

RECOMMENDATIONS

BIRMINGHAM CITY 1-8-43

MICHAEL F. BARRY, Master.

Plane Spotting Person In Water.- The army bomber spotting from the air picked up at least between 55 and 60 men, which had not a chance of being saved were it not for the boat and the bomber spotting. Those men would never have been picked up only for the assistance of the bomber and the Naval patrol boat.

Life Preserver Lights. Highly recommend the red lights. Could see a man at least a mile away. The whistle is all right, but at nighttime you hear whistle here and then there. Rowing around at night it is easy to pick up a man with a red light, but a man with a whistle I couldn't find for a long time. Those red lights were a lifesaver. The equipment which the men had at the time of effecting this rescue, was there any special means of detecting where they were? The light on the life preserver. You consider these red lights an asset? I think so much of it, I am taking it with me wherever I go. D

Whistles.- Did you have any trouble in detecting the location of the sound? Yes. And which do you consider the better of the two, the whistles or the lights? The light.

Bridle.- This bridle business. I think it should be the way we had it first. This one they have on now when you trip that pelican hook, it goes into the hook and may trip the boat over. The present bridle which is now fitted aboard the vessel, you do not consider it safe? No, sir I don't consider it safe. They should be separate. And you consider separate bridles would be better? That's right. There is no chance of catching.

Nets.- We went down so fast, that the net floated away from the ship, and when the boat turned over those fellows must have fallen into the net. My first assistant did get tangled and he was in the hospital, and he claimed that he was tangled in the nets. They should have a weight on them. Also recommend that on a loaded vessel where you have a small freight boat that the nets can be done away with; also only time he considers the nets to be of any service or use is when the vessel is running light. He disapproves of using wood as a weight to hold the net down, and recommends that a metal pipe be used full of cement or full of sand.

Oars.- The oars we had in our boats were too heavy. I recommend that in a 37 person boat that the length of the oars in same should not exceed 12 feet in length. The reason for this length is that at the time of abandonment of the vessel, as the boat is loaded to its full capacity, a longer oar than 12 feet is not required. Furthermore, by using the shorter oar it permits less interference in the handling of the oars.

Rafts.- They should be loose, they should float around. The more rafts the better, especially in a heavily laden condition.