Ropeyarn Sunday â€œSea Storiesâ€• and Open Trackbacks

Description

Lots of distracting things today, to include the upcoming anniversary tomorrowâ€¦.

But, despite my lack of focus, please feel free to post your links as trackbacks to your work.

There are two subtle things you notice in a life at sea that become so subconscious, you canâ€™t really put your finger on whatâ€™s different, unless you think about it for a while.

The first one is the open sea, far from the shore, where the water is deep and blue, smells unlike anything you ever experience on a walk along the beach, let alone in any port facility. Itâ€™s a freshness of its own, hence â€œa fresh sea breezeâ€• being a well used saying. Itâ€™s an alluring scent and one worth standing on the â€œweather decksâ€• and taking deep breaths to get the full effect.

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The second thing is there is always noise on the ship. At the very least, even when the ship is â€œcold ironâ€• (when the ship has the main engineering plant for propulsion and electrical services shut down), the ventilation fans are running. When the ship is up and running, the hull propogates the various noises to travel througout the hull and, with time and exposure, you can detect major and unusual events at the far end of the ship. As Engineer Officer, I became very attuned to the many subtle and not so subtle indications of changes in the plant status. I recall one night, waking and realizing the watch, several decks below had started one engine and were in the process of securing the other in the forward engine room. I, of course, reached for the sound powered phone and clicked the â€œE-Callâ€• buzzer to get the Enigineering Officer of the Watch (EOOW) to let me know what was up. The standard procedure was to notify me in the event of having to make equipment changes. As it turned out, it wasnâ€™t anything major that had happened.

Two more striking times when the Shipâ€™s noises communicated something very important was 00:32 9/18/1986. I was the Officer of the Deck and we were steaming in the South Pacific. We were running at top speed for one (of 4) engine on line when there was a *BANG* and the rapid decrease in the pitch of the turbineâ€™s whine, as it spooled down to 0. Before the engine had had much of an opportunity to lose much speed, I had already reached for the talk switch on the 21MC box and asked the EOOW what had happened. Of course, he was up to his eyeballs in taking care of getting the initial reports in, but he said â€œ1B is offline, starting 1A GTM.â€•

So, even in a ship of 563 feet and 7900 tons, the entire structure tells a storyâ€¦..

The other striking time the Shipâ€™s frame â€œspokeâ€• to me will be forthcoming next Wednesday in the next schedule Ropeyarn Sunday â€œSea Storiesâ€• installment.

Category

1. "Sea Stories"
2. History

3. Military
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