



LP Bulletin

Friday 13 February 2009

Bulletin 623 - 2/09 - Piracy Attack - Brass/Pennington Oil Terminal - Nigeria

The Association has just made available, to Members trading in the Gulf of Aden area, "*Piracy – The East Africa/Somalia Situation*" a booklet aimed at providing practical information to assist seafarers faced with piracy. Members should contact their Club representative for copies.

Piracy is not just confined to the Somalia region though, the following is a first hand report of an incident which happened earlier this week on a Member's vessel off the coast of Nigeria.

This is a master's actual first hand report on the circumstances of an armed attack on February 10th, 2009, off Pennington Oil Terminal.

Quote

- 1) The vessel loaded from Brass terminal a cargo of crude oil and sailed on February 10th 2009 at about 1500 hours on a course for Tema, Ghana.
- 2) At 19:05 LT : in position Lat: 05 59 N - Long: 005 47 E and southeast of Pennington terminal Nigeria, (the nearest shore was about 22 miles) the normal route that vessels always tracking, The OOW & lookout sailors noticed a small fast craft approaching the vessel from starboard quarter with estimated 10 heavily armed pirates attempted to stop and board the vessel and shouted by loud speaker to stop ship immediately or they will blow the ship and they started shooting with heavy ammunitions.



- 3) The OOW immediately sounded the ship's general alarm and broadcasted through public address telephone that the ship is under pirates attack.
- 4) The master urgently rushed to the bridge and assessed the situation. All crew were alerted and ordered by master through the public address to check all accommodation access doors as well as entrances to the engine room are closed well. Upon noticing bullets fired by pirates passing through accommodation bulkheads, master ordered all crew to stay away from any

access doors, windows, starboard accommodation cabins and to proceed inside galley (as it was located in the middle of accommodation).

5) The master refused to stop the vessel causing the pirates to be annoyed who continued intense firing at the vessel's accommodation. Master pressed the DSAS button and ordered the chief officer to broadcast on VHF ch.16 and alert all ships in the area request assistance and to relay the message to the nearest authorities. The International Maritime Piracy Center informed by telephone who acknowledged but no any assistance was given to the vessel.

6) The master urgently ordered to take some small pieces of metals, bolts, nuts and any hard materials that can be use as a defence by throwing it to the enemy's craft from the bridge wings. He also fired some rocket parachute flares against pirates speed boat.

7) The pirates temporarily move far from the vessel but continuously firing at the vessel's accommodation. They tried many times to board the vessel from fwd section but the master was alert making all the evasive manoeuvres not giving the pirates chance to board the vessel .

8) Finding it difficult for them to climb forward, the pirates again tried to approach aft starboard and still firing, the master and c/eng thrown bolts and nuts to the boat and also used rocket parachute not giving them chance to come closer to the vessel side.

9) After continued attempt and failed pirates withdrew the attack and returned to the one fishing vessel that appear to be their mother ship in position Lat: 04 00 N Long: 005 44 E 3.2 miles from our vessel, the attempted attack lasted for about 65 minutes.

10) Master communicated by phone to CSO Capt. _____, alternative CSO Capt. ____, and Port Capt_____ in Ghana office and informed them about the situation.

11) The mother ship observed chasing the vessel with greater speed called my vessel through VHF ch.16 and pretend to give assistance asking us to stop the vessel for them to approach from starboard side. Master refuses to stop and replied to move away or we will collide with them.

12) Master ordered the officers to steer towards high sea away from shore and went together with 2/officer to position fire guns monitors and close anchor wash.

13) Master ordered 2/officer, bosun, and 2 sailors to open the rigged fire hoses around accommodation.

14) Master on bridge noticing mother ship still chasing with greater speed 11 knots. master through VHF ch.16 communicating with the coast guard helicopter giving vessel position and pirates' mother ship position. When pirates mother ship closed to 1.1 mile master again communicated with helicopter that will launch rocket parachute to locate the ships position immediately.

15) Master launched 1 rocket parachute causing the pirates to stop and withdraw the chasing.

16) After about 1 hr when the distance from the pirates mother ship reached 9 miles master gathered the crew in the mess room to comfort them and give assurance to relieve from state of shock and trauma.

17) Two types of guns were used by the pirates, one heavy ammunition 10mm diameter bullet ball and one automatic machine gun. The bullet balls passed through the accommodation bulkheads (6mm metal thickness and internal insulation) in different starboard accommodations areas from upper deck to bridge deck including funnel and radar mast.

18) Starboard lifeboat was also shot with 6 bullets causing 6 holes. Total holes found in the accommodation areas was about 50 except the missed shots.

Master

Unquote

Source of information: Loss Prevention Department