

SYNOPSIS

At 1851 on 20 December 2009 the Singapore registered bulk carrier *Alam Pintar* was in collision with the UK registered fishing vessel *Etoile des Ondes* 15 nm north of the Cherbourg peninsula. As a result of the collision the fishing vessel sank; one of her four crew, Chris Wadsworth, tragically lost his life.

Alam Pintar was on an east-north-easterly course between the Casquets and the Dover Strait traffic separation schemes (TSS) on her way to Hamburg. The bridge was manned by an inexperienced officer and an unqualified deck cadet.

The officer of the watch (OOW) had seen *Etoile des Ondes* and realised there was a risk of collision, but his initial alterations of course to avoid collision were rendered ineffective when the fishing vessel also changed course to start shooting her pots. Finally, *Alam Pintar's* OOW ordered the wheel hard-a-starboard, but this was too late to be effective in preventing the collision.

The master and OOW of *Alam Pintar* were aware of the collision, but failed to stop. They made no attempt to confirm if *Etoile des Ondes* and her crew were safe, and failed to report the incident. There is evidence to suggest that the crew of *Alam Pintar* subsequently attempted to alter recorded contemporaneous data to mask the vessel's involvement in the accident.

Following the collision, three of the four crew from *Etoile des Ondes* managed to abandon the vessel and board their liferaft. Sadly, the fourth crew member was lost. The surviving crew fired two red distress rockets and activated their EPIRB. The flares were seen by at least three vessels and the sighting was promptly reported to Jobourg MRCC, as the nearest coastal authority, who then co-ordinated the search and rescue operation. Jobourg MRCC broadcast three "Mayday Relay" messages, but none of the other vessels in the area responded.

The crew of *Etoile des Ondes* were eventually rescued by the ferry *Norman Voyager*, which, upon sighting the flares, immediately proceeded to render assistance.

The MAIB has published separate Safety Flyers for the commercial shipping and fishing industries, which identify the key safety lessons from this investigation. Recommendations have also been made to the International Chamber of Shipping, and the major fishing federations, to promulgate the contents of the Flyers to their associates and membership highlighting to ship operators and fishermen the importance of effective bridge teams and the maintenance of proper navigational lookouts.