

Amphib Sailors

Looking Out for Their O



By LCdr. Bruce Supalla
and BMCS(SW) James Santeler,
Staff, ComPhibCru Three

The ink had hardly dried on the relieving letter officially designating a new first lieutenant on an amphibious ship heading to the Arabian Gulf. Suddenly, a seaman burst into the deck office, shouting, “Sir, we’re going to lose the motor whaleboat!”

Running aft and out onto the flight deck, the first lieutenant saw a group of Sailors standing around the boat davit on the port catwalk. He pushed his way through and was stunned at the sight. The forward arm of the davit was on the deck, with various broken parts, and the after arm was twisted grotesquely. The motor whaleboat hung perpendicular to the ocean by a single wire from the mangled after arm.

The Sailors huddled around the flight deck to brainstorm ideas to recover from this incident. Someone mentioned that a former BMCS (one of the authors of this article) had experienced a similar

mishap, but no one remembered how he had worked it out. In this case, there were no personnel casualties during the follow-on actions, but the Sailors lost the motor whaleboat in heavy seas.

As one of the original right-arm rates, boatswain’s mates often learn their profession through years of hands-on experience. This knowledge often is lost to a ship as senior deck personnel transfer or retire, and those who follow must re-learn the information. Too many times, this education comes at a bad time and at a high price.

Technical manuals cover a very limited number of casualties and usually are aimed at slow and deliberate troubleshooting procedures. Engineers and aviators long have had established procedures for immediate steps to take in an emergency. These steps help avoid or limit damage. The critical nature of deck evolutions aboard an amphibious ship requires the same close attention. Whether you have

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When Sailors aboard amphibious ships have a deck emergency, they need to respond promptly and correctly. A new series of booklets developed by Amphibious Group Three will help them do just that.

an emergency in a main-machinery space or on the deck, the situation calls for prompt, correct action.

To meet that need, people at Amphibious Group Three have developed a series of booklets covering “Deck-Emergency Casualty-Control (DECC) Procedures” for amphibious ships. These booklets serve as training tools and provide quick-reference guides in the event of an equipment casualty. You have all the information you need to recover from a variety of mechanical, electrical or hydraulic casualties to everything from stern gates to monorail-cargo hoists to cranes. You also get all the applicable cautions and warnings at a glance.

The “DECC Procedures” booklets for each amphibious-ship class are structured for easy updating and expansion as lessons learned from others are incorporated. When a casualty occurs, why reinvent the wheel to find a solution (hopefully the right one)? Instead, tap into the experience of

others. The booklets at Amphibious Group Three also can be modified for cruisers, destroyers and logistics ships.

Operational risk management helps you think things through before and during an assigned task. The “DECC Procedures” booklets help you do the same thing. Both will prevent people from getting hurt or killed and keep you from damaging or losing a piece of equipment.

The authors can be reached at (619) 556-3572 (DSN 526), or e-mail n45@cp3.navy.mil. You also can call BMC(SW) Michael R. Thibault at the Naval Safety Center at (757) 444-3520, Ext. 7122 (DSN 564) or send e-mail to mthibault@safetycenter.navy.mil. Order copies of the “DECC Procedures” booklets through the Department of the Navy, ComPhibGru Three N45, 3985 Cummings Rd., Suite 4, San Diego, Calif. 92136-5289.