

RECONSTRUCTION OF THE MEYER'S LIFEBOAT VOYAGE

Annex C to  
SPC-A minute /03  
Of May 03

Time	Wind		Wind driven current		Leeway		Boat		Current		Total	
	Dirn (fm)	Speed (kts)	Dirn	Speed (Nm)	Dirn	Distance (Nm)	Dirn	Speed (Nm)	Dirn	Speed (Nm)	Total lat chng Nm	Total Long chng Nm
23 Nov 0500	180	20	135	0.3	160	0.6	160	1.5	248	0	-5.92	-2.17
24 Nov 2300	180	20	135	0.3	339	0.6	160	1.5	248	0	-10.15	-3.72
1700	200	20	165	0.3	2.03	0.4	2.26	1.5	248	0	-10.54	-5.70
1100	190	20	145	0.3	2.75	0.45	-2.34	2.5	248	200	-13.22	-10.64
24 Nov 0600	180	20	145	0.3	-2.03	0.6	-3.38	2.5	248	200	-13.63	-11.37
23 Nov 2300	190	25	145	1	-4.91	0.4	-3.55	0.25	180	0.25	-10.52	-1.43
1700	160	20	115	0.8	-2.03	0.4	-1.70	1.5	225	180	-11.57	-0.58
1100	180	20	115	0.8	4.35	0.7	-2.97	1.5	225	180	-11.57	-0.58
23 Nov 0500	180	25	135	1	-4.24	0.4	-2.78	1.5	225	180	-14.17	0.74
22 Nov 2300	210	25	165	1	5.60	0.5	-2.78	2	248	170	-13.66	-8.35
1700	230	25	165	1	-5.98	0.5	-1.83	2	248	0	-7.91	-2.82
1100	210	20	165	0.8	-4.54	0.4	-1.84	1.5	230	0	-12.26	-4.11
22 Nov 0500	190	20	145	0.8	3.63	0.4	0.00	2.5	180	0	-16.21	1.49
21 Nov 2300	230	20	165	0.8	-4.78	0.4	-2.23	2	248	0	-8.78	-11.91
1700	190	20	145	0.8	2.75	0.6	-3.34	1.5	248	0	-10.64	-4.24
1100	190	20	145	0.8	-3.93	0.6	-3.34	1.5	248	0	-11.77	-3.83
24 Nov 0500	180	20	135	0.3	3.39	0.6	-3.34	1.5	248	0	-10.11	-0.41
20 Nov 2300	170	15	125	0.6	-2.08	0.45	-2.30	2.5	248	160	-7.86	-1.00
1700	160	15	115	0.6	-1.52	0.3	-1.27	2.5	248	150	-12.32	-3.35
1100	160	10	105	0.4	-1.01	0.3	-0.85	2	225	140	-11.27	-4.69
20 Nov 0500	150	10	105	0.4	-0.62	0.2	-1.27	2	225	140	-11.30	-4.12
19 Nov 2300	150	15	105	0.6	-0.93	0.2	-1.04	0	160	0	-2.58	3.74
1800	150	15	105	0.6	-0.78	0.2	-0.87	0	160	0	-241.04	-71.71
Total												

First guess wind provided by 80% of 3000ft wind at Geraldton, then interpolated for synoptic situation and boat observations

Direction of wind may be +/- 30 degrees

Wind strength at least +/- 5 kts

Leeway 3% (in a beam reach) of wind speed

Leeway 2% close hauled and on broad reach

Did not use AMSA standard for leeway based upon fact that lifeboat sat very low in water due to significant overloading

Boat course information is course steered with no account for any variation or deviation

All environmental directions are directions from

-ve long = west

-ve lat = south

Grey colored cells indicate derived data

Source of wind data - Bow observations

Source of current data - Aus 416, Aus Pilot for that area and routing chart

Wind driven current is 45 degrees to left of surface wind and 4% of wind strength

Conclusions

Based upon reconstruction of the Meyers lifeboat - scanty and contradictory information available on 21 and 22 Nov in particular

Cannot discount KDLS target no 3

Delmers position is less plausible

Unable to give conclusive position but available data does not support either particularly strongly

if KDLS target no 3 was the origin, it is likely that the lifeboat would have made landfall much further south and much sooner

Course analysis of movement of German floats recovered on 27th and 28th Nov indicates it is feasible

that this originated from the position derived by the working group (28 01.5S 112 06.5E)

This float is less likely to have originated from KDLS no 3

While not being experts on statistics, the working group believe it reasonable to assume total error of approx 33% of total distance - ie approx 80 Nm from derived position

Of this error, it is likely to be more south than to the north and more to the west than to the east. See comment re KDLS target no 3 and lifeboat.

Recommendations for future work

Spin up an oceanography and meteorology model (already available) from a couple of years prior and determine how non steerable floatsam would have moved

Recommendation for Navy position

KDLS target no 3 cannot be discarded, however there is evidence to show that both it and Delmers position are in error