

Allocated time and date: 1315 on 15th June 2015

Examiner: Hilliard

Examinee: AS

Duration: 1hr 10 mins

Result: Pass

I buzzed into the building at around 1300 and by 1305 Hilliard had come to get me; he spent the first 5 minutes going through my passport and discharge book whilst filling out paperwork. My driving licence had slipped into my passport, he said "I'll give you that back otherwise you could lose all you're ID at once and smiled" I fake laughed, probably too much. He asked me what type of ships I had been on and I just told him passenger ships; not wanting to start the questioning flowing too early. He noticed that one of my ships was British flagged and I thought here we go but he only asked me which company it was owned by. He then moved onto my TRB. He flicked through the pages, stopping to read my appraisals from my DSTO and Safety Officer before moving onto the particulars of my last ship. He seemed to spend a lot of time looking through these before saying things like "this bunker consumption is quite high" and 'how does that work out?". At this point I thought the guy in the carpark could probably hear my heart beating out of my chest. He then asked my first question...

So your ship had a gross tonnage of 107, 517 t. What does that mean?

It says here that you had a deadweight of 10000t, what's that?

On this one I gave an answer regarding cargo, stores and in my case passengers. I mention the difference between light displacement and load displacement...my first mistake.

So how is this figure calculated? Your light displacement is constant, but your load displacement is always changing so where does your deadweight figure come from? Eventually I got to load displacement calculated using Summer Draught and he moved on.

It says you had 12 immersion suits. Tell me about them?

How long are they supposed to be effective for?

He then took my nav & ops book and started flicking through that pretty much page by page. He got to a report on enclosed space entry...tell me about the procedure for maintenance on one of your potable water tanks(looking for enclosed space entry)?

Which toxic gases would you be testing for?

How would you test for them?

Your tank has a depth of 6m, how would you test the atmosphere at the bottom of the tank?

He then got to my passage planning section of my nav & ops; what would you mark on your chart?

Instantly skipped to planning stage and gave the standard answer.

He then told me to put my TRB and workbook away, I placed them to the side...apparently not good enough so back in the bag they went.

What on you're bridge tells you about squat?

What is squat?

What would you expect to happen if the ship is experiencing squat?

What would you tell your helmsman to do?

He was looking for allowing him to use more rudder.

How often would you do a compass error?

So you have a 2 week passage across the pacific ocean, what errors could you expect to see in your compass from staying on a single course for such a long time?

I had no idea, so I said some crap about it getting stuck on a heading. He wasn't impressed. I then said about changes in Variation as we cross the ocean, assuming we were talking about a magnetic compass. Again not what he was looking for. I'd pretty much given in at this point but he wasn't having any of it and kept pushing.

He then starting giving examples: your first compass error is 4 degrees. You take another 10 minutes later, 6 degrees.

I said call the captain, error with navigational equipment.

Master is on the bridge, he tells you to take another. 8 degrees error. What could be causing it?

I had no idea, kept going on about variation and deviation. Then he said: "on a gyro compass?!"

I was lost, didn't know which compass or what he was asking.

Tell me about how a gyro compass works?

I said I had fibre optic. He said he'd ask about that later, first conventional. I said the word precession a lot. He wasn't impressed.

How does it say pointing north?

Precession?...not going well.

So no gyro, what do you do?

Switch to other gyro.

No second gyro?

Switch all equipment with gyro inputs to another source.

How would you position fix? No gyro, no GPS.

I said Cel Nav, just hoping we'd get away from compasses.

How would you position fix using magnetic compass?

I said apply your var and dev to get true bearing and use that with conspicuous land marks.

He probably asked even more questions about compasses, but I can't remember them all. It was a traumatic time. The message is learn your compasses. Know them inside out, and all the errors.

After what felt like a lifetime, he moved on, safe in the knowledge that my compass knowledge isn't what it should be.

You see a fog bank 4 miles away. Actions?

When would you start your fog signalling? Before being in restricted vis or once in it?
I said before, to indicate to other vessels that may not be able to see me.

How far away would you expect your fog signal to travel?
I said 2 miles...

In all conditions?
Erm.

In what condition would you expect it to travel 2 miles?
Clear????

Have you navigated in fog?
I said not on watch(lying). He told me that it travels different distances depending on the conditions.

Your vessel is rolling heavily. Actions?
I said I'd put the waves just off my bow, on the quarter.

Quarter? Where is the quarter?
SHOULDER sorry shoulder. (ahh shit)

The wind is Easterly, seas are on your beam. What course would you steer?
I said East by South, he seemed happy enough and moved on.

You receive an urgency message, what does this mean?

Launch an FRC.

Tell me about what you'd expect to find on a new lifejacket.
I told him everything I could think of, apparently it was only the old stuff, none of the new requirements of what you'd expect to find on a life jacket.

What is the minimum weight for an adult lifejacket?

Child?

Infant?

Passenger ships have WTD. How would you use them correctly?

Blackout. Can you still use them?

Smartie Board

Tug and tow over 200m, 3 points on port bow. Showing stbd light. Actions?

Quoted rule 7.

Bearing steady, range reducing.

Stand on with caution.

He's not taking appropriate action.

Quoted rule 17.

Took the smartie board away. What would you do now? Who would you report this to?

Eventually got to MAIB.

Where could you find the info of the vessel and what happened?

AIS? ITU?

What equipment on the bridge?

VDR, save it.

Board back out. Pilot vessel 2 points to port showing green.

Same again.

Radar plot. 6 mile range. 3 plots over 12 mins. Own speed 3kts. Gave me parallel rules, pencil, calculator, dividers. Its there risk of collision? Actions.

Yes. She was just fwd of my beam and slightly faster than me. Broad alteration of course to stud.

Aspect?

I said I'd see red port light.

What's the calculation?

I went quiet.

He took the plot away. I'd won this one.

Models:

Narrow channel, vessel overtakes you on you port side and then starts to cross your bow. Actions.

Said overtaking can't become a crossing. Sound 5 short and call the master.

Bouyage:

He placed 2 preferred channel marks and all cardinal marks without top marks inform of me. He gave me the direction of north and that I was heading into port. He

asked me to put the top marks on the cardinal marks and navigate accordingly past each buoy. They weren't in anyway near the right order which was a bit confusing but as I passed the last buoy I saw him write pass on my NOE. Get in.

I might have missed some questions but just make sure you're prepared and you'll be fine. You can afford to make some mistakes, as you can see above, but so long as your ROR and buoyage is solid you should be fine. Confidence is key, and you'll never be prepared for everything. I was only asked about the smallest amount of what I knew, and he managed to pick out all the subjects I wasn't so confident on. It happens, just don't let it throw you for the important stuff at the end.

Thanks to all the lecturers for helping out during Oral Prep. Special thanks to J Ward for all his advice and support throughout and Tom Jowett for sparing his time.