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\$7.5 Million Record Settlement Reached for Victim of Alton Boat Explosion *Worker Suffered Life-Changing Injuries Due to Negligence*

CHICAGO, NOVEMBER 19, 2014 – On Tuesday, Edward Perez-Mossetty of Cayey, Puerto Rico, and Defendants American Tugs, Inc. and a confidential Alton Illinois boat company reached a \$7.5 million settlement in a Jones Act lawsuit filed in Madison County in 2010. This is a [record Illinois Jones Act recovery](#), according to John Kirkton, editor of the *Illinois Jury Verdict Reporter*. Levin & Perconti held the previous record Illinois Jones Act recovery of \$4.5 million.

Perez-Mossetty was represented by John J. Perconti, Michael F. Bonamarte and Margaret P. Battersby Black of Levin & Perconti in Chicago. Roy Dripps of Armbruster Dripps Winterschweidt & Blotevogel LLC in Alton, Ill. and Pedro F. Soler-Muñiz of Soler Law in Guaynabo, Puerto Rico served as local co-counsel in Madison County and Puerto Rico.

Perez-Mossetty, then 37, suffered serious neck and spinal injuries in an explosion aboard the *MV Alejandro* in 2009 while it was docked for restoration and repairs in Alton. Edward was in the engine room of the boat when the air tank exploded. He was thrown into the air and landed on his neck. The lawsuit alleged that American Tugs and the confidential Alton boat company were liable for Perez-Mossetty's injuries under the Jones Act, general maritime law and common law negligence.

The lawsuit alleged that the air accumulator tank that exploded aboard the *Alejandro* was being operated without a pressure relief valve or a working drain valve on the day of the explosion. Investigations by the Coast Guard, OSHA and the Illinois Boiler Inspector revealed that the tank was being operated without a working pressure relief valve and had thinned and pitted due to rusting caused by water accumulation. These agencies later cited the Defendant American Tugs. The suit further alleged that the faulty tank was installed in the *Alejandro* several years prior to the accident, providing the Defendants with ample notice and opportunity to place pressure relief and drain valves.

The regulatory agencies also found that on the day of the accident, employees were operating the tank on manual because the compressor kept shutting off. When running on automatic, the compressor would shut off at a certain pressure to avoid overloading the tank with compressed air. However on manual, pressure was allowed to build-up with no relief and eventually exploded, similar to blowing up a balloon until it pops.

“Edward’s tragic injuries were a result of unsafe conditions and negligence on the part of the boat owner and its employees,” said John Perconti. “During depositions, several workers admitted that the air system should not have been operated in manual mode without working pressure relief valves.”

“Employers have a responsibility to provide employees with safe conditions. This means operating with safe equipment in proper working order and training employees on how to properly use tools and equipment. American Tugs failed in its duty to protect Edward, changing his life and the lives of those who love him forever.”

“As a result of the injuries he sustained in the accident, Edward suffered a neck injury causing him to suffer partial paralysis with serious motor and sensory impairments,” said Michael Bonamarte. “This means that he has limited feeling and movement. He underwent surgery and extensive rehabilitation for months, neither of which were able to rehabilitate or restore him to his prior condition.”

“Today, Edward requires assistance to walk,” added Margaret Battersby Black. “He is dependent upon others for assistance with daily activities. In addition to losing his independence, Edward is in constant pain and will never work again. Edward will require medical care and treatment and assistive devices for the rest of his life, along with physical and occupational therapy. The \$7.5 million settlement will allow Edward to receive these necessary services and care, and will also provide for him and his family since he can no longer earn an income.”

Levin & Perconti is a nationally renowned law firm concentrating in all types of personal injury, medical malpractice, nursing home abuse and neglect, and wrongful death litigation. The lawyers at Levin & Perconti are committed to protecting and vindicating the rights of people who are injured by the negligence of others. Please contact the firm at (312) 332-2872 or visit www.levinperconti.com for more information.

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