

924/58

Enclosure No. 4

FILE No. ~~344~~
1958Fatal accident on duty Mr. G. Hornby, A.P.O.

It is quite clear that Mr. Hornby was the first officer to enter the transom space and get into difficulties.

All the others who entered the space afterwards did so in an effort to rescue him.

There was some confusion and it is difficult to establish in what order the rescuers entered the space with the exception that it can be said that Mr. Thomson was the first to go to Mr. Hornby's assistance. It would appear probable that Mr. Vassilev Crichan was the next to enter the space, followed by Mr. Kent, P.O. and then by the Junior 2nd Officer. Each one was quickly affected by the lack of oxygen and had to be pulled out before the next one went in and as a result of their dazed conditions their recollections of subsequent happenings are hazy.

Mr. J. R. Thomas, P.O. was the last to enter the space and he took the precaution of first fastening a rope round his body. With considerable effort he managed to get Mr. Thomson to the manhole and he was pulled out by those on top. Mr. Thomas then fastened a rope to Mr. Hornby and with the help of those on top pulling on the rope Mr. Hornby was drawn within reach from the manhole. Mr. Thomas was then pulled out and finally Mr. Hornby.

All those who went into the space to effect rescue did so at considerable risk to themselves and special praise is due to both Mr. Thomas and Mr Thomson. The lack of light, the small manhole and the effects of carbon dioxide made it a formidable task to get an inert person out of the space.

Attention is drawn to the fact that in the earlier report the reference to a "tank" space is not accurate. It in no way functions as a tank and might be described more correctly as a transom space. The correction is intended to make clear that there was an absence of any usual or foreseeable reason to consider the space dangerous. The absence of any obnoxious odour, when the manhole cover was removed, contributed to the same conclusion of no danger.

It was held by the Master and Chief Officer that the ship's officers were not informed that the manhole cover was going to be removed. On this point it has been ascertained that none of the surviving officers gave such notice. It cannot be proved by us whether or not the deceased officer gave any notice. He went to the engine room for the purpose of getting a suitable spanner and in fact returned to the steering flat with the spanner but we have been unable to establish how he got it. A greaser stated that a spanner had been removed from the top of the engine room and that it was then still missing and the suggestion is that deceased removed it without specific authority.

I would also refer to the masks that were produced, to mention that I have some doubt as to whether they would have been any use as protection against carbon dioxide.

C. & E. 584.
Sec. F.283 (July 1950)



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