

★ ALL HANDS ★

THE BUREAU OF NAVAL PERSONNEL CAREER PUBLICATION

**Special Issue :
SAFETY AND
SURVIVAL AT SEA**



This magazine is intended
for 10 readers. All should
see it as soon as possible.
PASS THIS COPY ALONG

NOVEMBER 1964



ON THE ALERT—Sharp eyes and quick action by ship's lookouts can be the formula for saving a crew member at sea.



REMAIN CALM and wait for pickup.

Man Overboard—This Is No Drill

GREEN WATER over the bow, a splash into the water nearby and another is thrown over the fantail. They saw you go over, so you've got it made. Just relax.

On board ship the lookouts keep you in sight while the recovery team readies the gear for your pick-up. They're a crack bunch, sharpened by practice. Each one knows his job.

TAKING CHARGE—Ship's skipper directs recovery operations from the bridge.



The rudder is put hard left when the word "Man overboard, port side," reaches the bridge. The quick turn swings the screws away from you and reduces the ship's speed.

The OOD alerts the task commander. Other ships clear the area, leaving your skipper room to maneuver safely. In CIC your position is plotted on dead reckoning gear.

Your ship completes its turn and approaches you. A whaleboat splashes into the water. Soon, practiced hands pull you over the gunwales and someone throws a blanket around your shoulders. The boathook fishes out the life ring and it's all over.

You were lucky. The seas were fairly calm, and it was daylight. But while you're shivering in the boat you can't help but wonder what the results would have been at night, or in heavy seas or, perhaps, in shark-infested waters.

YOUR CHANCES might have been better than you think.

Darkness, for instance, causes few major problems if the seas are calm and someone sees you go over. Almost immediately after the alarm is

sounded a searchlight will focus on you or on a nearby life ring. The OOD can then use that spot as a point of reference and complete his turn as he would in daylight.

A reasonably accurate 360-degree turn, however, is next to impossible when spotlights are limited by rain, fog, or rough seas. If the OOD has no reference point, his circle is likely to be imperfect—with disastrous consequences.

So a Williamson Turn will be used. This maneuver is almost guaranteed to return the ship to the exact spot where the turn was begun, regardless of weather or visibility. However, it takes a few minutes more than coming right around.

Once the turn has been successfully completed, the spotlight crew has a relatively small expanse of water to search. Your chances of being found are reassuring, especially if you're wearing a life jacket equipped with a light or if a man overboard signal marker was tossed overboard.

While the search proceeds, all unnecessary equipment will be secured and silence maintained on deck. That's your cue to raise hell.

NOVEMBER 1964

ALL HANDS



SING OUT 'Man Overboard' and toss the nearest life ring into the water.

Methods of pick-up, once you have been located, will depend upon the equipment at hand, and weather conditions. If you're a very lucky sailor (under the circumstances), a motor whaleboat may be used and are saving with a large task.

Unfortunately, darkness and bad weather can make the task more difficult.

THE RESCUE—Swimmer leaves ship's whaleboat to assist shipmate into boat.



11



RESCUE SWIMMER with safety line attached takes horse collar out to victim who is then pulled aboard ship.

weather often preclude the use of either method. You may be recovered over the side.

Over-the-side pick-up entails maneuvering the rescue ship within a shoreline's distance of the victim, sending out a swimmer with a line, and pulling in the man as though he were a fish on a hook. This is simplest for a small ship, so if you fall from a carrier or a cruiser, a nearby destroyer may be assigned rescue duties. They're mobile and fast.

YOU CAN—and must—depend on your ship. But despite the skill of the rescue team, you can expect to be on your own from ten minutes to two hours. During that time, survival will be up to you.

If you fall, the ship's screws will be your first danger. Although the OOD may succeed in swinging the stern away from you if notified in time, don't depend on it. Strike away from the side immediately.

Luckily, the impetus of your fall will probably carry you several yards from the side, so the safe zone will not be far away.

Once your ship has passed, conserve your energy. If you don't have a life jacket, improvise one by inflating your trousers (see box, page 16). Don't swim unless you have a definite objective, such as a lifebuoy or a smoke flare. If you must swim, vary your strokes and your strength will last longer (see center-spread, page 18).

Although an expert swimmer will have an easier go of it, a Class III man can survive—if he doesn't panic.

The *Survival Training Guide* (NavWebs 00-807-56) offers some advice about swimming in heavy seas. Swim on your stomach, with



Almost everyone has heard tales of helicopter crewmen who have gone into the water to recover injured airmen. Not so well publicized are the whaleboat crew members, who often do the same.

Two recent incidents come to mind—one, by air (via helos) and two, by sea (via boats).

The story of the whirlwind rescue took place in the Med. The incident began during a daytime launch on board the *Enterprise* (CVAN 65), when a *Vigilante* hit the water about four miles from the carrier, just seconds after the pilot and observer had ejected.

The *Enterprise* angel already was airborne and in the plane guard position just outboard of the carrier's island. The helo immediately left its station and sped toward the scene of the accident.

The downed pilot was located first, near a smoke flare. When the helo hovered overhead he signaled the crew with a double thumbs up. This may be translated: "I'm fine—check my observer."

After a short search the helo crew spotted the observer floating face down, his parachute billowing around him.

Airman J. S. Mitchell, one of the two helo crew members, fastened himself to the winch line and was



back, moving your arms just enough to keep your head above water. Don't panic and thrash around, it will only attract sharks. The idea is to remain as inconspicuous as possible.

Should you be attacked, the shark

In an Emergency, Navy Come on the Double — By Air and By Sea

It was night. Off the coast of New Jersey two ASW helicopters from USS *Randolph* (CVS 15) were conducting a sub hunt. They were assisted by the destroyer *Mullinix* (DD 944).

Once again everything seemed under control. Then one of the helos disappeared from the *Randolph* sky radar.

A few seconds later a new blip appeared on the *Mullinix* surface radar. Presently that, too, disappeared.

Helo 54 was down in 44-degree waters. Life expectancy of the crew? Between one and two hours.

On the destroyer, word was passed to station the recovery detail. Among those who mustered at the whaleboat were LTJG William Reiser, boat officer, and Signalman Third Class J. I. Amerson.

The boat was lowered and the crosswin shoved off in the direction of a signal marker near the crash scene. 54's sister helo was hovering over this marker. When the whaleboat approached, the helo began moving toward a small white light some 300 yards distant. The boat followed.

The small light proved to be the emergency flashlight attached to one downed airman's M16 West.

Two others were floating nearby.



FROM THE AIR—Helicopter picks airman from water just minutes after crash.

were soon missed. The captain was notified and retraced the ship's course on the assumption that Ingerson had gone overboard.

One hour and 25 minutes after the accident, the airman was located by a searchlight and taken aboard a

By Air and By Sea

The boat's approach to the first victim was complicated by confused seas and the propwash from the helo escort. When the crosswin finally succeeded in nearing the man, LTJG Reiser extended the boat hook. The helo crewman grabbed the hook and was hauled into the boat.

An identical approach was used for the second man, but the victim did not move toward the extended hook. The crosswin was unable to approach near enough for the boat crew to grab the airman.

Amerson jumped into the water to recover the unconscious man. But the seas were becoming worse, and he had trouble making headway toward the victim. To make matters worse, the whaleboat began to drift away.

All four victims were on board the *Mullinix* thirty minutes after their helo had hit the water. Thanks to the quick work of recovery, the helo crew escaped with minor shock and exposure.



Whaleboat crew goes to the rescue during demonstration.

The Williamson Turn

Navymen familiar with the Williamson Turn know it will help to return a ship to the same location as when the maneuver was begun. This maneuver is most useful when a man is overboard at night, in a choppy sea, or in low visibility and he is not in sight when the alarm "Man overboard" is sounded.

A man overboard faces three immediate dangers: mangling by the ship's propellers, drowning, or abandonment because he can't be located.

The Williamson Turn (named for CDR John A. Williamson, USNR, who developed it in 1942) reduces these dangers by swinging the ship's screws away from the victim, and assists in returning the ship accurately to the approximate area where the man fell overboard.

When the officer of the deck receives the word that a man is overboard, he orders hard rudder toward the side from which the victim fell. As the ship's stern swings away from the victim, maximum engine speed is usually ordered and the compass heading watched closely.

The rudder is held hard over until the ship's head nears a specific angle (usually 60 to 70 degrees) from the original heading. When

the ship's head nears the 60-to-70-degree differential from the original course, the rudder is then shifted full over to the other side.

The rudder is held hard over until the reverse of the ship's original course is approached and the ship is steadied up on this reciprocal course. The engines are slowed or stopped. At this point the ship should be about the same distance



from the victim as the ship's tactical diameter. A sharp lookout must be maintained, as a person in the water presents a very small object and is very difficult to see even in clear weather.

The Williamson Turn must be used with discretion. It wouldn't be particularly smart for the conning officer to order the ship turned at maximum speed into a heavy sea or when there is danger of a collision.

The Williamson Turn is not al-

ways the best maneuver to execute, even under favorable conditions. If the visibility is good and the sea is calm, particularly when the man overboard is in view from the bridge, the victim may be reached much faster simply by continuing the turn and conning the ship to the best position for recovering the man. In some ship types, recovery might even be faster by reversing the engines and backing down to the victim.

In many ships, the Williamson Turn is only one of many procedures carried out to insure the safe return of the man overboard. Sounding alarms, dropping lighted lifebuoys, maintaining a constant visual contact on the person with binoculars, stationing additional lookouts, illuminating the area with searchlights, maintaining a plot of the ship and victim's positions on the DRT, manning lifeboats and requesting aid from nearby ships or aircraft are part of established Navy procedure.

When the weather is rough, at night, or in poor visibility, the Williamson Turn frequently assures the man overboard a better chance of telling his grandchildren of the night he was pulled from the sea by a rescue crew.

later been found in the gedunk.

IF A BUDDY falls overboard, it may be up to you to trigger the rescue operation. If you see—or think you see—a man fall yell, "Man overboard, port (or starboard) side!" Keep yelling until you know you've been heard. In the meantime, throw over a lifebuoy.

Above all, don't hesitate. If you

do, the OOD may receive the word too late and be unable to swing the stern in time.

When the alarm is sounded, but doubt exists, the ship will proceed on the assumption that there is, indeed, a man overboard. But at the same time, the OOD may hedge his bet and call a muster.

Everyone must muster in person. If all hands are on board, the search

may be called off. But if a man is absent, it must continue indefinitely.

And may the Great Sea King help the missing seaman if he is later found asleep in the fan room.

So much for shipboard muster.

A positive attitude is invaluable in an emergency. Unfortunately, it is also a sad but inescapable fact that not all rescue operations end happily. Superb seamanship, meticulously laid plans, your own attempts to remain afloat—may be thwarted by a fluke of luck.

Consequently, there are safety regulations. Don't lean on life lines. Don't go on deck in bad weather if you don't have to. Don't work without a life jacket if there is danger of falling overboard. Don't, don't, don't. The rules will occasionally cramp your style (a life jacket can be a hot and uncomfortable burden), but they may also save your life.

Granted, your boat crew needs the practice. But that's why they have Oscar.

—Jon Franklin, JO2, USN

KEEPING TRACK—CIC watch team plots relative position of man overboard.



ALL HANDS