



Bodies recovered from sunken sea-clammer off Nantucket

By Curt Brown and Michael Bonner/The Standard-Times

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(Dec. 19, 2017) Two weeks to the day after the Misty Blue went down off Nantucket, state police confirmed Monday evening they had recovered two bodies from the sunken fishing boat.

Divers discovered the first body at 10:30 a.m. and the second at 4:20 p.m.

The Misty Blue, a 69-foot surf clam harvester based in New Bedford, sank Dec. 4 about 10 miles southeast of Nantucket with four men aboard. Capt. Eric Arabian, 44, and Colby McMullen, 22, were rescued by a nearby fishing vessel Enterprise. The search for fishermen Michael Roberts, 49, and Jonathan Saraiva, 32, was called off Dec. 5.

“We’d like to commend (the Coast Guard and Massachusetts State Police’s) efforts,” the Roberts’ family attorney Mike Flynn said. “They’ve been indefatigable in pursuing the retrieval of the bodies, and that’s been so important to the family in this crucial time of grieving.”

“The Saraiva family, as difficult as it is, is grateful to both the State Police Diving Team the Coast Guard and everyone involved in helping to bring their son and Mr. Roberts home,” said the Rev. David Lima, acting as spokesman for the Saraiva family.

Monday’s dive followed the postponement of at least five previous state police dives because of weather conditions since the Misty Blue sank.

“I just want him home where he belongs,” Roberts’ wife, Tammy, previously said. “And my heart breaks for the Saraivas, too. We have a forever connection.”

Lima had also expressed the family’s anguish with each delayed dive.

“That’s been really crushing,” said Lima. “It’s hard enough not knowing exactly what happened and how it happened. They’re grateful for the others having been saved, but not knowing where your son is and not being able to have him in one form or the other is just extremely difficult. It’s not just about closure, it’s about the unknown.”

The First Coast Guard District command center recorded a distress call via an emergency positioning indicating radio beacon from the Misty Blue at 6:10 p.m. Dec. 4. The vessel sank about 20 minutes later.

The cause of the sinking remains unknown, Flynn said.

“It’s premature for me to speculate, but we can say this, vessels aren’t designed to sink,” he said.

The Misty Blue is owned by Atlantic Capes Fisheries Inc., which is headquartered in Cape May, New Jersey, and operates facilities in Massachusetts.

On Nov. 8, Matthew Lyons, of Fairhaven, filed a lawsuit against Sea Harvest Inc. and the fishing vessel Misty Blue. In court documents, Lyons claimed he was seriously injured Sept. 15 as a result of negligence of the captain and crew of the vessel.

In seeking \$1.5 million, Lyons cited an “unseaworthy” condition, a legal term used to describe any unsafe condition occurring on a vessel.

Similar legal action could follow in an event of negligence but the idea of any potential suit is premature, Flynn said.

“Our primary focus at this point is the retrieval of Mrs. Roberts’ husband,” Flynn said. “And helping her through the grieving process.”

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