

CORRESPONDENCE

SIR,

Internal Combustion Piston Engine Training

In reply to Commander J. G. Ferrie's opinions on ICPE fault-diagnosis training—Correspondence, Vol. 23, No. 2—may I offer my comments from sea.

It is considered that regular rounds of running and standby machinery is possibly the best safeguard against expensive machinery failure and to this end fault-recognition training is extremely important. All courses ashore must have an element of On-Job Training (OJT) and this very important part of the training package should include the emergency procedures and routine inspections for the machinery as fitted in the ship to which the operator is drafted. Despite the batch system, ships are different!

The introduction of unmanned machinery spaces has placed the responsibility for surveillance on the Auto-Watchkeeping Panel and not on the Mark I Eyeball of years ago. RMS and reduced complements has forced the MEOs of older ships to place the same reliance on auto-watchkeeping panels fitted to machines not necessarily suited to be so monitored, and the use of the traditional watchkeeper has declined.

Expensive failures still occur even though a machine is monitored by a sophisticated 'black box'. Do we accept the black box as the way ahead? If so, it should be designed, manufactured, and maintained in order to pre-empt such failures and, if it is, there is little point in training the junior ratings in fault diagnosis—merely to be able to start and stop the machine and switch the box on and off.

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