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Title: **MARINE ACCIDENT REPORT: USS L.Y. SPEAR (AS-36) COLLISION WITH LIBERIAN MOTOR TANKSHIP ZEPHYROS, LOWER MISSISSIPPI RIVER, FEBRUARY 22, 1978**

Accession No: **00649427**

Corp. Authors / Publisher: • NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD
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Abstract: About 0927 C.S.T., on February 22, 1978, the USS L.Y. SPEAR (AS-36), upbound on the Lower Mississippi River, collided with the upbound Liberian motor tankship ZEPHYROS at mile 19.2 above Head of Passes, Louisiana. The ZEPHYROS was proceeding at a speed of 11 mph over the ground near the right ascending bank of the river. The L.Y. SPEAR was proceeding at 19 mph near the middle of the river and was overtaking the ZEPHYROS. When the L.Y. SPEAR was about 500 to 600 feet abeam to the port quarter of the ZEPHYROS, the L.Y. SPEAR turned to starboard until its bow was headed toward the midships section of the ZEPHYROS. Then, the L.Y. SPEAR turned to port, its stern swung to the right, and its starboard quarter struck the port quarter of the ZEPHYROS. Both vessels were moderately damaged and continued to their upriver destinations without further incident. No one on board the ZEPHYROS was injured; nine persons in the L.Y. SPEAR received minor injuries. The National Transportation Safety Board determines that the probable cause of this accident was the failure of the pilot to maintain adequate steering control of the L.Y. SPEAR. Contributing to the cause were the failure of the Commanding Officer to recognize the heading excursion earlier, and his approval of the pilot's request to use flank speed and to overtake the ZEPHYROS at that location.

Supplemental Information: Report

TRT Terms: Accident investigation; Marine safety; Maritime accidents; Military vessels; Reports; Ship collisions; Tankers

Geographical Terms: Mississippi River

Other Terms: L.y. spear (Vessel); Marine accidents; Naval vessels; Zephyros (Vessel)

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