



Friday 27th May 2011

Bulletin 766 - 05/11 - Stowaways - Worldwide

The Association would like to bring to light a recent case of stowaways' boarding at Richards Bay, South Africa to the attention of Members. This case highlights the extreme risks stowaways are prepared to take in their means of boarding while attempting to remain undetected.



The ship in question was a bulk carrier of 34,400grt, which loaded a cargo of steam coal for discharge at Sikka, India. Before arrival at the load port the crew had standing instructions to remain vigilant at all times for stowaways attempting to board. All doors remained closed and locked and all ladders from the main deck to the boat deck and from the boat deck to the next level had been blocked with razor wire.

Extra precautions were in place as the ship was transiting the Indian Ocean High Risk Area. One door, shore side was in operation with two seamen constantly on watch. Periodical patrols took place with constant reporting to the watch officer and chief officer. Before departure from Richards Bay a stowaway search was performed and stowaway check list completed.

Five days after sailing from Richards Bay two stowaways were discovered next to the JRC Satellite Antenna on the monkey island above the Bridge deck. The stowaways had boarded at about 01:30Lt under the cover of darkness and using dust from loading operations in hold No.1 as cover. The low free board of the vessel (the main deck was level to the quay) provided easy access.





They then proceeded through stairwells which had razor wire (pic.2) tearing their clothes as they went and climbed up from the monkey island into the satellite antenna housing (pic.3). The antenna housing above the monkey island was not part of the stowaway search due to its small size and high voltage danger. Similar to using the ship's rudder trunk area as a hiding place, this latest example demonstrates the risks stowaways are prepared to take in an attempt to board ships.

We would recommend to all Members to review their search areas and procedures and to “think like a stowaway” when designating search areas and assigning search parties.

Source of Information:

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