



UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS

MARINE WING SUPPORT GROUP 47
4TH MARINE AIRCRAFT WING
SELFRIDGE AIR NATIONAL GUARD BASE
MT. CLEMENS, MI 48045-5007

IN REPLY REFER TO:
4400
Adm
25 Feb 05

From: Gunnery Sergeant Jeffery H. Hankins United States Marines
To: Pros/ Services

Via: Mr. William Doetsch, President
Mr. Brad Grava, Vice President
Mr. Pat Laeder
Mr. Michael Dean
Mrs. Jamie Preston

Subj: ACCIDENT OCCURANCE ON 2-22-2005 / I-94 EXIT 222A EAST BOUND/
CHALMERS & OUTERDRIVE AT UNDERPASS OF WHITTIER ROAD.

Encl: Gunnery Sergeant Hankins' letter of appreciation

1. This letter has been sent to personally recognize you Company & its driver Mr. Michael Dean for safe driving and responsible actions after occurrence of accident.

J. H. Hankins
GySgt USMC



**Gunnery Sergeant
Jeffery H. Hankins
MWSG-47
Selfridge Air Nation Guard Base
Mt. Clemens, Michigan 48045
586-307-5637**

Date: February 25, 2004

I Gunnery Sergeant Hankins J.H. do submit for the record my sincerest appreciation for the responsible actions of your driver, Mr. Michael Dean, on 2-22-2005 at approximately 1440 hours.

DEPARTING FROM DETROIT METRO AIRPORT IN PERFORMANCE OF CASUALTY NOTIFICATION DUTIES, I WAS DRIVING MY FEDERAL VEHICLE EAST BOUND ON INTERSTATE 94 RETURNING TO BASE.

WHILE ON I-94, I NOTICED SIGNIFICANT CHANGES IN ALREADY EXISTING INCLIMATE WEATHER AND WAS ADJUSTING FOR ROAD CONDITIONS WHEN INCIDENT OCCURED. I WITNESSED VEHICLE #2 PRESUMABLY ATTEMPTING TO GAIN A POSITION IN FRONT OF YOUR 18-WHEELED TANKER. I THEN WITNESSED THIS SAME VEHICLE IN A LATERAL POSITION IN FRONT OF THE NOSE CAP OF THE TANKER. THE #2 VEHICLE CROSSED IN FRONT OF THE TANKER THUS STRIKING THE CONCRETE RETAINING WALL CAUSING LOSS OF CONTROL OF VEHICLE #2 AND WAS SET IN A SPINNING MOTION DIRECTLY INTO MY FED VEH. PATH OF TRAVEL.

VEH. #2 HIT RETAINING WALL NOSE FIRST THEN CAME ABOUT AND HIT ME HEAD ON, SPUN BACK INTO THE WALL AND THEN HIT HIS BRAKES CAUSING ME TO REAR END HIM. BY THIS TIME ATTEMPTS TO AVOID COLLISION WERE FUTILE. EVASIVE ACTIONS WERE EMPLOYED BUT FED VEH. STILL MADE CONTACT, AND VEHICLES CONNECTED AND BEGAN A JOINT SPINNING MOTION. I WAS SLAMMED INTO THE CONCRETE RETAINING WALL NOT ONCE BUT TWICE.

IN AN EFFORT TO DISENGAGE FROM VEH # 2, I PULLED HARD RIGHT TO BREAK AWAY AND INADVERTENTLY DROVE INTO THE 18 WHEELED TANKER, STRIKING THE DRIVERS SIDE, REAR TIRES THUS HOOKING A FENDER THROUGH THE GLASS WINDOW AND MAKING SIDE BODILY CONTACT WITH THE TIRES AS WELL. TIRE ROLLED ALONG REAR OF JEEP AND CAUSING UNDERSTANDABLE DAMAGE TO VEHICLE BODY. MY VEHICLE WAS NO LONGER DRIVABLE AND WAS TOWED TO A GSA LOT IN INKSTER.

The above is my personal recollection of the incident, and though no report can be 100% accurate because these events unfold so quickly, and everyone has their own opinion. However, I can assure you that had it not been for Mr. Dean's actions behind the wheel of his truck it could have been much worse.

The one constant in interstate freight transportation for all drivers is change. And they must constantly be aware of their surroundings; fore they cannot just drive for themselves, but must also drive for everyone else around them. Everyday, more than 555,000 18-wheelers travel our highways bringing goods from all over the world. Trucking brings daily food and commodities and we love that!! And yet, many motorists often resent sharing the road with large trucks.

My father was once a trucker and in the world of trucking, cycles come and go. You can probably count the number of carriers still in business from one or two hands. What separates them from the memories of carriers past? Safety.

I am not exactly sure what training you provide for your drivers, but whatever it is was well employed on the day of the accident. Mr. Dean could have done a number of things behind that wheel but what I recall is the following:

1. Initially I was behind him going about 55 or 60. I was catching over spray so I moved out from behind him.
2. I noticed that he had his service drive light on.
3. He maintained a constant speed.
4. He never wavered from his lane of travel.
5. When I saw the vehicle cross his nose, he managed to avoid broadsiding the irresponsible driver.
6. When I made contact with his wheels and fender, he kept the entire vehicle straight, slowed down, and actually acted as a protective barrier between my vehicle and other motorist to help contain the incident and prevent collateral damage.
7. Even while moving to the right hand side of the road he utilized his signals for lane changes.
8. He exited his vehicle and came to check on each motorist personally. Introducing himself and having an information card already prepared.

Safety, however isn't affected by cycles, you know as well as I do, the "circumstances beyond our control." are out there. Real safety as demonstrated by your driver was more than the three P's - Premeditate, Prioritize, and Proactive! It was also Personal conviction and a full understanding that driving is a civic responsibility.

The trucking industry in America is fully loaded with safety resources every fleet owner can access. But you know it has been paid attention to, when it is effectively employed and accidents produce survivors as opposed to fatalities. Mr. Deans being proactive in this accident ultimately saved my life and also demonstrated his concern for the company's economic variables, such as his desire to reduce damage to the investment of the company vehicle.

In closing I offer my sincerest apologies for having been involved in such an incident with your driver but I was lucky because you driver knew what to do. I hope that he will be recognized for his efforts and talents behind the wheel. He is a deserving individual and a valuable asset to your company.

Respectfully

Jeffery H. Hankins
Gunnery Sergeant U.S. Marines

Ordnance Chief
Military Funeral Coordinator
Casualty Notification Officer
Anti-Terrorism Force Protection Officer