Oral Exam- Chief Mate Unlimited

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V's Capt. Irwin De Graf, Fremantle

It was a regular spring day just like any other. The sun was shining and the birds were singing and by most standards this was just an ordinary day...............but behind this calm façade there lurked a dark and stressful undertone. For this was no ordinary day. This was a day that a boy would become a man........if he survives!

As I entered the ring I saw my opponent; he didn’t look like much but he was holding the cards. He offered me a drink of water and told me to get comfortable, remove my tie and jacket if I wanted. I was told the exam would go for 1.5hrs max and there would be no tricks.

I was told I am the mate joining a Cape Size bulk carrier discharging ore in Long Beach; I have just arrived on-board.

What do I do when I get to the bridge and meet the outgoing Ch Mate? Whats in a handover?
What size vessels have to have a load computer?

Coast Guard comes onboard...why?

Whats Port state Inspection?

Whats diff between Port and Flag state

A load line survey is happening......Whats that about. Conditions of assignment and whats the LL survey covering?

ESP....whats that? Who/ what does it apply to?

Gave me a profile drawing of my 9-hatch bulky with a triangle at the mid-ships gunnel and asked me to tell me what the issues here. I explained the ship was not allowed to take HD cargo the historical accidents with forepeak flooding leading to hatch one flooding which leads to bulkhead destruction between hatch 1&2. The requirement for stronger bulkhead and bilge alarms etc.

Whats the frequency of drills and musters?

The outgoing mate has gone before I arrive. Where do I find info on my duties?

The Port get news from FBI that there is a terrorist threat. What could this mean to me? SSP, MARSEC levels etc

Can I enter a confined space? “Yes I've done the training”. What is the legislation regarding Conf Space entry. “OHS(MI) Reg 2003 National Standards Part 4 and also Marine Order 21 referring to Australian Standards for approved gas sampling equipment” Boom! Smoked him and we moved onto another subject!

The cook calls me while we are 300nm off the California coast sailing to Dampier and asks to throw his galley waste overboard. What do I tell him?
Pilot Boards and Master is not on bridge due to extended Pilotage. What is discussed on Pilot arrival? Details of Master/Pilot exchange and I threw in some references to BRM principles here for good measure. Pilot is just advisor...blah blah!

How do I manage fatigue for the crew as we are departing port soon? Posting Watch roster and work hours. Extra consideration for the first and second watch teams after departure.

How to maintain an anchor watch? Duties?

How to get weather without GMDSS and internet? Barometer, Anemometer, eyeballs

Chart symbols. TSS Separation zone, TSS arrows, sector light

Buoyage. IALA A/B Laterals. Special, cardinals. No preferred channel.

Anchorage range and bearing. Showed two headlands and asked what one I would set a bearing on. One was quite well defined but had an intertidal zone in front so I chose the other less defined one.

Master Instructions for the watch-keepers? Night Orders

Nothing on bridge equipment!

How to check your gyro for accuracy?

What's the diff between Amplitude and Azimuth?

Voyage Planning, what's the stages?

What's a routing chart?

Loading in partially salt water.....what's my considerations?

How do you get the Dock water allowance?

What units does it result in? mm

What the IMO stability Criteria? Draw or explain. I just said them.

What about grain stability? I mentioned >0.075m/radians residual and he moved on. No Grain moments, form 226 etc.

What is LOLL?

Showed a picture of a timber deck cargo vessel at Loll with ice accretion in logs. Do I release the high or the low side? High side!!

Loading Cargo. Where to find info on the cargo? Shippers dec.

What's the doc for establishing the format for the shippers dec? BLU Code

A man in flouro walks up to the bridge and says hes the PIC. Whats that mean? I said he is an overpaid bogan and that hes there to supervise and direct the cargo ops. He would be checking the Material Handling Register and Certs.

What's the Register and what's in it?

What are the intervals and who does the inspections of this gear?
Ship owners arrive and ask you to load a couple of containers on deck at the last minute. Can you do it? No...no goods manifest.

There are dangerous goods on the list, can you load. No, no multimodal DG form and no notice given to AMSA with DG list

OK...all the forms are given and you are approved to load, can you load? Yes if I have Document of Compliance for DG Cargo

On voyage you see red flares in the sky? What do you do?

What publications are helpful? IAMSAR III, Code signals

How would he contact you? MF or VHF

Nothing on ship handling

What is Onload and Off load release for survival craft? Explain them and the dangers.

You have a fire onboard during the voyage? What monitoring gear do you have?

What can you do if its in the Engine room? The Chief Eng has some equipment, what is it?

Whats the deck control valve?

Various lights and shapes. Know ALL of them.

Various colregs. Head on with a trawler with shoal ground on my stbd side...what to do? They want to know that you are happy to go to port when allowed. You will fail if you have a fobia of going to port or you round turn. Again, you must know ALL colregs!

Rule 19. Put a vessel on stbd bow and two vessels behind (one to stbd aft). I am going faster that the vessels astern. What to do? Alter to stbd aft a trial manoeuver.

That's it. They brush over all the subjects quite quickly until they find a weakness....then they dig in for the kill.

Best of luck to you all

Pass!