



NOAA Teacher at Sea Mike Lynch Onboard NOAA Ship DELAWARE II June 20 – July 1, 2005

Daily Log: Day Four

Date 6/23/05
Latitude: 3651.23N
Longitude: 07526.591W
Wave Height: 1 foot
Swell Height: 2 Foot
Weather: clear
Visibility: unlimited
Wind Speed: 14 mph

Scientific Log:

It is now 12 AM Wednesday morning.
We were awakened for our shift

at 11:20. The unwritten rule aboard ship is that you hustle out and relieve the alternate shift a few minutes early. Things got a little chaotic prior to the end of our second shift on Tuesday. An electrical junction box that operates the high compression pump and water jets on the dredge was damaged on a tow. The electrical wiring was pulled out of the box, allowing water and sand to impregnate the electrical system. The damage was observed



prior to the dredge being lowered for another tow, and the work began. Life at sea requires the crew to wear many hats. There is no WalMart, no Home Depot, no 911, no fire department, and no ambulance. We are a self-sufficient community that must be self-reliant and work as a team in order to problem solve. Tools were brought out, electrical parts were on hand and collective, hands on, can do attitude was applied. The box was repaired and I learned a good deal about how electrical work designed for underwater usage, differs significantly from

what is done on dry land. This event prompted me to think about the interesting and challenging aspects of life at sea.

Today's journal log will focus on the job of safety. Starting the first day, we were all assigned fire stations, evacuation stations, general quarters assignments and given safety protocols. Before we left the dock, we had our first fire drill. We were also instructed to go to our evacuation stations and to bring our immersion suits. Everyone was asked to put his or her immersion suit on. It was a fine photographic moment, but also a very serious

one. While on a tour of the Osprey IV, prior to our departure, one of our officers pointed out the self-contained oxygen apparatus for fire fighting. In passing, he mentioned, “you know, if we have a fire out here, there’s no one to call”. Every one of our staterooms has four bunks a bathroom, four drawers and small lockers for your stuff. There are usually never more than two in the room at any time due to watch constraints. But regardless of the constraints on space, each room contains a fire extinguisher, four Emergency Escape Breathing Devices (EEBDs), four life jackets with beacons and two survival (immersion) suits. The “common room” which adjoins the galley is no



bigger than 6ft.by 12ft. There is a TV, a stereo, VCR and two couches. Space is limited, but central to it all are an EMT jump box for medical emergencies and an automatic emergency defibrillator for possible heart attacks. In the same room, there is a posting of all crewmembers and their stations and responsibilities in foreseeable crisis events. There are drills for fire, abandon ship, and man overboard. Each of these drills has an associated general stations alarm and whistle

designation to identify the nature of the crisis. Hardhats are worn on deck at all times and OSHA regulations for safety are strictly followed throughout the vessel, Immediately inside the stern deck are two emergency showers with eye wash stations. There is a chemical spill kit inside the ready room. There are full-size backboards and short boards dispersed throughout the ship for immobilization involving head trauma or possible spinal compromise.

Before boarding the ship, I observed twos stokes basket that would be used for emergency lift of a diver out of the water, or an overboard crewmember. There is also a contingency on



board for an emergency helicopter evacuation.

There are nine general fire stations throughout the boat that have hydrants and hoses. There are four life rafts that can be used for evacuation and one rescue vessel that can be used for emergency retrieval of a person overboard. There is a dive locker



with underwater breathing apparatus and trained personnel to make the dives. There is a Damage Control Locker that contains three SBA controlled breathing devices and fire suits in case of an onboard fire, as well as HAZMAT materials, and myriad of resources that would be necessary in the event of a collision. On each of the outside decks, there are life rings with locator beacons stationed to be used for a man overboard scenario. There are a total of eight life rings, six of which have locator beacons. At night, personnel are instructed to continue to release these in order that the ship can find a path back to the crewmember. There are a total of forty-five fire extinguishers onboard. They are a variety of water, CO2 and chemical. There is a chief medical officer and three other officers are current EMTs. All crew, commissioned and civilian have basic first aid training, current CPR, and are routinely presented with safety seminars on ship board policy, firefighting and the use of available equipment such as the emergency defibrillator.



At first, these drills and musters, seem to be mere bureaucratic protocol, but when you are at sea for a period, and realize the physical isolation that separates the vessel from services that we have all come to take for granted, you come to realize the nature of being at sea. For me, it was the repair of an electrical box that opened my eyes to the true interdependence that makes a crew a self-sustaining community.



Personal Log:

The morning shift from 12 to 6 was great. Temperatures were comfortable and the moonlight made to ocean absolutely beautiful breakfast at six and back to bed. Up at eleven and work to six. Our tows have been moderately successful and we have been keeping busy. I am still operating the shipboard computer for each of the events, and

that seems to be a lot easier now with practice. The food is great, but the hours to eat, in proximity to sleep, are all out of whack. This afternoon I suddenly started to get really tired. The whole crew is going through a metamorphosis where the intense curve of learning is beginning to be replaced by an overall fatigue. I am certain that will improve as we acclimate to our schedules. There is another teacher on board, but on the other shift. We are comparing notes as we pass. One of us has always just gotten up and the other has just finished a shift and is heading for the barn. I did a lot of interviewing today, some on a formal basis and a lot of informal questioning of officers, scientists and crew. My clothes are a mess and wash will soon become a reality. The general rule is to wait until you have a full load, as water is a manmade commodity on the DELAWARE II.

Signing Off, Mike, dad, AKA Mr. Lynch