Ropeyarn Sunday â€œSea Storiesâ€• and Open Trackbacks

Description

Capt Lex sent us to the archives for entertainment a few days ago. One of the linked choices was a story about life at sea and the availability of (fresh) water while keeping oneself in a state of good hygine.

He pointed out, in his fine style of prose, that aviators are regularly pilloried for being the ones who waste so much of the water, that others must suffer. He later learned, when assigned as â€œShipâ€™s Companyâ€• (that means the aviators share the joy of black shoe life, well, at least get a healthy taste of it), and that it is sometimes malfunctioning machinery, specifically the components used in water production or waste steam/heat recovery are the culprits, but, the â€˜Shoe Navy has a cabal that always requires pointing the finger of blame at those who would slip the surly bonds of earth. Itâ€™s a union thing, Iâ€™m sorry, I gotta stick with the homeboys here.

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Hereâ€™s my â€œwater hoursâ€• story. It was a cool November in 1989. We had taken in all lines several weeks earlier in Charleston, SC and sailed east in our plucky little (453â€²) FFG. Equipped with two evaporators, and carrying a few over 200 aboard, conversing water was not a huge task, but did require us all to be mindful of only using our share. The CHENG and his A Div Officer did a fine job of maintaining the plant, so we werenâ€™t constantly sweating the laod on this topic.

As we sailed through the Med, enroute Port Said to transit south through the Suez Canal and head for the Persian Gulf. The Chop (Supply Officer), Lt Wayne Aiken, had been on the previous cruise. At the Planning Board for Training the week before the transit of the Canal, Wayne suggested we accelerate the laundry cycle to get all the beding done, then we could make the transit easier on the water use, since youâ€™re not allowed (by Navy sanitation requirements) to make water in enclosed waters, which the Canal certainly was. we copuld then top off the fresh water tanks, and shut down the evaporators at the 12 mile limit off of Egypt, yet still have plenty for food service and normal showers on the 24 hour transit, with reserves while the evaps caught up on the other side of Port Suez. I agreeed and the department heads and the command senior chief went about working up the details.

Over the next few days, the plan went like clockwork. The sheets got done and a few of the divisions got their dungarees taken care off off schedule. Early on the day of our scheduled arrival at Port Said (the north end of the canal), we had launched the helo on a Dawn Patrol, and brought them back aboard before we enetered Egyptian territorial waters (12 NM). I recall being on the bridge and, in addition to monitoring our navigational approach (I was navigator, too), I kept an ear out for the communications between the helo and CIC to make sure we didnâ€™t break boundries.

We headed into the anchorage, the Engineering Officer of the Watch (EOOW) letting the bridge know the evaporators were â€œwrapped upâ€• as the Officer of the Deck (OOD) completed the entering port checklist. We anchored about an hour later and the CHENG called up, saying we were losing fresh water fast. Immediately, the chain of command was sent around the berthing spaces, looking for running showers, or other â€œappliancesâ€• in the heads. They all reported back, that nothing was running, and there were no findings of pooled water in the spaces. We were still using water. This was

a real problem, more frustrating as we had taken the time to make a plan just to keep a problem like this from happeneing.

More hiking around the ship. Nothing, until the Ops Boss, LT Tom Strother, found a garden hose, draped over the side of the flight deck, running at full output. He also found an airman from the helo detachment, with a long handled brush, dutifully scrubbing down the helo, as was standard procedure, after the flight. The problem was, he was supposed to have a nozzle on the garden hose, so he would only use the water required.

In this case, we lost almost half of our fresh water over the side, courtesy of the well intentioned maintained, keeping the risk of corrosion on the very expensive flying machine of HSL-44 Det 4. Marty Keany and I had an interesting chat a few moments later.

We regrouped, we did make water in the Canal, but it was super chlorinated, which, is itâ€™s own reward.

When I checked off the Command, one of the helo pilots, Carl Bush, was a great cartoonist, drew a cartoon of me. The view was from behind me, sitting at my desk. The 1MC (General Announcing System) was blaring â€œWATER HOURS ARE NOW IN EFFECT!â€• and I had a cartoon thinking bubble saying â€œAll RIGHT!â€• in response. There were other details, like an overflowing In Basket, and an empty Out Basket.

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Yes, Capt Lex, it was the aviators this time.

Category

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admin