, located the wreckage on the second day of searching, using a remote-controlled submarine equipped with cameras, lights and sonar.

When the F/V LADY CECILIA sank, its automated emergency radio beacon sent out a distress signal. Coast Guard responders discovered a debris field and an empty self-inflating life raft, but no sign of the crew. After an extensive search that covered 640 square miles, Chris Langel, 25, of Kaukauna, Wis., Luke Jensen, 22, of Ilwaco, Wash., Dave Nichols, 43, and Jason Bjaranson, 38, both of Warrenton, Ore., were all presumed dead.

The investigation into this tragic loss of life is ongoing. All that is known right now is the vessel appears to have sunk very quickly, possibly in a matter of seconds. The Coast Guard says investigators will closely analyze the underwater video over the next few weeks, with the findings to be presented at a future public hearing in Astoria, Ore.

The underwater video is very important in analyzing what happened to the vessel. For example, in a case years ago, attorneys from Latti & Anderson LLP were able to defeat the boat owner's argument that a commercial fishing vessel sunk due to being hit another vessel. We did so by hiring of an independent ROV, which went out to the area where the vessel sank and videotaped the ocean floor hoping to find the vessel. Luckily, the vessel was found on the bottom of the ocean floor in one piece, which indicated it was not struck by another vessel. Hiring the independent ROV was key investigation for this firm in securing a settlement for the families of the lost crew.

While no amount of compensation can bring back a loved one, commercial fishing companies should be held accountable when negligence or [unseaworthiness](#) causes a fisherman's death. If your family member perished in a commercial fishing accident, [visit our website to learn more about maritime death claims](#), and call us at 1-800-392-6072 for a free consultation with an experienced Boston maritime attorney.

Latti & Anderson LLP – Boston maritime lawyers

Robotic sub finds wreck of Lady Cecilia

<http://www.chinookobserver.com/20120911/robotic-sub-finds-wreck-of-lady-cecilia>

September 11, 2012



Lady Cecilia

PACIFIC OCEAN — In a vivid demonstration of how far technology has advanced, the U.S. Coast Guard and a maritime salvage company located the sunken fishing vessel Lady Cecilia Sunday, about 20 miles off Leadbetter Point west of the mouth of Willapa Bay.

The Lady Cecilia and its crew of four were lost at sea in March 2012 after a distress signal came from the vessel's emergency position indicating radio beacon. Until recent years, what became of them would have remained a mystery forever. But grieving families will now at least have the minor consolation of knowing the final resting places of their loved ones.

The Coast Guard contracted with the salvage company to locate and examine the wreck of the Lady Cecilia using a remote operating vehicle (ROV), which discovered it in about 460 feet of water.

The port side of the vessel was surveyed on Sunday and the starboard side was scheduled to be examined Monday. The vessel is more or less upright on the bottom, and is intact, according to a briefing provided to David Jensen of Ilwaco, father of one of the crewmen. There are a number

of lines coming off the side, according to a briefing provided to a family member of one of the fishermen.

ROV operations, which were conducted off the Coast Guard Cutter Fir, a 225-foot buoy tender homeported at Tongue Point, were performed to assist Coast Guard Investigators to determine the cause of the sinking.

The ROV's underwater video of the vessel will be closely analyzed by investigators over the next several weeks and the findings presented at a future formal Board of Investigation public hearing in Astoria, Coast Guard officers said.

A formal Board of Investigation into the cause of the accident, mostly a fact-finding mission, happened in April. Coast Guard investigators and personal attorneys questioned family members and friends of the deceased fishermen and federal observer, co-owners of the Lady Cecelia Tom and Dale Kent, captains of other boats in the vicinity of the sinking and Coast Guard inspectors.

Sector Columbia River Commander Bruce Jones previously said that no more hearings would be held until the vessel was found.

The Lady Cecelia sank March 10, in the Pacific off Washington, taking with it skipper Dave Nichols, 43, Jason Bjaranson, 38, junior deckhand Luke Jensen, 22, and fisheries observer Christopher Langel, 25.

A signal from the crew's Emergency Position Indicating Radio Beacon came in around 3:37 a.m. that day, sending Sector Columbia River's personnel 17 miles west of Leadbetter Point near Willapa Bay at the northern tip of the Long Beach Peninsula.

The Coast Guard's search started with a MH-60 Jayhawk crew from Air Station Astoria and two 47-foot motor lifeboats from Station Grays Harbor and Station Cape Disappointment. When they arrived, guardsmen found an empty lifeboat, an oil sheen, some crab pots and other debris, but no pieces of the Lady Cecelia.

The Coast Guard searched a 640-square mile area of the ocean, eventually expanding the search area to more than 1,300 square miles.

The search employed both the MH-60 Jayhawk helicopters from Air Station Astoria, the motor lifeboat crews from stations Cape Disappointment and Grays Harbor, an HH-65 Jayhawk helicopter from Port Angeles and a C-130 Hercules search plane from Air Station Sacramento, Calif. The Coast Guard called off the search the morning of March 11.