

11 Jan 07

From: JAGMAN Investigation Team
To: Commander, Submarine Group EIGHT

Subj: COMMAND INVESTIGATION INTO THE DEATHS OF SENIOR CHIEF
THOMAS HIGGINS AND PETTY OFFICER MICHAEL HOLTZ ONBOARD USS
MINNEAPOLIS-ST PAUL (SSN 708) ON 29 DECEMBER 2006

1. On 8 January 2007, the JAGMAN investigation team met with Commander Ian Hugo, Queen's Harbor Master, Plymouth, England. He briefed the team about his knowledge of the facts and circumstances surrounding the subject investigation. In addition to providing the team with a hard-copy of his PowerPoint brief, he provided the following relevant information:

- a. Movement of ships in Plymouth harbor is based on slack high tide at narrow portions of the channel, due to funneling of currents through this area.
- b. [REDACTED] is a civilian Ministry of Defence employee.
- c. A submarine will normally be escorted out of Plymouth Harbor with three police boats, two tugboats and the pilot boat.
- d. Only one other ship was scheduled to move on 29 December 2006, a merchant vessel later in the day.
- e. United Kingdom vessels usually disembark the [REDACTED] on the 169 leg.
- f. Foreign vessels usually disembark [REDACTED] on the 250 leg, sometimes outside of the Plymouth breakwater.
- g. Typically, [REDACTED] transfers will take place at approximately 4-5 knots, but can adjust as needed.
- h. Sea conditions on 29 December 2006 at the time of the incident beyond the breakwater were exactly as expected by local authorities.
- i. The Harbor Master believes the ship made a distinction between "inside the breakwater" and "inside the lee of the breakwater."
- j. While [REDACTED] can each independently call off a transit in or out of Plymouth Harbor, the [REDACTED] retains sole authority for allowing a vessel's movement in or out

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of the harbor.

- k. Surface ships' transits in or out of Plymouth Harbor are restricted when wind speeds are greater than 30 knots.
- l. [REDACTED] are not required to inform submarine commanding officers of restrictions on surface ship movements.

