Chapter-6, the final chapter, of an RFA Deck Cadet's 1st Trip Journal 1974 ~ 1975

Previous Chapters	Dates
1	24th October 1974 to 28th November 1974
2	28th November 1974 to 19th December 1974
3	19th December 1974 to 17th February 1975
4	17th February 1975 to 6th April 1975
5	6th April 1975 to 16th May 1975
All 6 in one PDF	24th October 1974 to 9th July 1975

Click to open the PDF - each opens in a separate window.
FileSizes vary between 0.7Mb and 6.0Mb

16th May 1975 – Olwen BRAZEX

I spent the first few hours of the morning working with AB Martin and we had to take apart a loading manifold and check the valve. It was so rusted together that the bolts were eventually chiselled away. The operation was interrupted by the RAS with Leander on rig 12. This continued until noon. After lunch there was a second RAS with Lowestoft and after setting the rig, cadets on deck worked on the 36' boat davits – chipping, linseeding and painting them.

17th May 1975 – ESE 90' Salvador.

After the rule of the road, signals and compass, I started a wire splice – (left hand locking) and worked at this for an hour or so. I have found that the secret is to be cautious and not too hasty to make the various tucks. (Similar to chess).

After this I practised the rope splices and successfully completed an eye, back and short splice. One set was finished properly, whipped and cut off. During the afternoon I worked on some physics and later in the evening, while waiting for the scheduled RAS, I read a summary of channel buoyage.

18th May 1975 – 60' SE Salvador.

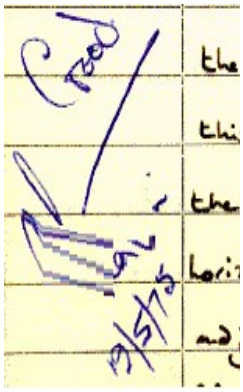
Lecture on the Sextant.

A practical demonstration was given of how to take basic sights with the sextant and also how to eliminate any mechanical errors incurred therein.

Before taking a sight it is necessary to ensure that all possible mechanical errors are eliminated, and there are three systematic adjustments to make.

The first adjustment is to ensure the index glass is perpendicular to the plane of the circle. The sextant is held face up and arc away. On looking through the index glass obliquely, one should see the arc in the mirror and the true arc touching the edge of the mirror. If this is not so, then the first adjustment is turned until the error of Perpendicularity is Removed.

The second adjustment is to remove any side error. In order to adjust for side error by the horizon, the arm and the micrometer are set to ZERO, and the sextant must be held relatively horizontal and the observer looks through the telescope at the horizon to se if the true an reflected horizons are in line. If not, then the side error has to be eliminated and this is done by turning the second adjustment screw on the horizon glass.



The final adjustment is to set the horizon glass parallel to the index glass, when the index equals ZERO. If they are not parallel, the index error exists. To adjust for this error, the sextant is held vertical and the horizon is observed. The true and reflected horizons should be in line.

If not, the third adjustment screw is turned until the error is as small as possible. The value is noted and later applied in the calculation. There are other adjustments but these are the basic Three.

19th May 1975 – 70' Salvador.

The Avcat dehumidifiers were once again dissembled and after fighting against corrosion and paint we managed to get the first one apart. The silica which is deliquessant, absorbs moisture from the air and turns from blue to pink.

The second hand crystals were then baked in the oven overnight to remove moisture as steam.

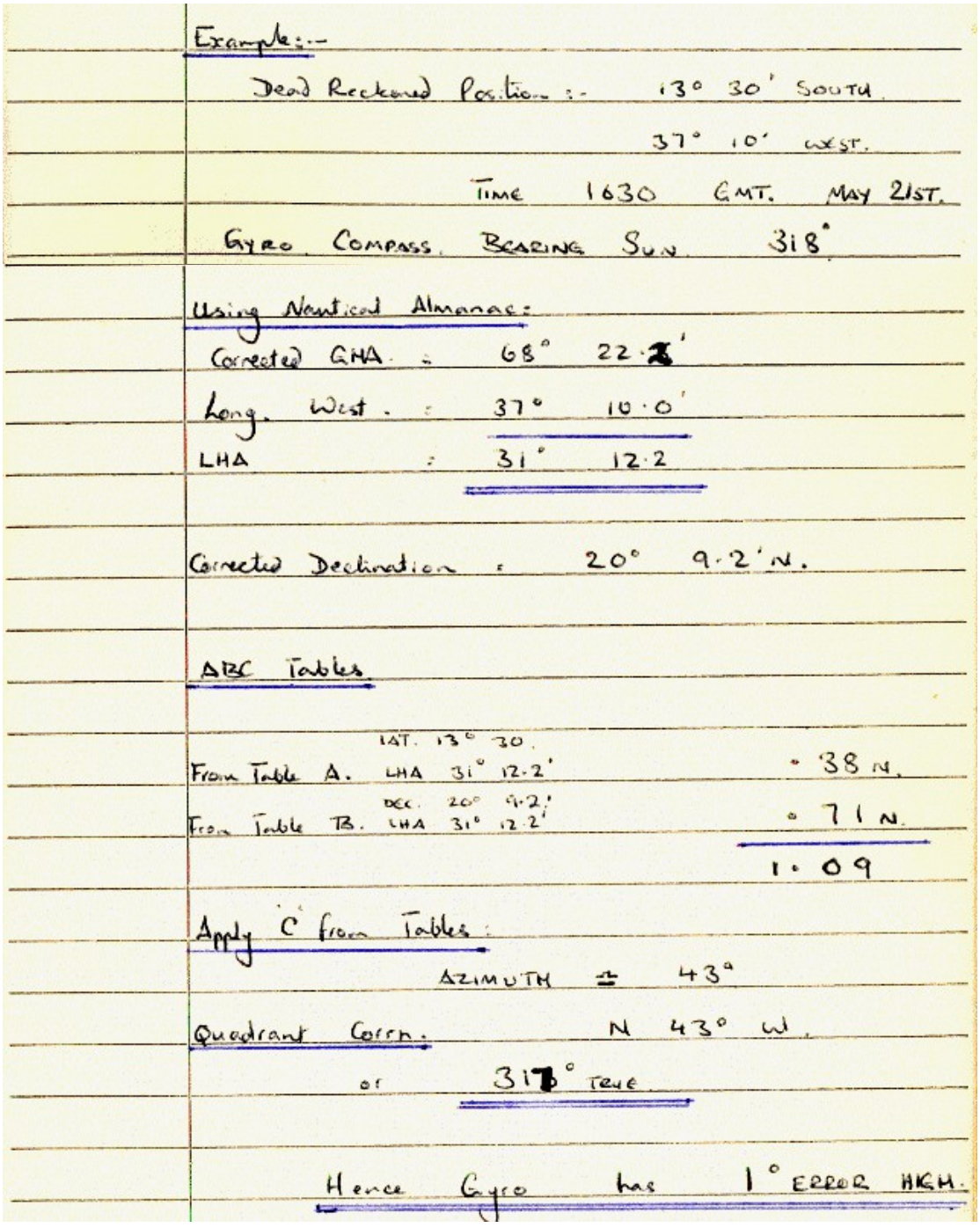
We had a relatively uninterrupted day except for the removal of four oil drums from the foreward hold which had to go to the flight deck for a vertrep.

20th May 1975 – near Salvador.

The final phase of watchkeeping began and my watch was the Graveyard 12 – 4.. During the watches, the regular routines were carried out and there were a few alterations.

During the day, I spent much of the time keeping the flying log but when there was some spare time, the Junior Second Officer explained how to take and calculate AZIMUTHS so as to check compass error. The results were found by calculation, and also using the Azimuth Diagram.

Example:-



Example:-

Dead Reckoned Position :- 13° 30' SOUTH
37° 10' WEST.

TIME 1630 GMT. MAY 21ST.

GYRO COMPASS BEARING SUN 318°

Using Nautical Almanac:

Corrected GHA. : 68° 22·2'

Long. West. : 37° 10·0'

LHA : 31° 12·2

Corrected Declination : 20° 9·2' N.

ABC Tables.

From Table A. LAT. 13° 30. LHA 31° 12·2' · 38 N.

From Table B. DEC. 20° 9·2' LHA 31° 12·2' · 71 N.

1·09

Apply 'C' from Tables:

AZIMUTH ± 43°

Quadrant Corrn. N 43° W.

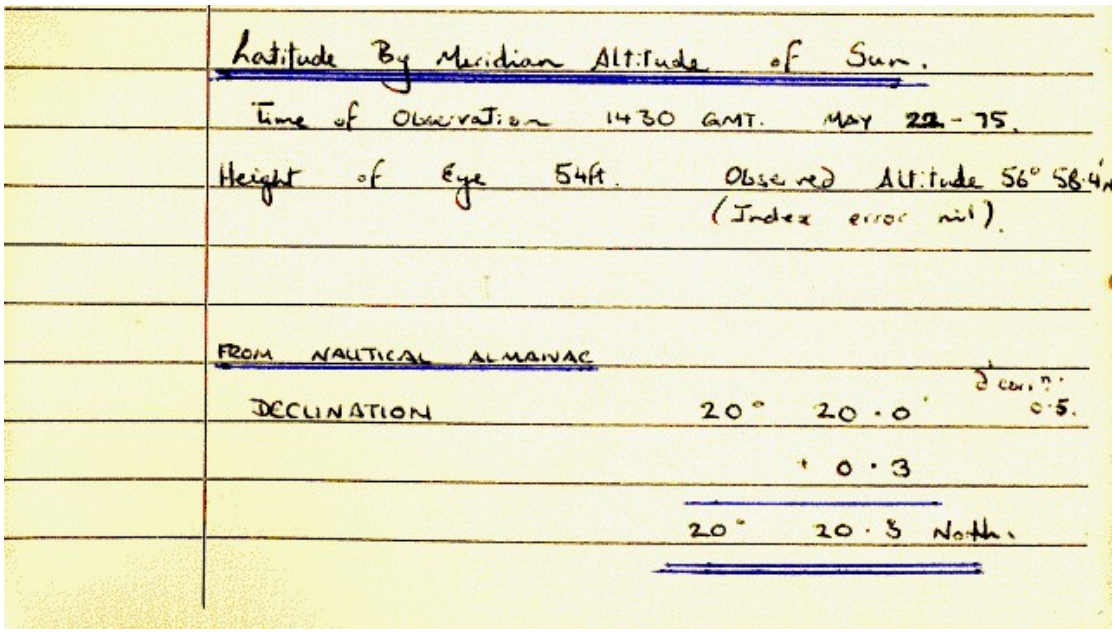
or 317° TRUE

Hence Gyro has 1° ERROR HIGH.

21st to 23rd May 1975 – Salvador.

On the final day of the watch, he explained the measurement of altitude using the sextant and the corrections that are applied. He made it quite clear that showing me the method was against "tradition" as one should be familiar with basic principles first, but being a sight was to be taken, he would briefly show me.

Latitude By Meridian Altitude of Sun.



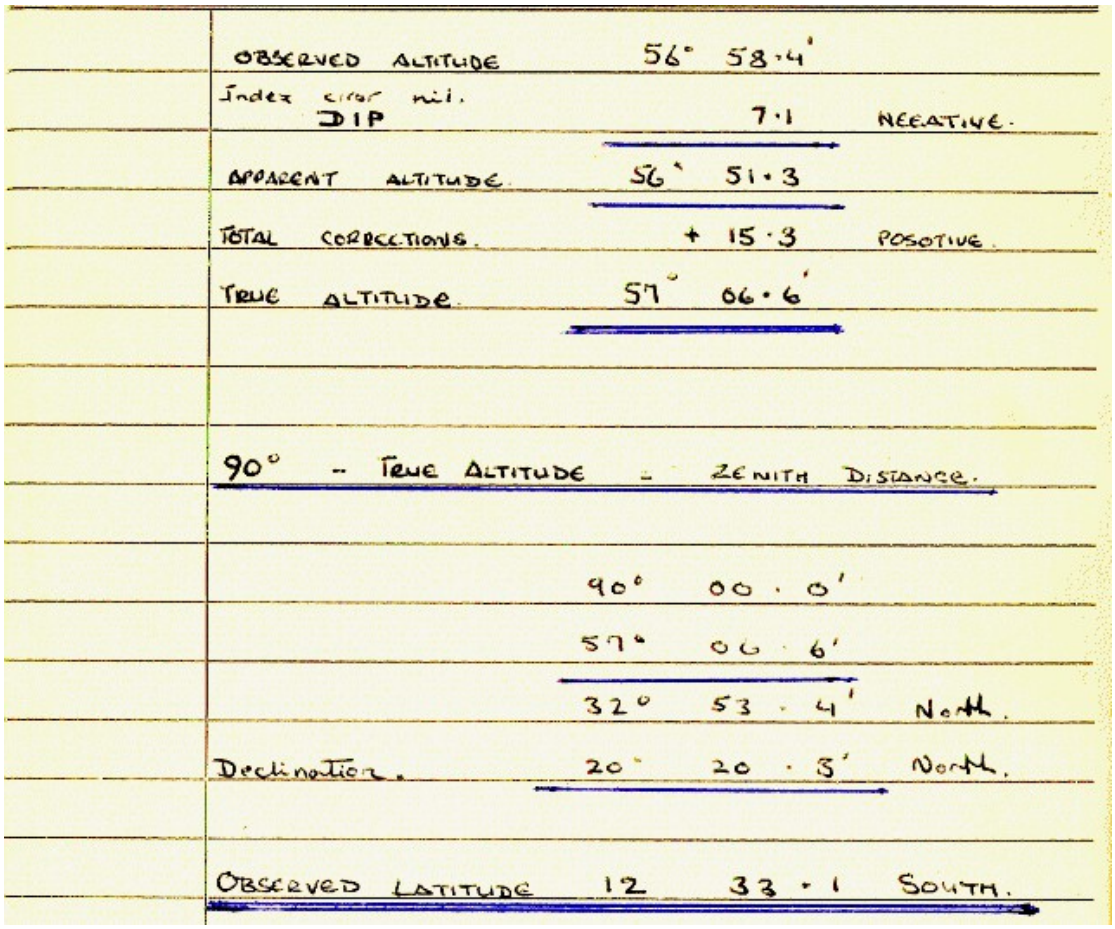
Latitude By Meridian Altitude of Sun.

Time of Observation 1430 GMT. MAY 22 - 75.

Height of Eye 54ft. Observed Altitude 56° 58.4'
(Index error nil).

FROM NAUTICAL ALMANAC

DECLINATION 20° 20.0' d corr: 0.5.
+ 0.3
20° 20.3 North.



OBSERVED ALTITUDE 56° 58.4'
Index error nil.
DIP 7.1 NEGATIVE.
APPARENT ALTITUDE 56° 51.3
TOTAL CORRECTIONS. + 15.3 POSOTIVE.
TRUE ALTITUDE 57° 06.6'

90° - TRUE ALTITUDE = ZENITH DISTANCE.

90° 00.0'
57° 06.6'
32° 53.4' North.
Declination. 20° 20.3' North.

OBSERVED LATITUDE 12 33.1 SOUTH.

During the last watch, the clocks were advanced one hour and special notes had to be added to the log. Also the watches were made 20mins shorter but at the expense of 40mins rest!

We have now detached from the rest of the fleet and the ship was steaming 035°. The automatic helm was in use so I was able to see it adjusted etc. The "off course alarm" was set and from this point on, we only had to keep a sharp lookout as the ship was near busy shipping lanes.

EMPIRE DAY! 24th May 1975

After starting the emergency engines and equipment, I started my wire splice which was to be completed. Four standard tucks were put in, followed by two to taper it with so that it could be effectively served. When finishing the splice, it is greased and covered with material so as to preserve it. This is put on with the lay. Finally it is served using tarred Marline and a special mallet. The result is a very tight whipping.

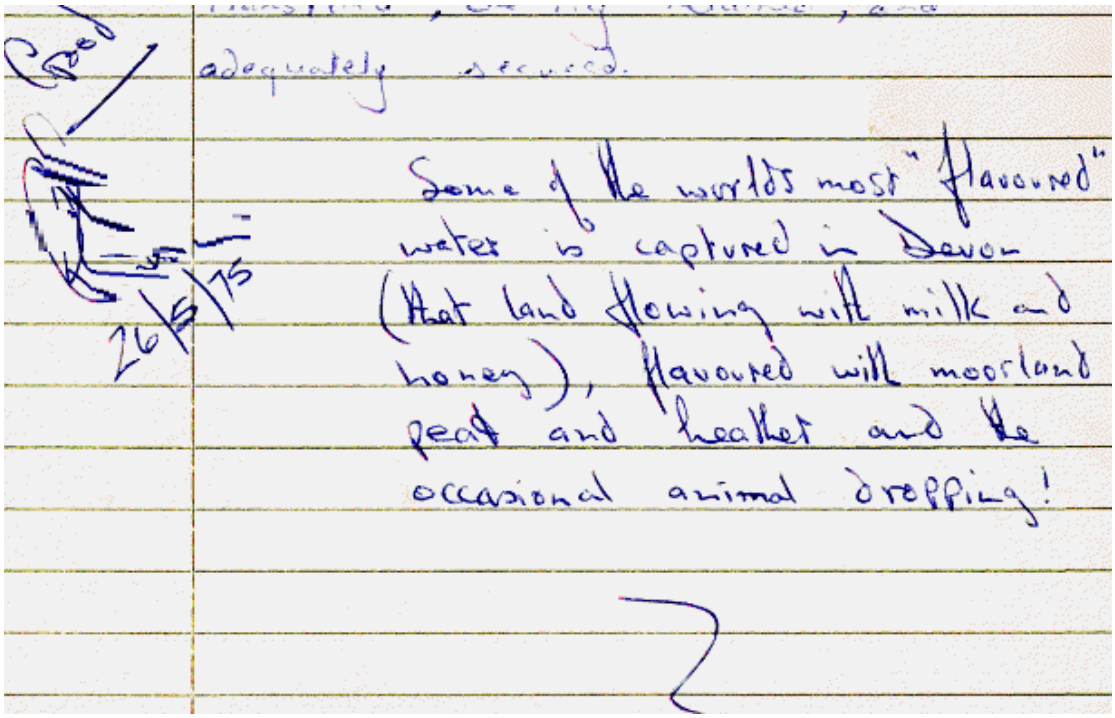
Just after noon we practised taking a sun sight, first removing the sextant errors. The sextant altitude was measured and our **APPROX !** position found.

25th May 1975 – 2½ Thousand' SE Gibraltar.

This morning we replenished Ark, Diomede and Lowestoft and the cadets operated Rig 3 themselves for the latter RAS. After changing the hoses for fresh water, the resulting flavour of the product was tested. Water, which is a chemical compound containing Hydrogen and Oxygen, is formed by igniting the two products. The resulting substance is known as water and has no colour, taste or smell when pure. However the tested product had an oily appearance with a distinct unknown flavour.

Nevertheless, my expert water sampling opinion was disputed and finally contradicted. (If jolly jack needed oiling, the time has now come!) Some of the purest naturally occurring water is captured in Bermuda, and its flavour (non-existent) bears no resemblance to today's test product. Maybe years of ship life corrupt one's taste buds, if not the contradicting decision was inevitably psycho-symatic, (the flavour you want to taste in your mind becomes the physical taste!)

Nevertheless, the event provided good humour prior to the RAS which came off with no major problems. The fuel was safely transfered, the rig returned, and adequately secured.


adequately secured.

Some of the worlds most "flavoured" water is captured in Devon (that land flowing with milk and honey), flavoured with moorland peat and heather and the occasional animal dropping!

26/5/75

26th May 1975 – 400 S. Cape Verde Isl.

A pumpover was in progress throughout the day with Pearleaf, however I wasn't on watch until late afternoon so in the morning I stencilled the words – **SWL 10 TONS** on the derricks. Afterwards 1A tank lid was marked.

During the afternoon I plotted the fire main onto the ships plan, however it wasn't completed before my RAS watch.

By now, the Avcat had finished and I spent some time station keeping or as lookout as was required.

The fuel oil was finished at approx 19:45 but the diesel lingered on until much later.

27th May 1975 – WSW 70Mi CAPE VERDE ISL.

I worked with the first officer throughout the day, continuing the emergency plans. The fire main plan was completed by noon but several mal-printings on the original plans caused delays and we then traced the system out as it was. A major section of the fire main is 7" but this is decreased down to 3" to 2½ inch as required. The pre-wet systems are designed in such a way that, by "instantaneous fittings", it can be linked to the fire main if necessary. The jet nozzles are fitted throughout the ship and can be operated from strategic points: ie. '01' deck, by ships office.

28th May 1975 – near CAPE VERDE.

I finished symbolising the chart of fire equipment and pre-wet etc. and it now shows most emergency fire equipment including stop switches and automatic foam system. It was checked and corrected against the safety book.

A chief petty officer from Ark Royal who is onboard explained the equipment and precautions necessary in HQ1 for measuring radio-activity and the normal strategy used in a cleansing party and for pre-wet wash down. Although the discussion was of great interest, let us hope the system never has to be put in force. However he explained that a ship can withstand Fallout areas well, provided necessary steps are taken immediately – hence he has suggested a drill take place at fairly frequent intervals.

Later in the morning, we participated in OOW Manouvers and each of us operated the radar and executed the manouver. I made a couple of feeble attempts at station keeping etc. but nevertheless one learns by ones mistakes.

There was an evening RAS with Ark and the 1st attempts ended in emergency breakaway due to a SeaKing in trouble.

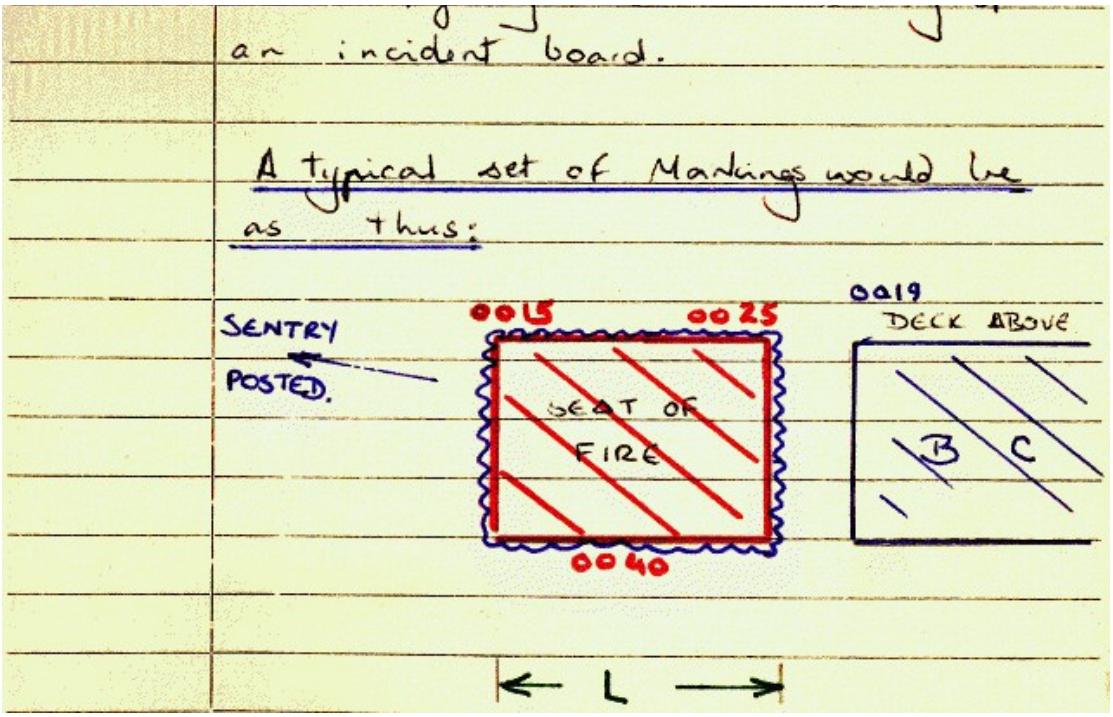
Meantime I took an amplitude to check compass accuracy.

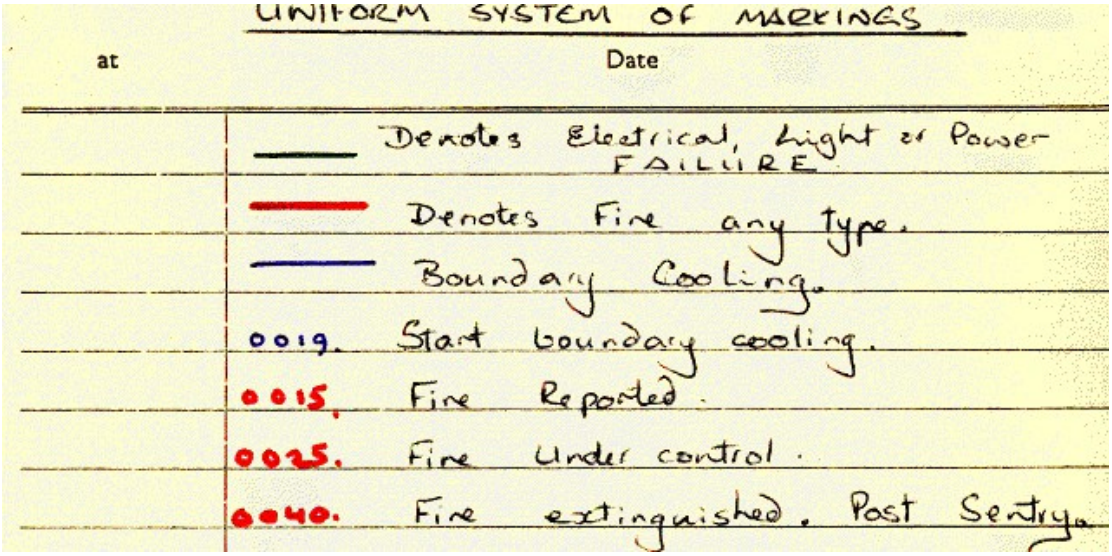
Sine Dec x Sec.Lat = Sine.Amplitude

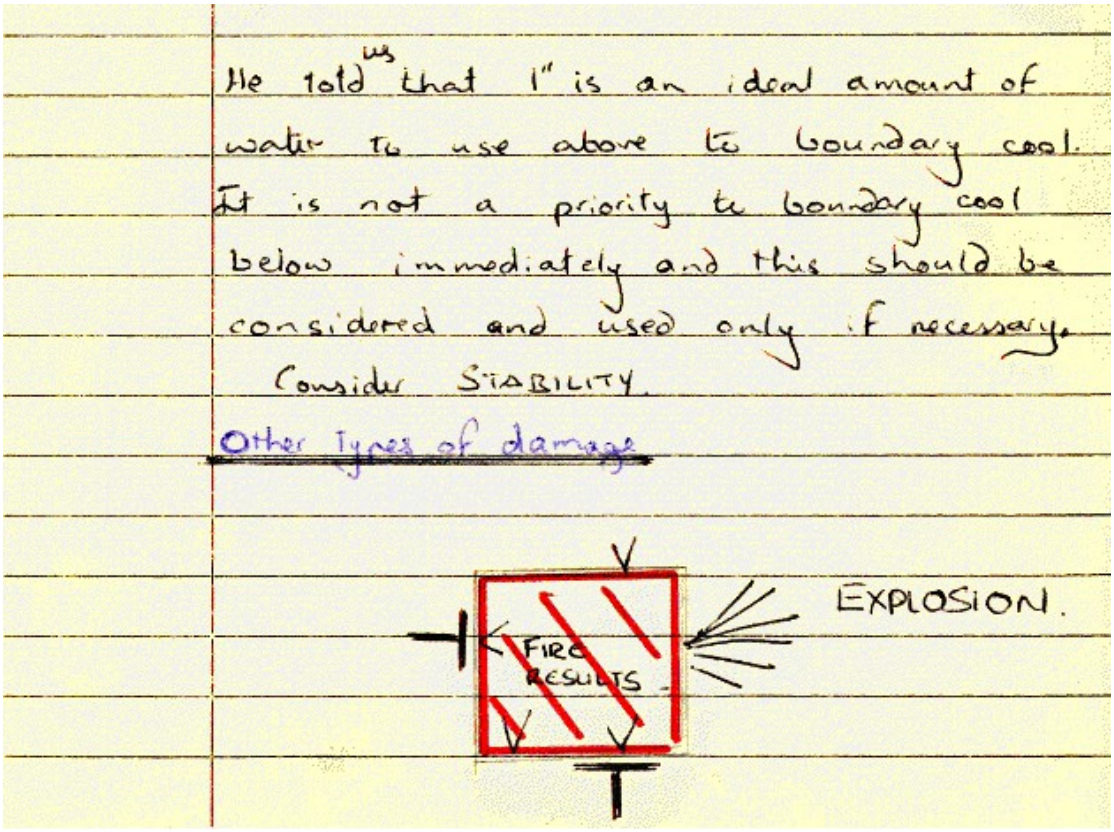
29th May 1975 – towards Gibby.

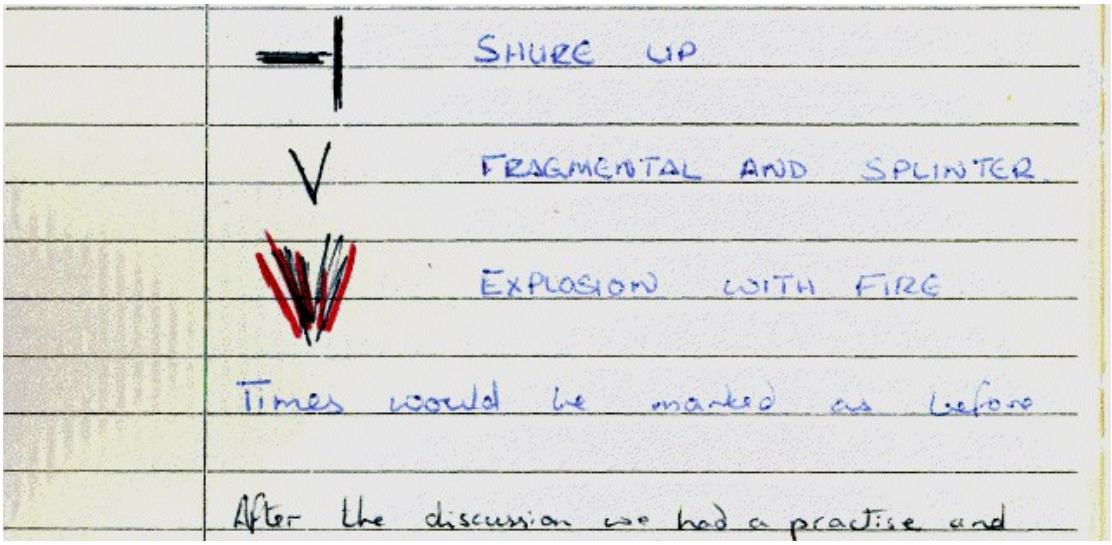
Although there was a replenishment in the morning, Port watch had Study and I worked on my Project which was a drawing of a berthing operation.

However at 10:30 we had a discussion with the F.C.P.O and he discussed DC and firefighting and the marking of an incident board.









After the discussion we had a practise and were split into three groups. I was put in charge of HQ1. and made several errors. However the exercise taught everyone a considerable amount.

Check the Phone is on The Hook ETC.
Report Events Slowly and Calmly.
Look at all aspects on Incident board.
There are 6 sides to every space.

The exercise was very worthwhile.

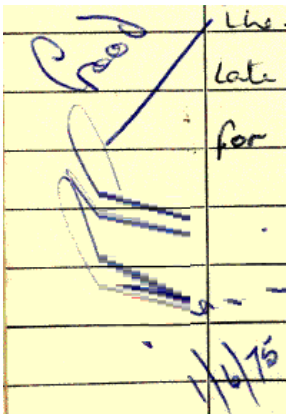
30th May 1975 – N.W. Africa.

Worked on the flight deck for the first part of the morning greasing, oiling and servicing firefighting equipment. We then hosed and washed the platform down, removing all the rust chips etc.

After this, port watch started working on the lifeboats and we counted all the provisions and replaced the milk. This time the milk was put inside the watertight canisters so they should last well. After this, we counted and maintained the equipment in the boat and attempted to locate any missing gear.

Signals in the Evening.

Last day of Mai. – Same Place.



We had an early start in preparation for the RAS with Leander and Diomede on rig 3 and we worked on deck, the CTU running the rig themselves. Both replenishments came off without any major difficulty and fuel was successfully transferred. On securing the rig, I practised the left-hand locking splice, and finished off the strop that had been started last week. It was greased and served and made ready for use.

There were further replenishments in the late afternoon and I was in RASCO for the refuelling of Ark and Falmouth.

June First, Seventy Five.

Lecture on Buoyage.

Uniform Buoyage System, Set with main Stream of Flood

Buoys are an aid to navigation and their positions should not be implicitly relied on. The position of the ship should always be fixed by compass bearings of fixed objects on shore if any doubt exists as to the correct position of a certain buoy.

When referring to channel buoys the terms used are "Starboard Hand", denoting the side which is on the right of the ship when entering a river or harbour, from the sea, or when going with the main flood stream.

The term "Port Hand" denotes that side which is on the left, under similar conditions.

Lights, if any, Used on Buoys

Startboard Hand Buoys: White showing 1 or 3 or 5 flashes.

Port Hand Buoys: Red showing any number of flashes up to four. White showing 2, 4 or 6 flashes.

Middle Ground Buoys: As far as possible, lights will be distinctive, but no colours will be used other than red or white and neither colour nor rhythm will be such as to lead to uncertainty as to the side on which the mark shall be passed.

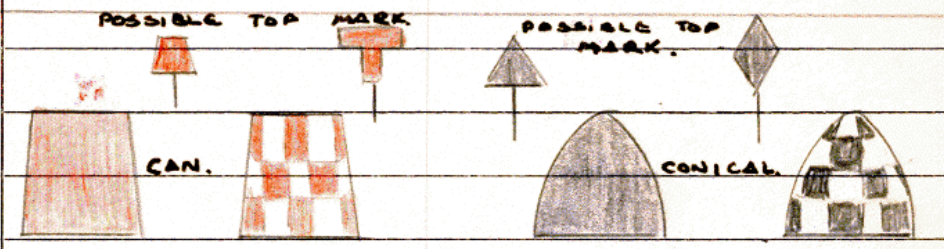
Isolated Danger Buoys: To be of a character different from neighbouring lights on marks at the side of the channel.

Wreck Buoys: Whenever possible, wreck buoys are placed on the channel side of the wreck they are marking.

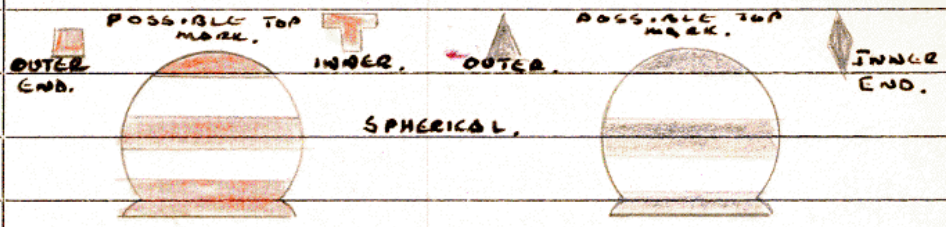
In addition to the buoys shown in the diagrams, there are also special navigation bouys fitted with lights, bells or whistles. …

at STUDY DAY Date Monday June 2. - 75.

buoys fitted with lights, bells or whistles. Such buoys are usually placed at important positions at the entrance to a harbour of a bend in the channel etc.

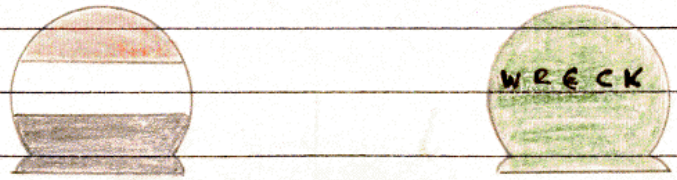


PORT HAND. STBD. HAND.

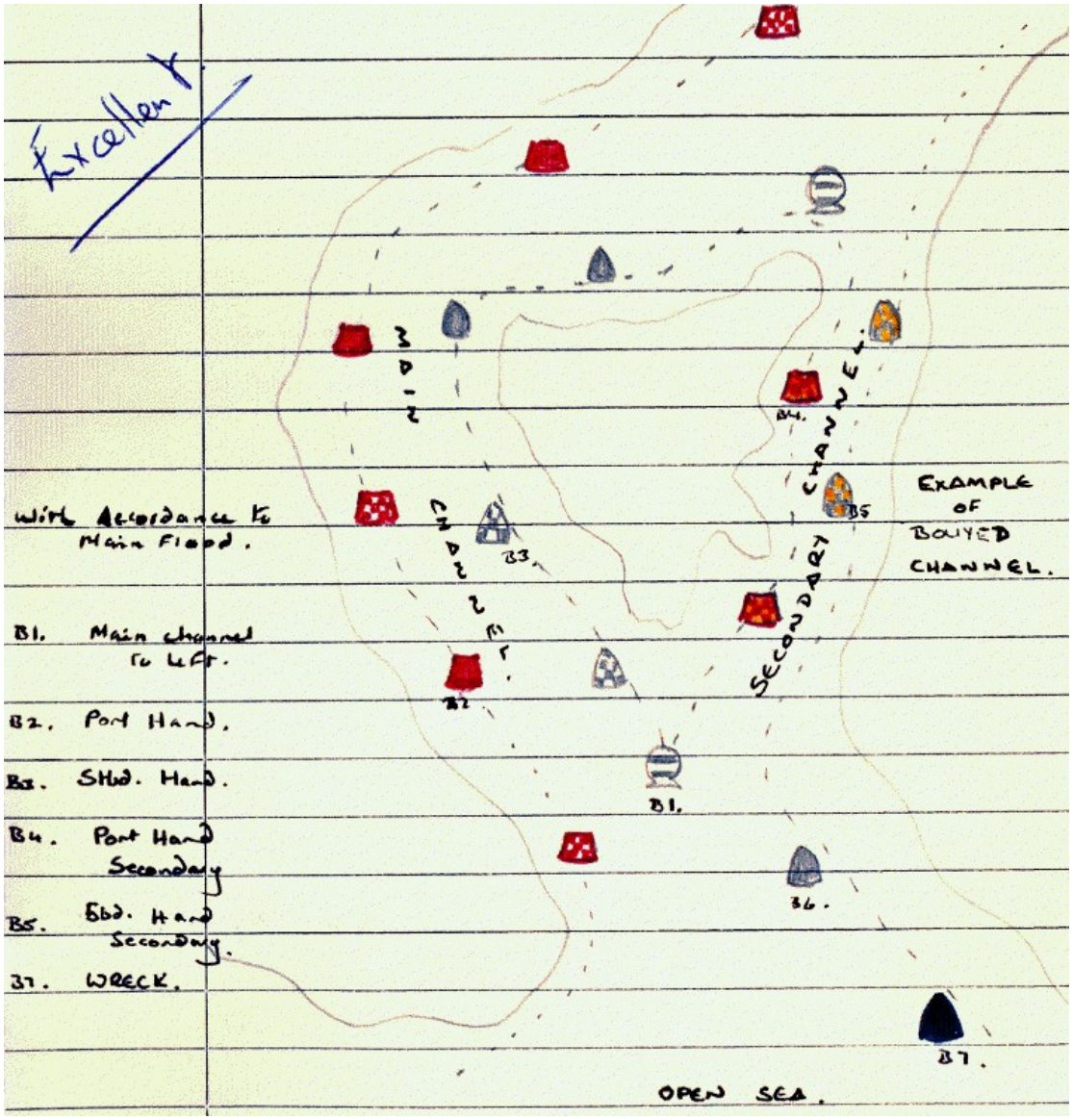


MIDDLE GROUND. MIDDLE GROUND.

Main Channel to RIGHT. Main Channel to the LEFT.



ISOLATED DANGER. WRECK. Pass Either Side.



Tuesday, June 3rd - 75

The pumpover with Dewdale was the cause of an early start and we were on deck at 05:30.

I was working with the carpenter and we loaded water into the fwd. cargo FW hold and also the after tanks. The water was channelled to the fwd.hold via the ships main water line. One valve on the tank deck had to be shut. While the water was loaded, we kept continuous soundings on it until at 40ft, and then isolated this tank and piped the water via flexible hose to the after hold. Again a regular sounding was kept until the desired quantity had been loaded.

On completion of loading, we coiled and stored the hose and then continued with regular jobs.

June 4th – 75 - NEAR GIB.

After completing the soundings I was on the bridge for the RAS with Blake. The one and a half hour replenishment saw the transfer of FFO and Diesel. Afterwards I continued working with the carpenter, repairing a shower skirting, where water had penetrated between the "pit" and the bulkhead, causing water accumulation in the next room and unnecessary dampness. The original angle boards were removed and the gap caulked and sealed with a non-solidifying water repelling plastic compound. Also to prevent any further water entering, a shedding board was set up.

June 5th – 75 - GIBRALTER.

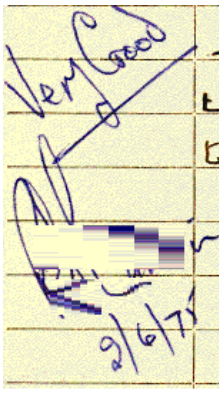
Harbour stations were called just after breakfast and I was on the gangway. The pilot ladder was rigged on the lee side and all the equipment, strop, lifebuoy and heaving line, were on hand for embarkation of the pilot. When alongside, the gangway was lowered and rigged.

In the afternoon I worked with the carpenter, finishing the shower job and undercoating it. I finally secured for the day at 16:45 after the painting was completed.

June 6th – 75 - GIBRALTER.

After sounding the cofferdams and spaces, I cleaned the cabin until 10:30. At this time we were to lower the Ships Boats in accordance with Orders. However, boat 6 was being worked on and only 4 and 2 were lowered to water level. After hoisting inboard again and securing the gripes, we were allowed ashore.

June 7th – 75 - DEPARTS GIBRALTER.



The draft was taken at 07:30 and then harbour stations were called – I was on the focsle. We singled up to one and one fore and aft, and after securing a tug fwd. and aft, we slipped the jetty and were pulled around and out through the breakwater. A rule of the road check was held later in the day and then I did the daily soundings.

Being that I completed a wire splice and strop earlier on, I had the afternoon to myself, and continued to do the correspondence course.

[AUTHOR NOTE: no entry for Sunday 8th June]

June 9th – 75 - NEAR FINNISTAIRE ?

We had early calls at 04:30 for the RAS with Falmouth. The rig was prepared and ready by 05:10 only to learn the replenishment was delayed. Finally we transferred fuel at 08:00. There was a rather heavy swell running today which made winch driving more critical, however there were no serious mishappenings.

On completion of the RAS, we destored the two fwd. boats and they are now ready for replacing.

Juring the afternoon, Port watch cleared up Number Four boat and washed it down.

June 10th – 75 - USHANTE

Port watch had study throughout the day and I continued to get ahead with my correspondence course. The majority of June's lesson was completed, however the project is still outstanding.

We also had signals during the morning including semaphore, which everyone seems to have caught on to quite quickly.

June 11th – 75 - PORTSMOUTH. (Anchorage)

Port watch started to de-store, check and replace the equipment in number six boat and after it was all removed, the boat was brushed and scrubbed free from paint chippings and rust particles. We managed to get a considerable amount done, however anchor stations caused delays and I was on the gangway. The accommodation ladder was finally rigged by noon and the "box" lowered on the red winch, however the block had to be changed first because it was badly damaged.

June 12th – 75 - Z-MOORINGS, PORTSMOUTH

The outside of number six boat was scrubbed down and cleaned prior to entry into Port. At 13:00 the anchor was brought up and the anchor hung off. The Port Cable was pulled clear and prepared for shackling to the buoy. The tugs pulled the ship near the buoy and line boat had a toughmix rope attached to the buoy. When it was secured we hauled up on the rope until it was practical to shackle up the cable. When we secured, the blake slip was placed across the cable, thus taking the weight off the mooring cable capstans.

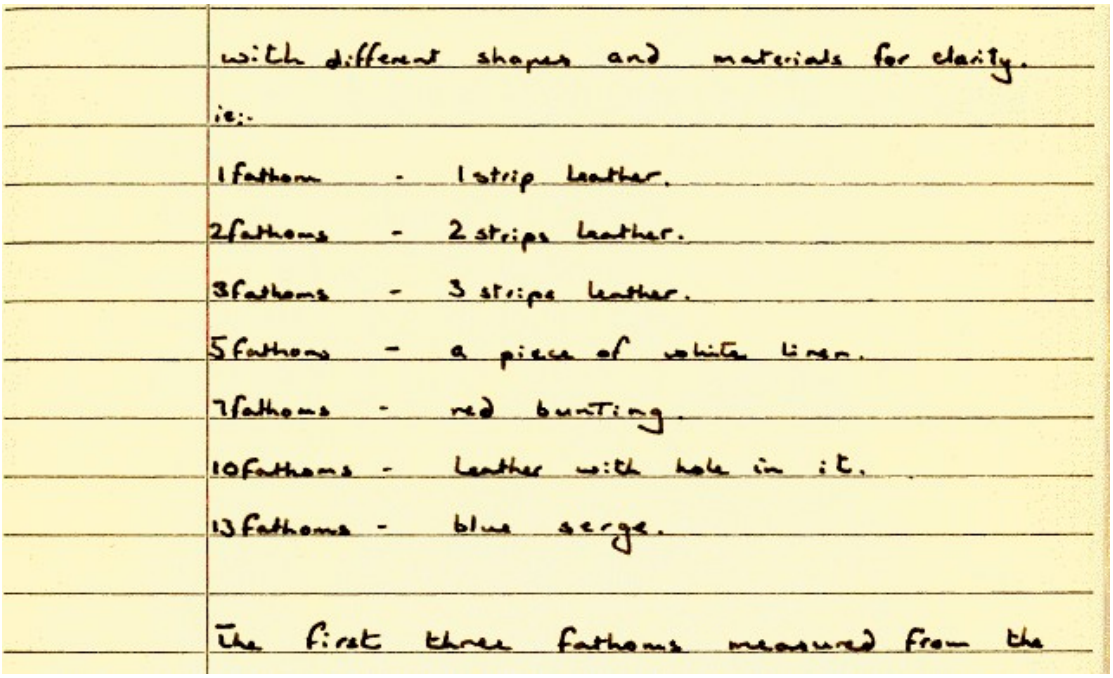
June 13th – 75 - Z-MOORINGS

We reported to the Chief Officer and we worked with the first officer for a couple of hours, before proceeding with a lub.oil cargo watch. We were loading OM 100 and OEP 69 and we had to keep regular sounding checks.

Also, between soundings we cleaned the classroom and finished the life-lines.

The OEP 69 finished during lunch, however the 25 tons of OM 100 were not completed until approx. 14:30, and after shutting down and taking final ullages, we knocked off.

The final remaining task was that of taking soundings around the ship with the hand lead, but this wasn't done until low tide. The leadline is a small rope with a shot of lead attached to it. The rope is marked with different shapes and materials for clarity. ie:



with different shapes and materials for clarity.

ie:-

1 fathom - 1 strip leather.

2 fathoms - 2 strips leather.

3 fathoms - 3 strips leather.

5 fathoms - a piece of white linen.

7 fathoms - red bunting.

10 fathoms - Leather with hole in it.

13 fathoms - blue serge.

The first three fathoms measured from the

The first three fathoms measured from the lead should also be marked in feet with knots.

The different material, either of colour or texture permit rapid recognition.

[AUTHOR NOTE: no entries for Saturday 14th and Sunday 15th June (probably weekend leave after returning home)]

June 16th – 75 - To O.F.J. Gosport.

89% of the cadet training unit returned today and after a brief cabin clean, I was assigned to work on the flight deck. We maintained all the fire hose connections and the nozzles. Afterwards the hangar spray valves were opened, closed and greased and generally maintained. Our final job of the morning was the cleaning of the GPI and removing funnel soot from it.

During the afternoon we greased and checked the external pre-wet valves and instantaneous connections. It was quite evident that they had not been maintained for some time, and the 1" test valve Port Aft, is damaged and of no further use. All other valves etc. were returned to normal working order.

In the evening we moved to Gosport OFJ and my harbour station was on the focsle.

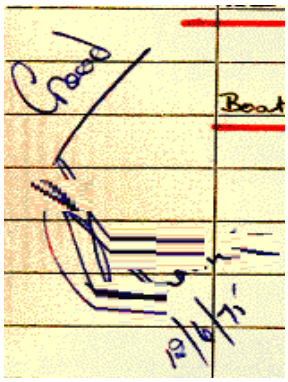
June 17th – 75 - O.F.J. Gosport.

The cadet training unit today went for a sail around the harbour in the lifeboat, using it under oars and under power. After motoring up stream, we shut down and returned in great haste under oar.

Common Terms:-
When a pulling boat is underway, any order to the oarsman is obeyed on completing one full stroke after the order is given. All such orders should be given at the moment when the blades of the oars are in the water. When obeying an order, the crew take their time by the stroke oarsman.

Give Way Together is the order to start pulling.

Oars – cease pulling. Oar blades horizontal and clear of the water.



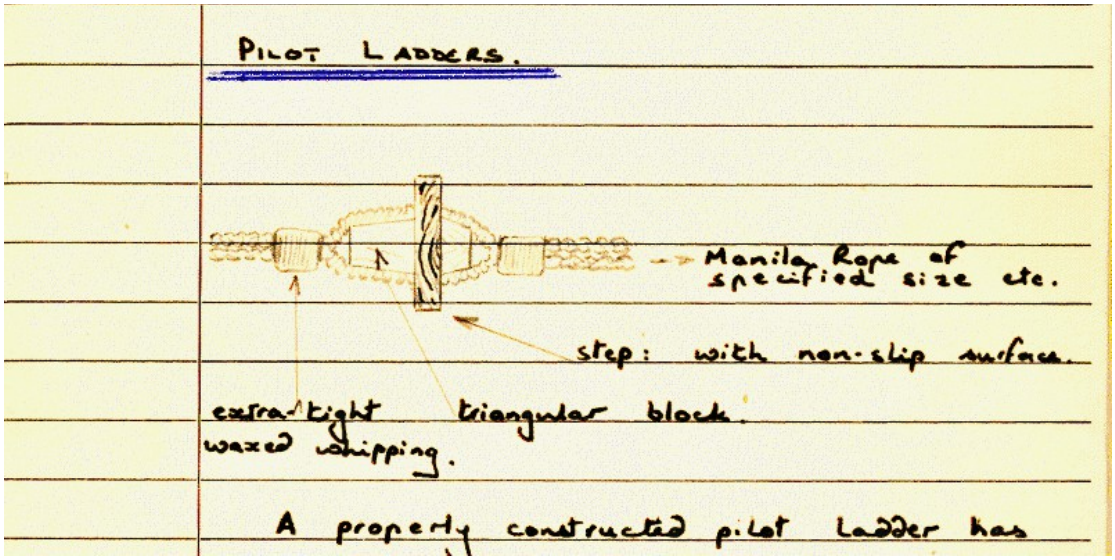
Back Together – backwater together.

Hold Water : oar blades vertical in the water.

Toss Your Oars : oars brought vertically inboard with the loom resting on the bottom boards.

Boat Your Oars : lower down and rest in the boat.

Pilot Ladders.



A properly constructed pilot ladder has to conform with set down specifications which describe step length, spacing and the use of proper triangular wooden blocks. Rope size is critical and the use of spreaders to prevent twisting is laid down.

When making a pilot ladder it is important to make the whipping as tight as possible, because under use the line tends to stretch. The wooden triangular blocks should be fairly small so that, when in use there is sufficient rope between rungs to hold on to.

Should an accident occur while using a pilot ladder, the inquiring board will carefully scrutinize the ladder and check its construction. Any faults will be severely frowned upon – hence painstaking initial assembly is absolutely essential.

[AUTHOR NOTE: no entries between 18th and 22nd June]

June 23rd – 75 - Gosport.

For the first few hours of the morning we worked in the clothing store, to do a complete stock-take and tidy up.

After this, we proceded with fire-hose pressure checks, in which each fire hose is individually pressurised and blocked with a blank coupling. While under full pressure. we examined the hose for any leaks or faults and then noted the results. It proved to be a rather time consuming series of tests because the hoses have to be properly drained and coiled after trial.

The tests continued into Tuesday, however again they were not completed due to a rewarding discussion with the RFA Careers Officers which took up most of the Afternoon.

June 25th – 75

Port watch had study today and Lesson 8, Project nine was finally completed. Immediately after lunch, we all went down into number seven port tank which contains salt water ballast. The actual structure was obviously the same as 7STBD. but this time it was emptied and we were able to see the valve and strum box. We adhered to all the necessary precautions as suggested in the "M" NOTICES and we had safety harnesses and lines on hand, as well as the explosimeter, CABA and mask with bellows. However, we didn't ventilate the tank as it had been recently ballasted and oxygen in the air had not been consumed in this short time.

After having a good look around, Port watch were dismissed and allowed to continue with study.

June 26th – 75 - DEPARTS O.F.J.

This morning we compiled a boat and emergency station muster list, in the manner as suggested by M320.

The allocation of duties was really already laid out and we only had to amend the existing bulletins. The muster organisation boards are posted in common places throughout the ship and there are three in number. In addition to these, there are Section Boards which provide quick reference under any tense conditions.

M320 recommends a clear posting of tasks such as Damage Control, Fire Party etc.

When the muster boards were updated, the Boat Station cards were amended according - each boat has a qualified lifeboatman in charge with a varied group of crew members.

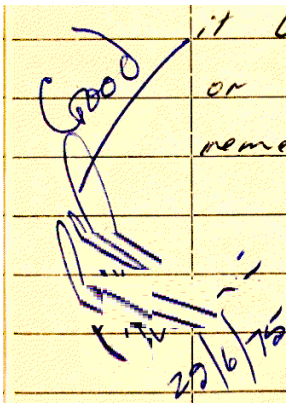
The ship left the OFJ at high tide and I was on the gangway / pilot ladder. The cadet constructed conglomeration! of rope and wood was put to front line use, and didn't give up under its initial use! Victory at the moment of truth!

June 27th – 75 - Portland.

During the morning we pressure checked the flight deck hoses and then went around replacing the damaged equipment, with newly made up hoses.

We had a muster station check in the morning so that the new crew would be familiarised with their emergency positions. An actual fire drill was not staged but it is expected that there will be one soon.

June 28th – 75 - Portland, Torbay, Portland ! + ?



It proved to be a rather upside down day, with the cable party being called out four times in less than 12 hours. The anchor cable is becoming more stubborn every time and it very seldom stows correctly. Normally an excessive build-up of cable forms at the back of the locker and there is no down pulling force, so the chain piles up at the capstan. However after walking it back and heaving it up ten or fifteen times, it usually remedies itself.

[AUTHOR NOTE: no entry for 29th June]

June 30th – 75 - SPITHEAD

This morning the crew muster lists were again updated and then I went on preparing and making the new canvas covers for the access ladders to the lifeboats. This involved a foreward toenail stitch at the ends and a similar stitch to hold the ropes in place. At the end of the day, we had completed the end sewing and also the splices.

The Anchor party were called at 15:30 and we heaved up the anchor and then steamed into 'Z' moorings. The procedure was as before and the tugs took up the same positions as before. We were finally shackled up to the bouy at 18:00.

July 1st – 75 - Pheonix.

Damage Control Course

The introduction to the course was in the form of a lecture in which the theoretical side of Damage Control were covered. An overhead projector was used and the types of shoring and leak stopping were shown.

The normal procedures call for Emergency Stations to close up when there is a likelihood of damage caused by explosion or similar.

When the vessel has been hit, two men search parties are sent out to locate possible damage and then report to headquarters.

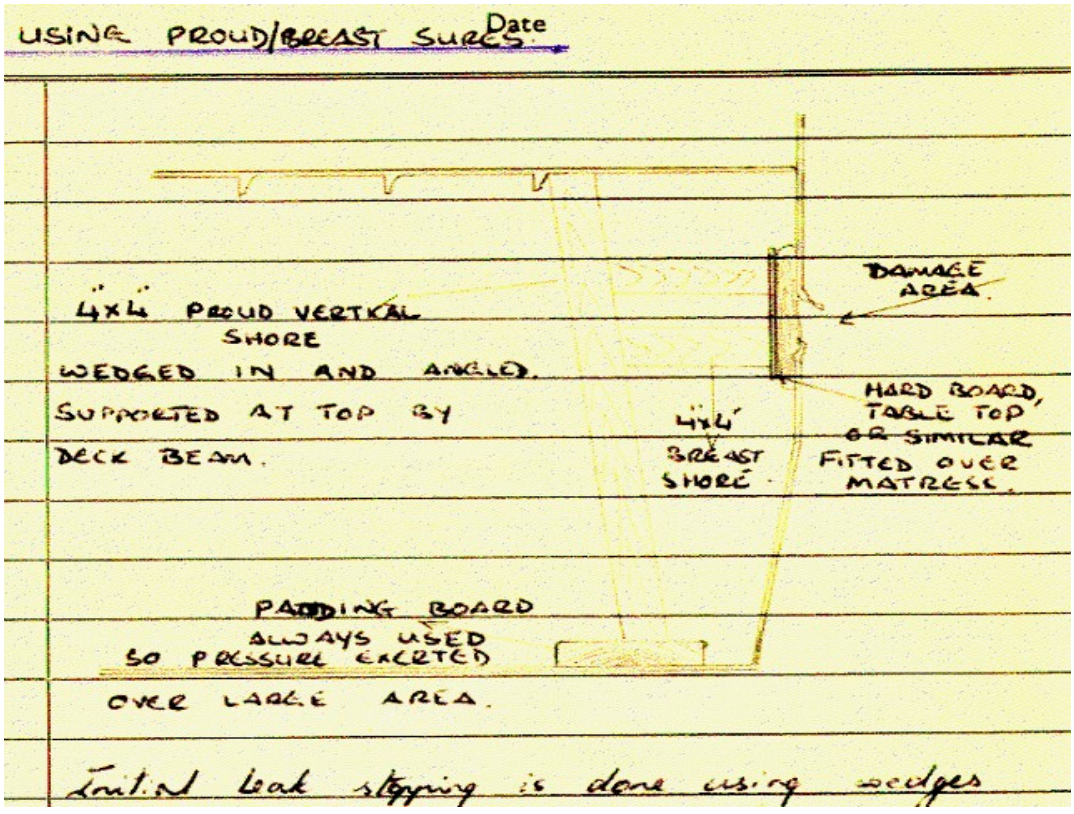
The original party only carries a small first-aid kit containing soft wood wedges and a hammer. They are expected to slow the incoming water but not stop it.

On reporting back, the officer in charge allocates 2/3 of the available personel to attend to leaks, while the remainder continues preparing all the equipment.

(classifications)

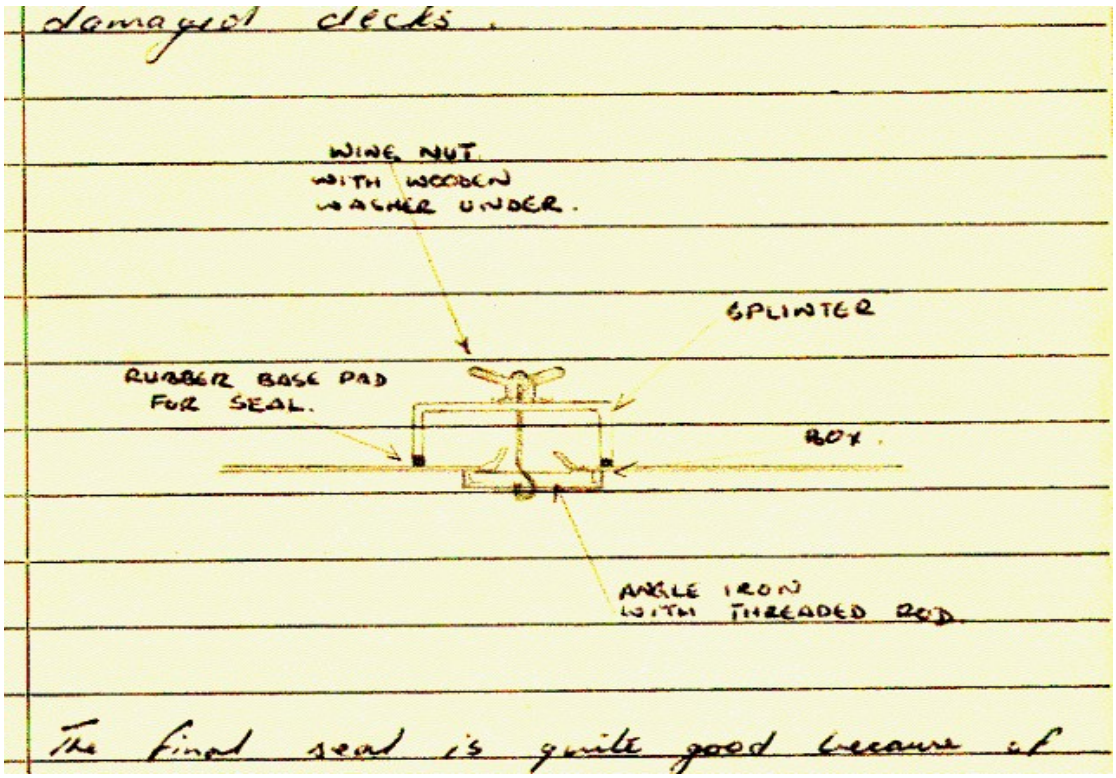
There are various sections of leak types, ranging from splinter holes to extensive hull plate damage. Each type of problem is tackled in an individual way.

USING PROUD / BREAST SURES



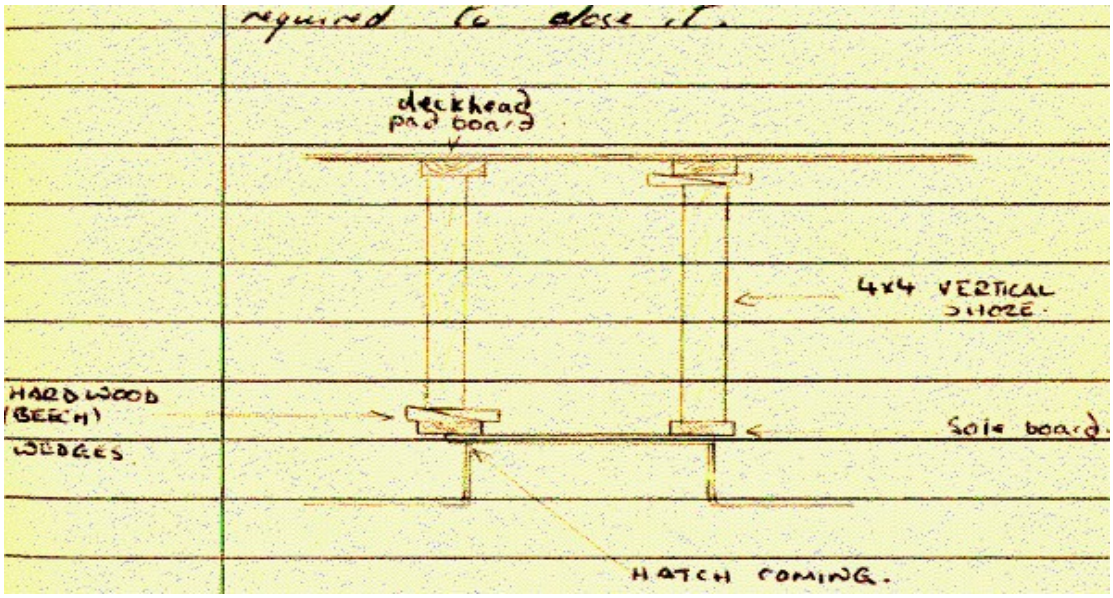
Initial leak stopping is done using wedges but as time permits, the stronger shores are prepared. The distances and measurements are made with gunter batons. The 4 x 4 is then cut to length and put in. The pad piece is put in initially and then the vertical shore is wedged in by pushing it solidly against the deck beam and pad. A mattress is placed over the hole end and then a solid board. These are held in place by breast shores.

The use of splinter boxes is very effective especially if fitted with a screwed rod. They are ideal for damaged decks.



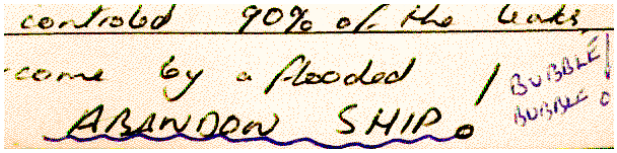
The final seal is quite good because of the rubber base of the splinter box. They come in three main sizes and are suited for most damaged areas up to 1ft square.

The other major type of shoring is that for damaged hatches. Often a hatch will not close properly and pressure is required to close it.



During the simulator exercise we used all the techniques and used rubber padding as well. Water gushed in from all directions and although we controled 90% of the leaks, we were overcome by a flooded compartment.

ABANDON SHIP !



July 2nd – 75 - Z-MOORINGS

FLAG USEAGE

The International Code of Signals allows essential communication by radio, morse or flag to all ships, even those who speak foreign languages.

GENERAL PROCEDURE

To call a station, the identity signal is used, otherwise it is understood that the message is addressed to all within visual distance.

The receiving station then acknowledges by putting the ANSWERING PENNANT at the dip and when the message is understood, the AP is hauled close up. As the dip is replaced by the close up , the XMITTING station lowers the hoist and then sends the next. The DIP / CLOSE UP procedure is used again.

To illustrate the last hoist, the A.P. is also hauled up by the XMITTING station.

If a signal hoist is not clearly understood, the Receiving Station hoists:-
ZQ: Your signal appears incorrectly coded.
ZL: Signal received but not understood.

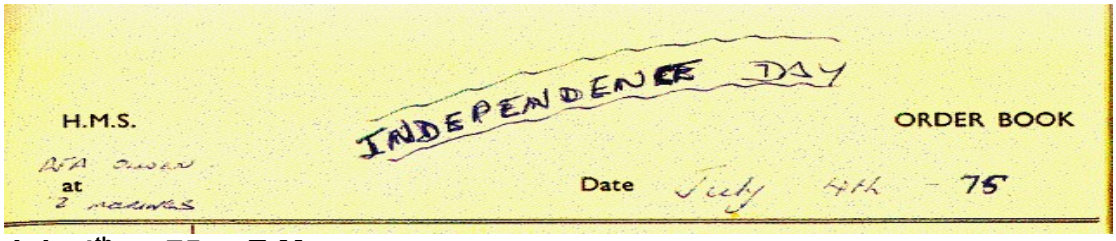
July 3rd – 75 - Z-MOORINGS

We started by preparing tank cleaning equipment and then set it all up.

The Victor Pyrate Machine was put on the specially designed hose, and lowered 10ft, by rope, into the tank (in three steps, once an hour to thirty feet).

The hose was connected into the Butterworth Tank Cleaning System and the water was pumped through at 165°F, mixed with steam.

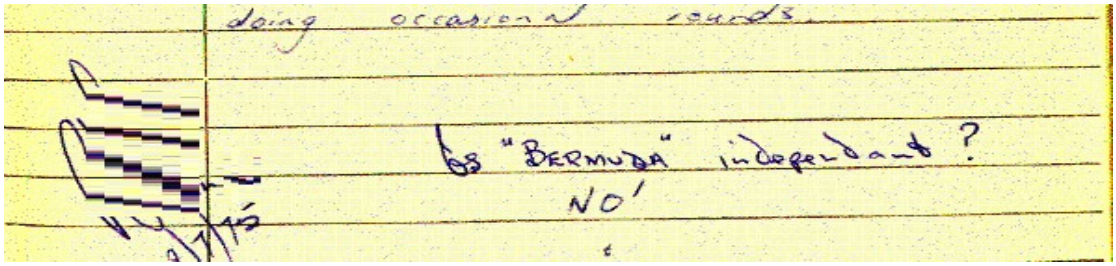
The stripping pump was taking out the accumulating water and pumping it into a barge. The tank has been opened up and will now cool and be ventilated overnight.



July 4th – 75 - Z-MOORINGS

After the usual Friday routines (cabin clean etc), Port watch had signals, today both Semaphore and morse.

Over the weekend the CTU were given weekend leave and I returned on Saturday. A group of us went sailing and afterwards I did OOD. duties which involved upkeep of the logs, meeting boats and doing occasional rounds.



July 7th – 75 - PORTSMOUTH

The weekly routine is that of greasing and we promptly started work on the after davits, greasing generally and maintaining the butterfly gripe nuts.

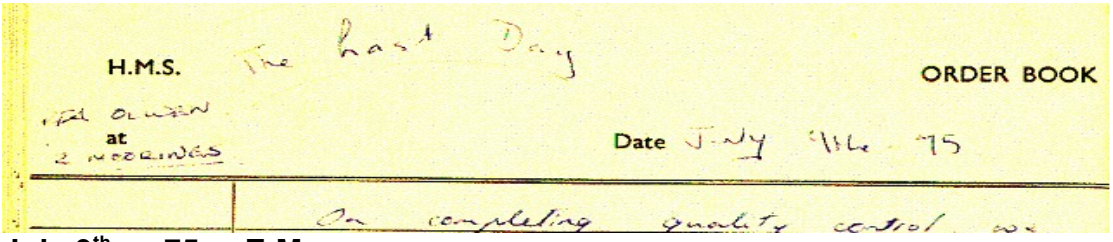
The job was to last all day and we managed to complete two full sets of davits.

In the evening I worked on my Navigation Correspondance Course.

July 8th – 75 - Z-MOORINGS

I spent the day doing the outstanding greasing, record book tasks such as maintenance, capstans and associated machinery. It proved a rather in depth job, as some of the grease nipples were missing or damaged, and had to be replaced.

In the afternoon I started some of the winches, but did not finish until 15:00 and then semaphore and morse were staged.



July 9th – 75 - Z-MOORINGS

On completing quality control, we prepared the bosuns dingy for sailing; this again for the record books.

Away we went at 09:00 and sailed in the area near the ship until nearly 11:00 when there was a crew change. I went in the lifeboat and practised some rowing and crewing.

In the afternoon, this continued and we rowed and motored around the harbour. The boat was hauled up at 15:30 and after washing it down, we secured it and finished for the day.

What happened next ?

The last entry in the Journal was for 9th July so the following is based on a combination of fact and recollection - it may not be 100% accurate.

I left RFA Olwen a week or so before the CTU broke up. This was because CTO Lannin had 'secretly' negotiated a transfer to RFA Lyness which was in Plymouth and was going to be sailing South again - with Bermuda (my home) being the next port of call. RFA Lyness berthed in the old Bermuda Dockyard – HMS Malabar – on 23rd July 1975 and this was within walking distance of where I lived. I was "paid off" and took leave.

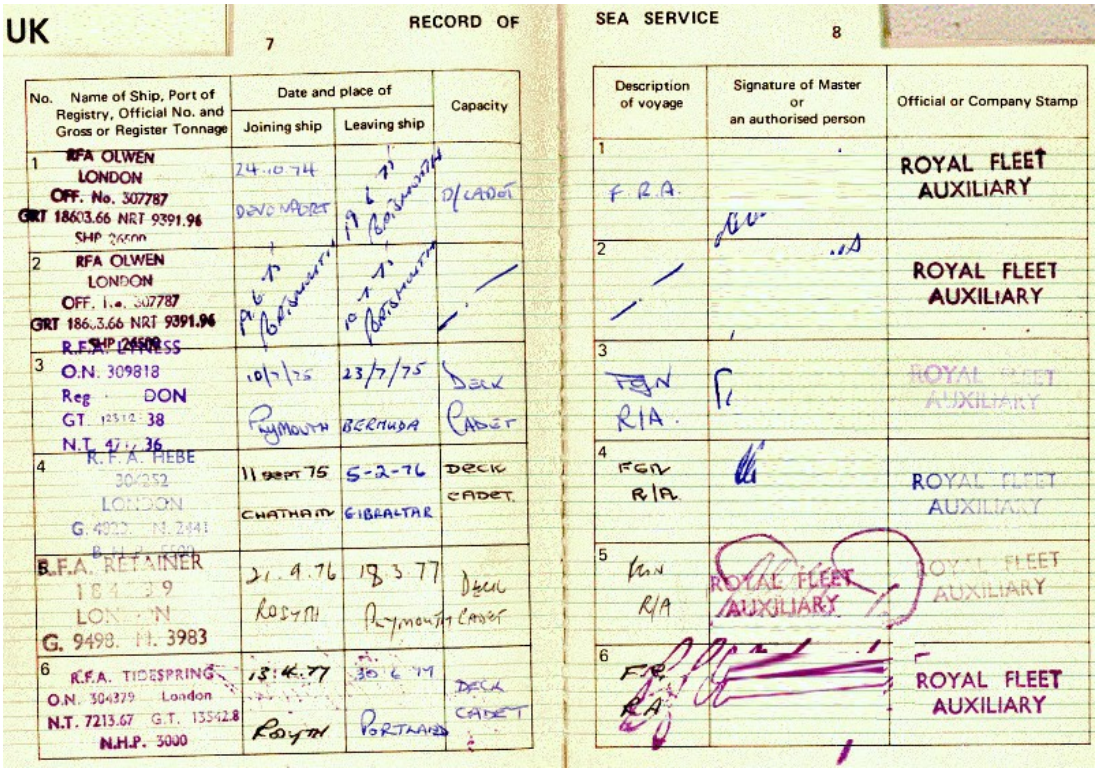
My 1st Trip experience was my longest period away from home, totalling 312 days. The nearest I came to Bermuda in that time was in January, when Olwen passed approx. 75 miles ESE as we were headed South. The R/Os allowed me into the shack to listen to the Bermuda commercial radio stations ZBM and ZFB.

After approx. 7 weeks leave, I returned to the UK and joined RFA Hebe on 11th Sept in Chatham to resume the "Initial Sea Period".

My training programme as a deck cadet was:

C. TRAINING PROGRAMME

Agreement: Period 3 years 6 months Commencing SEPT 30TH 1974	
Induction Course: COLLEGE RIVERSDALE, Liverpool. Signature of Principal/Head of Dept.	From SEPT. 30TH. To OCT. 11TH -74.
Initial Sea Period	From 24 OCTOBER -74 To 05 FEB -76
Phase I: COLLEGE	From 9 FEB -76 To 2 JULY -76
Phase II: Intermediate Sea Period	From 04 JULY -76 To 30 JUNE 77
Phase III: COLLEGE	From 11 JULY -77 To 17 MARCH-78
Final Sea Period	From 06 JUNE 78 To



UK 7 RECORD OF SEA SERVICE 8

No.	Name of Ship, Port of Registry, Official No. and Gross or Register Tonnage	Date and place of Joining ship	Date and place of Leaving ship	Capacity
1	RFA OLWEN LONDON OFF. No. 307787 GRT 18603.66 NRT 9391.96 SHP 26500	24.10.74 DEVONPORT	[illegible]	D/CADET
2	RFA OLWEN LONDON OFF. No. 307787 GRT 18603.66 NRT 9391.96 R.F.A. [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	
3	O.N. 309818 Reg DON GT. 12512 38 N.T. 47[illegible]36	10/7/75 PLYMOUTH	23/7/75 BERMUDA	DECK CADET
4	R.F.A. HEBE 30/252 LONDON G. 4022 N. 2441	11 SEPT 75 CHATHAM	5-2-76 GIBRALTAR	DECK CADET
5	R.F.A. RETAINER 18[illegible]29 LON[illegible]N G. 9498 N. 3983	21.9.76 ROSYTH	18.3.77 PLYMOUTH	DECK CADET
6	R.F.A. TIDESPRING O.N. 304379 London N.T. 7213.67 G.T. 13542.8 N.H.P. 3000	13.4.77 ROSYTH	30.6.77 PORTLAND	DECK CADET

	Description of voyage	Signature of Master or an authorised person	Official or Company Stamp
1	F.R.A.	[illegible]	ROYAL FLEET AUXILIARY
2	/	[illegible]	ROYAL FLEET AUXILIARY
3	FGN R/A.	[illegible]	ROYAL FLEET AUXILIARY
4	FGN R/A	[illegible]	ROYAL FLEET AUXILIARY
5	FGN R/A	ROYAL FLEET AUXILIARY	ROYAL FLEET AUXILIARY
6	F.R. R.A.	[illegible]	ROYAL FLEET AUXILIARY

After approx. 3½ years, I completed an OND in Nautical Science and got my 2nd Mates Foreign Going Certificate. My first trip as 3rd Officer was in RFA Bacchus.

I remained in the RFA until October 1984 and my last ship was RFA Tidespring, serving as Junior 2nd Officer.

CTU Crew List

CTO PJ Lannin:
from Devon
… **Commodore, RFA 1999 ~ 2003** - the most senior position in the service.

I only met up with other CTU cadets on a few occasions after July 1975.
2 of us did OND and the rest did ONC so we were at college at different times.

John Burrows:
from Leeds
… Capt. RFA (source: facebook)

Simon Conran:
from Bury St.Edmunds
… 3/O RFA (source: rfanostalgia)
… left RFA in 1987
… 2013: mate with Cemex Marine (UK coastal)

Barry Dixon:
from Bermuda
… did Mates and Masters in Bristol / Cardiff
… left RFA in 1984 to do degree in System Analysis
… 1986 ~ 2014: IT related activities. (source: author)

Ed Durkin:
from Gloucestershire ?
… went to north-east Scotland and worked 'Offshore' (source: deduction)
… still applies IMO Rule-12 on a regular basis when in "*Wylo Too*"

Vernon B. Ramsay-Smith:
from Royal Leamington Spa
… youngest and most ambitious cadet in the CTU
… smoked more than a chimney
… followed the OND 'path'
… noughties: Capt. RFA (source: YouTube)
… 2013: Capt. Interislander, New Zealand

Nick Sarel:
from somewhere posh ?
… a keen glider
… really wanted to be in the Fleet Air Arm
… what happened next = unknown – probably something aviation related.

Martin Harper:
from UK City of Culture, 2017 (aka 'ull)
… Chief Officer RFA (~1994 – 2003 (source: rfanostalgia and historicalrfa))
… 2004: UK MAIB
… 2012: Marine Standards Manager at Interislander, New Zealand.

John K. Stoker:
from The Midlands
… oldest cadet in the CTU
… left the RFA after 1st Trip.
… went into forestry ? (source: rumour)

Dave Waters:
… what happened next = unknown
… possibly went to New Zealand.
