

By Mr. Alderson

MR. MOON ✓

MR. WELLS ✓

MR. MERVIN ✓

MR. MARTIN ✓

MR. LLEWYLN ✓

MR. CORNISH ✓

MR. HALLIDAY ✓

MR. GLENNY ✓

Gentlemen,

Your comments please.

on the rear.

100 Bulwark,
at sea.

Sunday 21 May 1972.

THE WELFARE OFFICER'S REPORT CONCERNING THE WELFARE OFFICERS' DINING HALL

It is now almost 4 months since I joined the ship and nearly 1 month since I initially complained about the Dining Hall.

2. You may recall that I was asked not to raise the question at the Mess meeting since this subject was being actively pursued by the then CRPA(A) Llewelyn.

3. I have also observed that from various Welfare Committee meetings, the same subject has been raised by our Mess representatives, and that Commander was going to 'look into the matter'.

4. It is most disheartening to find however, that we have not progressed one iota towards an improvement in the standard, cleanliness or service of this place that masquerades as a dining hall.

5. Subsequently, a book was placed in the Mess, entitled 'Dining Hall complaints and suggestions'. It was further stated that two volunteers would be required from the Mess to help run the dining hall. This implied that in order to reach our rightful standard - we had to do it ourselves. I strongly resent this implication, which in fact is a direct indictment against the S & S department. I do not ask for volunteers to help us send signals or telegrams, nor do the Engineers ask for volunteers to raise steam. The Dining Hall is surely the responsibility of the S & S department, whether it is delegated to a Petty Officer or Leading Hand in charge of Messmen for the domestic warts and bolts, or not.

6. Even since the sporadic burst of active improvement during our trip home from Malta during the first week of April, the Dining Hall has again deteriorated.

7. I should like to raise, inter alia, the following comments:-

a. Cleanliness and appearance. Without doubt, this is the most squalid dining hall I have ever seen, and one of the dirtiest. The deck appears to have three or four coats of ground in green together with five coats of equally ground in dirt. Furthermore, the walls could do with a good wash down.

I would have thought the recent DMP in Portsmouth (during which time it was slated for Galley work to proceed) provided an ideal opportunity for it to be repainted and the deck completely re-done. Since this was not programmed, it is suggested the Commander be asked for a night working party to close the dining hall on completion of cinema on three or four nights, and clean off the deck dirt and green, wash down bulkheads and deckheads, re apply gloss and re paint. It's sure that this could be accomplished by 4 or 5 hands (Royal Marines perhaps?) and the dining hall would remain for normal service during the day, the work being carried out at night.

Finally, its spartan appearance. Not one clock or picture or mural in sight. Surely we should be able to provide some sort of decoration to those ghastly bare bulkheads.

b. The Service. Whilst there is no complaint about the food, or its cooking processes, it is the conditions and the manner in which it is eaten which leaves much to be desired.

The state of the utensils (when you can find some), the plates, the chair covers, to dirty table cloths and the often empty condiments - is worse than most buffet bars on a British Railways station. The up dating of bread, rolls, tea, milk, butter, utensils, saucers etc, etc, is almost non-existent.

I prefer a later supper than an early one. It is most significant, that unless one goes to supper within the first 20 or 30 minutes of opening - then you have got to go searching for all the domestic warts and bolts, quite apart from sitting at crummy, dirty places. I firmly believe that with an opening time of 1730-1845, one has a right to expect the same service and layout of tables (and all that it implies) whether one enters the dining hall at 1830 or 1730.

I have noticed that invariably the Messmen are not in the dining hall during the last half of meal opening times - and if they are, one has to go and flush them out in order to replenish certain items.

o. The Messman on Duty dining hall rating. Whilst it is easy to criticize their performance (or lack of it), have they ever been given precise instructions as to what it requires? more or their terms of reference laid down? who is directly responsible for their employment? and who is supervising them?

Whilst finishing supper tonight, I witnessed the pathetic fiasco of ten Messmen clearing up. One, a Royal Marine, asked the other young ordinary seamen what to do - the CO could not tell him since he himself did not know. 'Just tidy up the tables'. This the Marine did. In true military fashion he re-aligned the sauce bottles, vinegar and salt and pepper cruetts in single file - only such measures were all empty! This clearly shows a lack of supervision, or indeed of anyone remotely interested in seeing that the job of clearing up and preparing for the next meal is done properly.

d. Misuse by members of our Mess. I am afraid that some of our own members should be called to task for taking food out of the dining hall. I have seen them collect grease proof paper from the Chef, stack up with meats various, or bread and cold meats, and proceed to make up a food parcel and take it out of the dining hall.

g. The solution?

Firstly, we must pin down the precise terms of reference for Messmen, who in charge of the domestic nuts and bolts, who preserves the dining hall etc. etc. (For example, there has been no Libbers available for the past three lunches - why? and who does one see to get it there every day?).

Is it the CPO Cook? the Dining Hall party? (if so, who is in charge, and once established, we want him there throughout the meal period) or is it the Chief Gunner? Incidentally, since the CPO Gunner is in receipt of a monthly payment, there are his terms of reference laid down? It seems that 9 o'clock snacks is the only service he provides.

Secondly, we must achieve and maintain a standard in keeping with our status.

(i) Messmen should be dressed in white Mess jackets during all meal hours.

(ii) Messmen should not smoke in and not taking cups of tea and coffee.

(iii) Messmen should not smoke in their cabooch with meals (they must have their meals at a separate time - they are their to serve US).

(iv) Messmen should make sure that Libbers, plastic cups or glasses are always available each lunch time.

(v) Messmen should constantly check and replenish tables, crockery, condiments and the tea urn (the tea never lasts out the whole supper period with the Barbican force onboard).

(vi) In addition to Libbers at lunch time, water jugs, food water and glasses should always be available on the tables.

Finally, the implementation. Clearly, it is basically lack of supervision of Messmen and the fact that most Chiefs just mean and 'go and get it themselves' or get a Messman out to replenish the milk etc. They also feel, I suspect, that it is not their part of duty to go round dripping at the Messmen.

The division of responsibility must be clearly stated, the precise 'job to be done' be defined and carried out and the supervision must be continuous.

Falling the involvement of this alleged 'A S involvement' - the only other solution is to have a Duty Chief's Mess President, to whom the Petty Officer or Leading Hand would report personally, 20 or 30 minutes before and after each meal, that the dining hall is in all respects ready for use, and that Messmen are lined up in the correct rig etc. etc.

We have just embarked on a 2 month period at sea - for pity's sake - LET US GET IT RIGHT - NOW.

A. P. WILSON

By Mr. Mackay.

Also, all so very true, but I understand
improvements, — are on the way. 1/25/72

By Mr. Mackay.

There has been an improvement recently, with
the wood fall off after the initial screws event or
I agree with everything that has been said. 1/26/72

By Mr. Glenny.

As above, a general overall improvement since Mr. Brown
gave the dining hall partly their terms of reference. However,
one thing that depressed me more than any other is the
C.P.O. who, finding that saucers & side plates are not
available, does without — rather than grab the nearest
by the horns & demand these utensils. The other
thing is those chair covers — surely between the sets available
one good one can be made & the rest used for rags etc
better to have all chairs well covered, or none covered (during
laundry periods) than a perpetual ragged shambles!

Incidentally many people do not know that the water cooler in
our dining hall works — it does, but cold water out of a
cup seems unenriched; for what reason are glasses withheld from us?