

**Date:** 2<sup>nd</sup> July 2015

**Time:** 0915

**Examiner:** Nowshad Jobair

**Examinee:** NC

**Training Company:** Trinity House – Chiltern Maritime

**Duration:** 1 hour 20 minutes in the exam room, about 1 hourish of exam time

**Result:** PASSED!

Turned into a bit of a story I'm afraid, but I have tried to portray the whole of the experience. When it comes to the questions, he will start by asking about something, but then there will be a load of little questions that tag on to it, which he will ask in succession afterwards. He will pick up on things you've said and come back to them a few questions down the line too. The first question and RoR questions are the only ones I've remembered in order, the rest aren't in order as they came, just as I remembered them.

With my exam being first in the morning, I decided to travel down the evening before. Stayed at the Lakeside Adventure Center, as there was no room in the nun-house. It was in a beautiful location, my window overlooked the coast and a huge lake, massive room, massive bed, massive breakfast, quite a pleasant little number it was! It is also closer to the MCA Office than the nun-house too. When I arrived in Liverpool the night before, I checked into the hotel, and then went and met up with Brook at Wethers for food and a swifty bevvy. I would recommend getting out of wherever it is you stay (if you stay), even if it's just for an hour. We talked rubbish completely unrelated to Orals for a while, and then ran through a few questions for 20mins or so. Really helped me chill out, and also made me realise that I do know stuff, and to stop stressing about the stuff I didn't, because it was too late to learn it by that point, all you can do is polish your answers. Anyway, once we left Wethers it was time for the dry run to the MCA office, had a quick scope of the place and figured out what the craic was. Drove back to the hotel, and by this point I was flagging. The weeks of stress and study were starting to finally catch up and I knew I needed to sleep. Had one last flick through the rules and hit the hay. Was woken up about 2am by a bird hopping about on my bed that had gotten in through the window, chased him out and got some more kip. Woke up feeling refreshed about 5ish after what felt like one of the best nights sleep I'd had in weeks. I also felt oddly serene, and far too calm. But this was to be short lived. Got showered and ready, had a last flick through some notes over breakfast and then went and put my 90s power-suit on. And it was at this point, when I looked in the mirror, suited and booted and ready, that I realized what was happening, and had a major panic and flap, and this feeling didn't really wear off until an hour or so after the exam!! Then it was time to get in the car and drive to the MCA office...

Arrived there in plenty of time. Sat in the car on the front trying to get a handle of my nerves and shakes, trying to remember the Rules of the Road of all things! At 9am I made my way to the entrance and they let me in and took my phone, told me my examiner would be with me shortly and to take a seat. Whilst I was waiting, I was scoping the waiting room, reading stuff on the walls that might potentially help!? I had no idea how, but it settled me a little. Then at 0915 prompt, Captain Jobair open the door and greeted me. Seeing his little chirpy face made me relax instantly. I followed him into the exam room, and he asked for my passport, discharge book, TRB and workbooks. He asked about my ships, and he was intrigued that I had been on 5 completely different ships, so we spent nearly half an hour chatting about that! Helped me relax, until he went all Jekyll and Hyde on me! He completely changed once the exam started.

He kicked off the exam by saying that he was going to be following MGN 69 and if I was familiar. He then started the questioning by opening my workbook at a random page and questioning me on what was in front of him. So here we go...

- DSC: What is? What info does it send? How do you send them?

- MMSI numbers: How many digits? Info the number can give you?
- Receive a DSC distress alert: Actions all areas?
- GMDSS log book: What does it contain? Entries?
- GMDSS Checks: Daily? Weekly? Monthly? How do you do them all?
- Differences between EPIRB and SART?
- Why are VHF handheld batteries kept separate?
- Setting up the bridge for departure?
- Echo Sounder: How to set up? Depth Below Keel? Depth of Water? Not getting a reading, what could this be? GAIN!! So what is gain? What other things could affect the readings or returns?
- Radar: How to set up? What is tuning? How to tune in coastal and deep sea areas? What is Rain/Gain/Sea? How to set R/G/S? Ground/Sea Stabilised?
- Steering Gear: tests before departure? How they're conducted? Monthly checks? Engineers checks? Comms? Type of SG? How it worked? Pumps? Tripping the pumps? Follow up? Non follow up? Autopilot? Parameters that you check? Hard over to hard over in 28s on 1 pump.
- When would you call the Master?
- Actions on sighting Landfall? Would it make changes to how you conducted your watch?
- Sailing directions: info obtained? How would they specifically help on sighting landfall? How would you know they're up to date?
- Weekly, Cumulative and Annual Notice to Mariners: what are they and what they contain? How do you use them onboard?
- Gave me a gyro error to calculate.
- Place a synoptic chart in front of me. Ask what it is? What it shows? And asked what the wind direction was at a certain point he had marked on the chart.
- You are on watch on a general cargo vessel, loading heavy lifts using the ships derrick: Actions on Cargo/ Deck Watch? What would you need to pay particular attention to when loading these lifts? What is the most critical point of the stability whilst loading the heavy lifts from the shore? Why?
- You mentioned COSWP in relation to PPE/PPC, where does COSWP come from? What other info does it contain?
- You mentioned SWL, Permits to Work and Risk Assessments: What are they? Why we have them?
- You mentioned ISM Code, What is it? Why we have it? SMS? DPA? DOC? SMC? Interim Cert? Wanted the full Shabang.
- You are taking over the watch, what are your actions and expectations during handover?
- You are on watch, see a man on the F'csls fall over board, actions?
- Williamsons turn? Pros and Cons? Alternatives? Scharnov and Anderson? Explain?
- You are on watch, fire alarm goes off, actions?
- Master relieves you to go and lead a fire team, actions? BA Checks? Asked a question about bottles sizes and pressures and if they vary? What info would be given in the brief? Door entry procedure?

#### Buoyage:

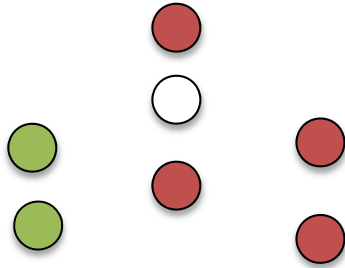
- Starboard hand Special Mark
- Starboard hand Lateral preferred channel Port (Region A)
- Port hand Lateral Mark (Region A)
- Isolated Danger
- West Cardinal

#### RoR:

- V/L crossing on my stbd side? Actions?
- Moved V/L 1 point abaft my beam on my stbd side? Same again.
- V/L overtaking me open water? My actions?
- V/L crossing from port, actions. He doesn't take action. My subsequent actions. (Nowshad loves the 5 short + light, call captain, call ECR + get engines on stby, nav risk assessment, man on the wheel, etc.)
- Asked if my actions would change if it was a very large vessel? I said no not if he wasn't displaying any shapes. Asked what shapes would change it?
- RAM, what is it?
- RAM crossing from port? Actions?

### Smartie Board:

- Vessel engaged in trawling, stbd aspect, no additional lights. Day shapes? Fog signal? 2 points on port bow, actions?
- Vessel probably more than 50m, engaged in towing, length of tow over 200m, stbd aspect. Day Shapes? Fog Signal? 2 points on port bow, actions? When would there be a change of responsibilities with this vessel?
- Vessel probably over 50m at anchor. Day shapes? Fog Signal? Dead ahead, actions?
- Then he gave me this...



I said: vessel RAM, engaged in underwater operations, underway, not making way. He firstly asked how I knew it was underwater ops and what these could consist of. Then asked how I knew it was underway? Went on about masthead and side/stern lights. He repeated the question? I repeated the answer. He did not look impressed, I was bricking it!! He then asked me to define underway. I did, and I still hadn't twigged it. Asked me if RAM shows anchor lights, I said no. And I still didn't twig. He thrust the smartie board at me again and asked me what it was. I gave the same answer... Still hadn't twigged... Still bricking it!

He slammed the smartie board on the table, huffed and puffed, sat back down and picked up my NOE. He sat looking at it for a while and then used his hand to cover it whilst he wrote his decision it. Once he had finished writing, he slipped my NOE back into his book. I didn't even have chance to catch a glimpse at what he'd put. Safe to say at this point I was proper panicking, on the verge of have a full on strop! He sat and starred at me for what felt like ages. He then asked me to recite Rule 6. I was completely shocked, could hardly talk, and managed to get a few words out whilst I had my head in my hands. Once I stumbled my way through the rule and finished, he asked me to recite rule 8. Panic and despair had turned to rage!! I spat the rule out, and after I had finished he said that I had had a really good exam, he had no worries or concerns or suggestions about anything he'd asked, that is up until the last question. My heart sank to my stomach. He then pulled out a copy of the rules and asked me to read out loud and explain: Vessels NUC or RAM Rule 27 d iii: *when at anchor, the lights or shapes prescribed in this paragraph shall be exhibited instead of the lights or shapes prescribed in Rule 30, Vessels at anchor/aground.* That's when I twigged what he was getting at; you can't tell if those lights were underway or not!! I felt like a right idiot, and I was kicking myself! I had no Restricted Visibility or Radar Plots.

He then turned into happy jolly Nowshad from college and told me that I had passed rather flippantly, and I fell off my chair. I was convinced that last question had done me in! He shook my hand, went and sorted paperwork and when he came back I was still pretty shocked. It was at this point I looked at my watch and realized I had been in nearly 1hr 20min!! However we did waste quite a bit at the start, so I guess it was only really about an hour of exam time. Felt like it dragged, but flew by at the same time.

Everyone raves about the nun-voodoo that you get when you stay in the nun-house, I personally think it adds more pressure, and was much happier staying elsewhere. Nun-Voodoo WILL NOT ensure you pass your orals. Only you can do that. Pull your finger out and put the work in and you should have no issues at all. Listen to Wardy, he is the Orals Yoda afterall, he's done this many times before and knows the score. Listen to him, do as he says, and again, you'll sail through!!

It's really not a nice experience, but once that CoC drops through the door or you're on the way home after all the slog you've put in to get it, it will all be worth it! Chin up, dig deep and you'll surprise yourself with the answers you come out with when you're in there! You'll be just chipper!!

Big thanks to Wardy, Jowett, Craig, Mcnamme, Sayed, and everyone else who helped get us through, couldn't have done it without you all and your help! Cheers to all the class too, it's been an emotional 3 years and I can't believe it's all coming to an end! Those of you left to go through, best of luck!  
But now its time to find a job haha!!