

Orals Report – RE V HILLIARD

Was most certainly a tightly fought affair to say the least!

But Victory was mine!

Tried to include as much as I can remember but must have missed a few things out.

I was called in by Capt Hilliard at approximately 1455

He took my discharge book passport and filled in all the paperwork = 5mins during this time he asked me what sort of ships I had been on with what companies (Princess + P&O Australia, cruise ships)

Then said he needed to look through my TRB and Workbooks (Very gingerly gave him my workbook)

He had a good look through the ship's particulars for all the ship's I had been on, asked me how many lifeboats we had on the Pacific Dawn and capacities (14, 10Xlifeboats 150ppl and 4Xtenders 141ppl)

He then asked me how many crew we had on board?! The first of many questions where I wasn't sure, but I very confidently said 1089.....no idea if that is correct It looked like He then did a calculation to see if it matched up, but after seeing how many liferafts and MES we had he seemed to abandon the calculation

He then went with what pressure you charge the BA sets to on board (200 bar)

He then turned to my workbooks and that is when the problems began.

He saw that on a lifeboat securing arrangement picture that I had labeled a lashing incorrectly as a 'boat lashing' immediately asked me what the proper name for the lashing was (gripe) started explaining to him how the gripes on the lifeboats I had worked but he waved me down (not interested, but it is clear that any mistake in your workbooks really sticks out like a sour thumb to them!)

He then started asking me about an enclosed space entry, but after I had told him about who we had to inform and started on the equipment he stopped me.

He then saw a photocopy of a compass error log book I had taken from my first ship to go with a report. He was very interested in this and started examining it in great detail with a suspicious smile on his face.

He then asked the deviation of the magnetic compass is increasing over several days, what would cause this?

I mentioned hard iron and soft iron and induced deviation changing

Why is it increasing tho? – because the ship is travelling to a higher latitude each day?! Don't really know if this is correct or not

What is deviation? – the correction applied from the ship's own magnetic field

Your magnetic compass isn't turning as fast as it should be, why is this? -there is something wrong with the magnetic compass.....? he looked super unimpressed when I replied with this, so I continued with that the ship would have to get shore personnel on board to give it a service or replace it with a new one

What is it called when shore personnel give your magnetic compass a service? - after a lot of uncomfortable moments I spat out 'a calibration?' he looked disappointed and asked angrily 'did you not go through magnetic compasses in NAESTO?!?!?!' - no....we did all of the electronic navigational aids tho

What do I mean by swinging out a compass? - still no idea what it means, he wasn't impressed with my BS so he moved on.

Carried on flicking through my workbook and when he got to the end flicked back through the pages with an alarmed look on his face as if to say 'THAT'S IT?!?!?!?!?!' not good.

He then asked me how GPS works - Gave him the basic run down of GPS, 2D and 3D fixes, how GPS calculates your position, even threw in the pesrandom code or however its spelt to try and gain some brownie points which he nodded in recognition at.

What is DGPS? - just gave him the basics that DGPS uses a ground station where the position is known to triangulate your position. Wanted something a little more but couldn't get there

What is more accurate GPS or DGPS? - DGPS

Why? - repeated myself and hoped I covered what he was after, he looked in pain and said ok then

There is a break in the wire feed from the GPS antenna to the receiver, what would you expect the GPS to show? Said it might go blank, might just have a constant position that's unchanging, cross check, and might show red indication, the multipilot display might also switch to dead reckoning? But shouldn't happen anymore, really do not know if what I said was right or if it answered the question.

Errors of an ECDIS? - ????? said how if the inputs have errors the ecdis will result in error, also mentioned permits, updates, scale minimum and human error setting up the ECDIS

What is FWA? Gave a really rubbish description mentioned the formula and how to get the DWA (wasn't interested in this, was not going to let me lead him) He then asked how do you calculate it?/or measure it? - mind fart.....looked around the room and finally saw the hydrometer but couldn't pronounce it for some reason, just kept saying 'hydro...' in the end he said it for me and a little

whisper of a smile crept across his face for a second, quickly to be replaced by the constant grimace his face relaxes into.

Set up the bridge for departure – was listing all the things but sped me up to SG

Went through the procedure for steering gear (hard over to hard over on all the pumps individually and together, tripping pumps, communications, headings, then went in to follow up, non follow up, and all the other locations you can steer from on the bridge) – he wanted something else though, maybe that it should go into alarm? Which I forgot to mention.

Asked me what Follow up and non-follow up is? Rough explanation, (non-follow up just sets the rudder at a point and does not return to midship's, can be used in a emergency if the rudder gets stuck and you need to midship's the rudder immediately.

Asked me the procedure for engaging hand steering from the autopilot? Very weird question because didn't think there s much to say, I am sure he was getting at something but I still do not know what, just went through my companies procedure (voice commands with the helmsman) and how the orientation of autopilot and handsteering on the switchover panel (how either way you turn the switch from autopilot it will go to follow-up, and hoped it covered all the points

Tell me about the SOLAS training manual? – bumbled around this for a while but covered all the points, should have been a lot more confident & direct with my answer

I saw that you had Polypropelene rope, what would the stopper for this be made of? MIND FART! PANICED! Said Manilla? He looked extremely alarmed, I knew that was wrong but the words just didn't want to come out

Which publication would you look in to find out? I knew he was throwing me a bone but my mind just didn't want to comply!

WHICH PUBLICATION?!?!?!?!? He asked again.....I remained motionless, completely frozen.... he then reached towards COSWOP and I shouted I WOULD LOOK IN COSWOP!!!! He then slung COSWOP at me and said you might be able to find the answer in there, I will be back in 2 mins, and then left slamming the door behind him. (the answer was that man made rope, is stoppered by other man made rope) very obvious looking back, but just goes to show that the examiners will not just fail you for the sake of it, they do want you to pass, best trying not to loose your cool like I did because you make things so much worse for yourself.

He came back in and followed up with what stopper would you use? – West country

How often do you test the emergency steering? – I wasn't sure if he meant an emergency steering drill, or just testing all forms of back up steering (I said once a week and he just repeated himself, so I went with once every three months, to which I looked alarmed? He said HOW OFTEN? i stuck to my guns but was not very convincing so he asked me that it wouldn't be every 2 months then? I mumbled to myself until he moved on, was really doubting myself, but should have been confident with my first answer and stuck to it!

He then asked when you first receive a GPS on board, on a brand new ship, what data do you have to put in it?i didn't know, but after speaking to others he might have been after datum? (NOT SURE)!

At this point he yawned and I knew that he was nearly done with me, but just to keep me on my toes he said that we had just had a collision with another vessel actions? – I ran through my company checklist for a collision and he said that I was going into master and chief mates answers, and asked me what an OOW would do? (just said close WTD's, call capt, initiate damage control response, log position & start incident log, display lights and shapes (NUC) pull out company checklist)

ROTR

Gave me a sailing vessel on the smartie board, stbd aspect crossing from port - series of compass bearings & AAM, identified it and said I would keep clear under rule 18 (alter to port sound 2 short and rapid blasts)

VL towing not RAM stbd aspect, port side, steady bearing range reducing – Stand on with caution under rule 17 (maintain course & speed)
No further actions from tow – Sound 5 short and call master (tried to go into rule 17 but moved on and didn't ask for actions)

Gave me a radar plot that had already been completed (overtaking a vessel on port side) and asked me for actions in clear weather (2 short alter to port and explained why)

Then said it was restricted vis, paused for a while to gather my thoughts, but because I hadn't been confident throughout the rest of the exam he pushed me and said well what does rule 19 say? Repeated it verbatim and before he had a chance to speak told him my actions and why (alter to STBD because I expect him to alter to port because I was on his STBD quarter)
Can you work out the aspect please? – I could not

Then went on to model ships

Put me on a vessel with another vessel EXACTLY 2 points abaft my stbd beam – As per rule 13 a vessel coming up more than 2 points abaft the beam shall be deemed to be overtaking, so crossing situation, so I am give way under rule 15 (verbatim rule 15) and then broad alteration of course to STBD.

Buoys – laid out the 4 cardinal marks in a strange pattern asked me to identify all of them (lights, rhythm etc) and then put me on a ship heading east. The lay

out of the cardinal marks confused me a little bit because It was not readily apparent where the danger was, (he wanted me to say what other buoys I would expect to see) so I went through them one by one and other cardinal marks that would be placed indicting the safe water.

After this he did ask me one more question but I had no idea what it was or what I did because I saw him writing PASS on my NOE. – sheer bloody relief, not joy!

Think my main advise would be try and stay calm! They really do not want to fail you! It seemed with me he gave me every opportunity to rectify my answers and multiple shots at every question to get what he wanted me to say (didn't succeed most of the time) Also ROTR can really save your bacon! If you know it inside out and back to front then the chances of you failing on something else are slim! Listen and trust in Mr Ward, he knows what he is doing and if you do what he says he will get you through!

I found the whole experience to be absolutely horrible, but it is just one of those things you have to go through, be confident with your answers and if you don't know just say so if it isn't a failing question, they don't want to know if you can BS well, they want to see you as a confident officer! Nor do they expect you to know everything (quiet evident in my exam because it came across that I knew very little) so saying I don't know sometimes or I would look up the answer in this publication can be an acceptable answer.

Big thanks to Jonathan Ward for his support and help (in and out of college), and also to Mr Leppert, Mr Jowett, Mr Stringfellow, Mr Parvez, Mr Ashton and Mr Eccles

They will get you through it!
Good luck to you all!