

# CORRESPONDENCE

## The Falklands—Dieso Quality

SIR,

The judgement by Commander Bolger (*J.N.E.*, December 1982, p. 181) that the quality of Dieso arriving in the South Atlantic was as varied as the tankers that transported it is not supported by the facts.

Great care was taken to guarantee the quality of our products, including the provision of backup to handle contamination of fuels aboard the Base Support Tankers *Alvega* and *Scottish Eagle*. Where fuel was procured from outside our normal supply sources, cargoes were cleared by NGTE before acceptance.

Fuel supplies to Operation Corporate were studied in retrospect by a committee representing DG Ships, CINCFLEET, NGTE, AMTE and DGST(N). The conclusions, which were published in March 1983, stated that

Neither of these suppositions (that there had been a lower than normal quality of fuel and that some STUFT\* ships employed were unsuited to the quality control requirements) is true. All Dieso supplied was F-76 either from storage or purchased to the latest F-76 specification. All tankers taken up from trade were cleaned and tested to RFA standards, often by staff of NGTE Cobham. Indeed, such ships were on average cleaner than RFAs because they were all cleaned immediately before deployment.

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\*Ships Taken Up From Trade

## Spares Support of D.G. Ships-Sponsored Equipments

SIR,

In his letter published in the December 1982 issue of the *Journal* (pp. 323-324) Commander Thomas says that his remarks are an attempt to explain *why* problems exist in Spares Support and to give a simple outline of the difficulties obtaining.

He states that 'support activities' cannot commence until the equipment is identified; that, once identified, the supplier is required to make initial recommendations for spares; that D.G. Ships's Contract Cataloguers (private firms) deal day-to-day with the (equipment) suppliers; and that D.G. Ships has not in general had the resources to monitor or chase support activities. But no statement is made as to what these 'support activities' are, why they are necessary, why they cannot start until a certain date, or why they need to involve the employment of private firms or (by implication) additional D.G. Ships' resources.

He states that a detailed description of 'why' the complex support procedures are necessary would be long and boring, but no doubt his readers would have liked to have had some indication of the procedures (and to reason 'why' themselves?) and perhaps the subject could be aired a little further.

What is involved is, briefly:

- (a) approach to a maker of a new-to-Service piece of equipment by a Contract Cataloguer (CONCAT) appointed by D.G. Ships, to obtain from him a set of drawings of the equipment and his list of recommended spares;

- (b) transmission of those drawings and list to D.G. Ships;
- (c) examination of the drawings and list by D.G. Ships's technical personnel to approve/select the final list of components to be provided as support spares and to assess the scale to which such components should be stocked;
- (d) return of these documents to the CONCAT to establish which components may have already had Nato Stock Numbers allocated and which may be in DGST(N) stores;
- (e) submission by the CONCAT to the R.N. Codification Authority for codification of those items not already having Nato Stock Numbers;
- (f) submission of the completed list of items—all now with NATO Stock Numbers—to D.G. Ships to make an Initial Purchase (I.P.) of those components that are 'new-to-Service';
- (g) acceptance of these I.P. items into stores by DGST(N) and the issue to ships of On-Board allowances of both 'new' and already established spares;
- (h) concurrent production by the CONCAT of an Illustrated Parts Catalogue (for the ships) and a Provisioning Schedule (for DGST(N)), detailing the spares involved.

This is obviously a rather protracted affair (and 'complex', as stated by Commander Thomas).

When one considers that the personnel selecting the spare components and the scale of support for them are not the designers of the equipment, and when one considers the number of changes-of-hand that the documents are passing through, one can no doubt understand a little more readily 'why', perhaps, not always the correct components are selected for spares, or 'why' some items are over-stocked and hardly ever 'move' whilst others are under-stocked and never appear to be available on demand, or 'why' items may be incorrectly defined or referenced. Also, due to the time involved in the whole procedure, 'why' the initial stocks of spares may not have been purchased nor the Provisioning Schedule and Illustrated Parts Catalogue published by the time the user requires them; and further, as the design of the equipment may have been altered in the intervening time without those dealing with the 'spares' aspect being informed, 'why', when the spare parts do arrive in store and the documents are issued, they may reflect the wrong thing anyway.

However, as Commander Thomas states in his final paragraph—'new equipments will always be prone to spares support problems'.

But need they be?

Compared with the 'pantomime' referred to by Cdr. Thomas, it is for consideration how the equipment user might be better served if:

- (a) using the same 'value engineering' techniques they used in selecting the design of the main equipment and components, it was the designers/design approvers who selected the range of spares and assessed the scale to which they were to be supported, and applied for Nato Stock Numbers at the time that drawing approval was taking place;
- (b) the spares support figures were quoted in a couple of extra columns (On-Board and Shore Back-Up) at the side of the items list in the equipment drawing which the Design Section approves;
- (c) a copy of the equipment drawing in micro-film form was supplied to the ship (as is standard Datum Pack procedure for Configuration Controlled Ships?);
- (d) a set of spares was purchased at the same time as the main equipment, and a copy of the Items List of the drawing involved passed to DGST(N) to arrange subsequent support stocks;

- (e) the consequent absence of Illustrated Parts Catalogues gave more space on-board and fewer documents to consult/get out of step with other documents in the course of amendment.

In the June 1975 issue of the *Journal* (pp. 310–314) an article on Sparedex stated, *inter alia*:

- (a) spares requirements are assessed by the engineering specialist sections of the design authority [at headquarters];
- (b) [the Sparedex exercise showed that] the efficiency of the range carried on board was about half of what it could have been with ideal selection;
- (c) as a result [of the Sparedex exercise] it was proposed to remove approximately half of the [carried on board] range and also to place on board an additional range of ... popular items;

but as stated in the foregoing remarks, it is not the engineering *design* specialists who make the spares assessments and the problem could no doubt be largely overcome if they were—and further overcome if the process of spares selection, purchase, and documentation were simpler.

(Sgd.) H. S. Searle