

ORALS REPORT – MM

Examiner – Capt. Jobair

Liverpool MCA office – 1045 – 11.06.2015

Time – 1 hour 10 minutes

Stayed the night before at the Nunnery, didn't find them to be as pleasant and soothing as everyone makes out but other than that it was fine. Drove along to Crosby for 1015, rang the bell 15 minutes before and waited in the reception.

At 1045 precisely Cpt. Jobair came out and told me to follow him. After he took me to the room he took my passport, discharge book and sea service testimonials and scanned through them, asked a few questions about my last ship and filled some forms. This seemed to take about 5-10 minutes. Then the questions started.

- How do you plan a passage Liverpool to Charleston?
APEM. First I mentioned general advice in SOLAS, SMS, Chart 5500 series, Bridge procedures guide then gave what I thought was a good answer for Appraisal. Probably about two minutes, listed considerations about vessel, crew, navigational aids, all publications I could think of, then tried to move on to Planning. He stopped me several times saying "What else?" until I said I couldn't remember. (After I got out I remembered ALRS and tides but I can't think of anything else. At the end he said my appraisal description had been weak)
- What's in the weekly notices to mariners?
- What's in the annual?
- What's in IMO guide to ship's routeing?
- What's the difference between routeing chart and guide?
- Name everything you find on a routeing chart?
- Wind roses? (Wanted everything)
I was a bit shaky on most of this, he wanted more from every question.
- Stood up and moved to the binnacle, the arrow was pointing up on the azimuth ring, asked what this meant?
- How often do you take a compass error?
- Sextant out, got me to read an angle on then off the arc.
- Non-adjustable errors? That particular sextant had an adjustment screw on the telescope so after listing told him collimation was adjustable on this sextant. He seemed happy for the first time.
- What is zenith distance? Gave a pretty bollocks answer. He looked unhappy again.
- What are GHA and LHA? I explained about Westerly longitude from Greenwich to the body, then from the body to us. Apparently this is wrong, I thought it was the right answer but he told me at the end of the exam to brush up Cel-Nav.

- So back on the ship, who does the familiarisation tour? What do you get shown on your familiarisation tour?

When I got to survival craft he stopped me and followed that tack for a while.

- Why do you have liferafts for'd?
 - What capacity were your lifeboats?
 - Where would you find out? I Said S.E.C., forgot it's also marked on the boat
 - How often do you have to manoeuvre your boats on the water?
 - Talk me through it. (Gave him the whole procedure like a champ inc. risk assessment, PTW, FPDs brake test etc.) At one point he stopped me and asked about the new SOLAS amendments covering release hooks. I admitted I didn't know but managed to placate him with a thorough explanation of the Nadiro drop-in ball system I had sailed with.
 - What is the purpose of the on-load release system?
 - Moved on to extinguisher, what are the dangers of CO2?
-
- So, you spend some time on the bridge, what GMDSS checks do you do? Gave him daily, weekly, monthly with short explanation of each.
-
- You mentioned a SART, what would you see on the Radar? Which Radar?
-
- Difference between X band and S band? Which is better for navigation? Which is better in rain? Which is better at range?
-
- Radar performance standards?
-
- How would you set up a radar? Stopped me at Gain and asked what it was, gave a shaky but correct (I think) answer. Then moved to tuning where he stopped me and asked about tuning. I said frequency, to which he said "FREEEEquency!?" and I changed my mind and said I didn't know. Then talked about the clutters.
-
- You're on watch, MOB Stbd side actions?
-
- Why did you do a single turn? Are there any others?
-
- When would you use a Williamson turn?
-
- You are at sea and have a man on the wheel, says he's having trouble keeping a course. What could cause this? I said external forces, wind/sea on the beam etc. He moved on but he might have wanted more.
-
- You're on a bulk carrier loading iron ore, what do you think the stability will be like?
-
- What do you mean by stiff? How would the ship behave?

- What's a negative GM?
- Tell me about the ISM code? Gave a pretty good answer, IMO mandatory code, SOLAS Chp IX, Herald of Free Enterprise, Estonia, came into force 2002, objectives verbatim, seemed happy enough.
- How do companies implement it?
- What has to be in an SMS?
- Where else would you find guidance on PTW systems?
- Anyway, back on the bridge, midday, deep sea, you encounter heavy rain, actions? Said I would call my lookout to the bridge and went through whole usual RV procedure, explained rain is a condition of RV as per rule 3. Happy enough with my answer.
- Gave me a radar plot drawn on a sheet. North up, RV. Vsl on port quarter, risk of collision exists. Explained I cannot alter towards so I will make a broad alteration to Stbd. Moved on.
- Then buoys in a line, he wanted to know topmark, light and action. Port hand special mark, W cardinal, Isolated danger no bother. Then Preferred channel to stbd region A, for some reason I blurted out "Port hand lateral preferred channel to port". He picked up the buoy to put it back in the box with the others but I asked him to wait. He put it back down and I gave the right answer but I thought that must have been the final straw.
- Then the model ships – Crossing from stbd, gave him the SCB and AAM to determine if R.O.C exists, it did.(After this when he gave me each situation he said bearing is steady range is reducing) Gave him rule 15 and action.
- Moved the other model and said now 1 point abaft your beam, new situation. Same action.
- Then crossing from port. Stand on. Now you see two cones apex together. Broad A/C to port but I can go either way.
- Then he laid out a TSS and gave me lights on the board Tug < 50m, Tow >200m. Stbd aspect crossing from port. Stand on with caution. He asked me the fog signal. Then said you're getting closer. I said I am the stand on vsl under rule 15. She is not showing RAM so I am not obliged to keep out of the way. At this stage I will sound 5 short, aldis lamp, call master, engage hand steering, navigation risk assessment. He didn't push me for actual action and moved on.
- Same TSS, sailing VSI crossing from stbd. Explained I am the give way vsl but change of responsibilities as she should not impede my safe passage, stand on with caution. Then said

she is standing on too. Same action as before, didn't get to the stage of having to take action before he moved on.

- Took the TSS away, put white over red and a single white on the board. I said pilot vessel from astern or pilot vsl at anchor as long as she is still engaged in pilotage duties. He asked me how I would know which it was. I said Radar plot or ARPA. He said how else. After thinking for a while I realised he had placed the board on my port bow so I said if she is stationary I would expect the bearing to be opening rapidly. Seemed to be what he was looking for as he moved on.
- CBD crossing from port. Said she remains give way but I am obliged not to impede. I said I would take early and positive action to avoid a close quarters situation developing before risk of collision exists. He said yes, but what else? I wasn't sure what he was looking for so I said I could either slow down or A/C to starboard early. He said yes but what else? I said I wasn't sure.

At this point he looked up and said ominously "This exam is over.....And I can tell you.....you've passed"

Mentioned my weak appraisal of the passage plan, Cel-Nav theory issues and said he wanted me to call the master for the CBD crossing from port.

I was glad to get out, felt like an absolute grilling.