

'OUCH'

To Commodore 'D'

Sir

It is with much regret and indeed haste that I am compelled to write this 'Occurrence Report'. Regret, that such a relatively small misunderstanding could lead to the following circumstances and in order that you will receive this report before you form your own preconceived opinions from previous reports which may subsequently appear in the World or National Press or Diplomatic Correspondence, for I am certain that they will all tend to over dramatise the actual events.

We had just picked up the Harbour Pilot and the Communications Junior Seaman had just returned from changing the 'G' Flag for the 'Pilot Flag' and this being his very first trip was having some difficulty in folding the flag correctly. I therefore proceeded to show him the correct way. Coming to the last part of my instruction and as he still retained his hold on the flag, I told him to 'Let Go' This particular Rating, although willing, is not too bright which necessitated in me having to repeat my order in a rather sharper tone of voice.

At this precise moment the First Lieutenant appeared from the Chartroom having been engaged in plotting the Ship's progress and thinking that it was 'Our Vessel's Anchors' which were being referred to, repeated the order to 'Let Go' to the Officer of the Watch on the Fo'csle. The Port Anchor having been 'Cleared Away' but not yet 'Walked Out' was promptly 'Let Go'

The effect of suddenly letting the anchor 'Drop from the Pipe' whilst our vessel was still proceeding at 'Full Harbour Speed' was quite dramatic and proved simply too much for the 'Windlass Brake' and the entire length of the Port Cable was literally pulled out by the roots. I fear that the subsequent damage to the 'Chain Locker' might well prove to be quite extensive.

The sudden braking effect of the Port Anchor naturally caused our vessel to veer in the direction of the town's 'Swing Bridge' which spans the tributary to the river up which we were proceeding at the time. It must be said that the 'Swing Bridge Operator' showed great presence of mind by opening the Bridge for my ship, unfortunately he did not think to stop the vehicular traffic first.

This resulted in the now partially opened Swing Bridge depositing a Volkswagen Caravanette, its passengers, whom I believe were either German or Dutch, two cyclists and a cattle truck on my foredeck. The Ship's Company are at present engaged in rounding up the contents of the latter vehicle, which from the noise, I would say were pigs.

In his valiant efforts to stop the progress of my vessel. The First Lieutenant dropped the 'Starboard Anchor' Far too late of course to be of any practical use for it unfortunately fell onto the roof of the 'Swing Bridge Operators Control Position' After the 'Port Anchor' was 'Let Go' and the ship began to veer, I gave a 'Double Full Astern Ring' on the Engine Room Telegraph and in addition personally telephoned the Engine Room in order to maintain 'Astern Revolutions'. I was then informed that the Sea Temperature was 53 degrees and

was asked if there was a Film Tonight. My reply, I fear would not add constructively to this report.

Until now, I have confined my report largely to the activities on the forward end of my ship, whilst at the after end they were also encountering problems. At the precise moment when the 'Port Anchor' was 'Let Go' The Senior Commissioned B'osun was supervising the making fast of the 'After Tug' and was in the act of lowering the Ship's Towing Spring down onto the deck of the Tug. The sudden braking effect of the Port Anchor caused the Tug to 'Run Under' the stern of my ship at the precise moment when the propeller was answering my 'Double Ring Full Astern' The ensuing prompt action of the B'osun in securing the inboard end of the Towing Spring delayed the sinking of the Tug by several minutes thereby allowing the Safe Abandonment of that particular vessel.

It is also very strange that at the very moment of 'Letting Go' of the 'Port Anchor' there was a power cut onshore. The fact that we may have been passing over a 'Cable Area' at the time might reasonably suggest that we may have touched something on the River bed. It is perhaps lucky that the overhead 'High Tension Cables' which were brought down by our Ship's Foremast were not actually 'Live' and were probably being replaced by the 'Underwater Cables' but owing to the blackout onshore it is impossible to state exactly where the pylons fell.

It never fails to amaze me, the actions and behaviour of foreigners during moments of relatively minor crisis. The Harbour Pilot for instance, is at this very moment, still huddled in a corner of my Day Cabin crooning to himself and sobbing uncontrollably after having consumed an entire bottle of Gin in a time that is worthy of inclusion in the Guiness Book oo Records. The Tug Captain on the other hand, reacted most violently and had to be forcibly restrained by an RPO and two Messmen who now have him securely handcuffed and under Close Arrest in the Sick Bay where he is still screaming obscenities and telling me to do impossible things with my ship and my person.

I hereby enclose the names and addresses of the respective Drivers and Insurance Companies of all the vehicles at present still on my Foredeck which the OOD managed to collect before his hurried evacuation of the 'F'oscle. These particulars will, I hope enable you to claim for the unfortunate damage to the handrails on the Boat Deck. I an enclosing the 'Preliminary Report' as I am finding it extremely difficult to concentrate due to the dozens of Police, Fire Service and Ambulance personnel and vehicles with their flashing lights and sirens.

In conclusion, it is extremely sad to think that had the Communications Junior Seaman realised that there was no need at all to fly 'Pilot Flags' after dark, none of the aforementioned events would have occurred at all. For my 'Weekly Accountability Report' I will assign the following 'Casualty Numbers T/9922804 and 992805 respectively..