

Some remarks regarding the “log book”. R.W. page 54, 55.

1. General

A log book should record events as they happen, just factual events, no opinions, no emotions, it is not a report, but serves as a source of information to create a report. Some rules: mistakes, errors are deleted in such a way that the deleted item(s) remain legible. Corrections are to be signed. No erasers, liquid paper to be used.

“Salvage Log Book”

What kind of a log book is this supposed to be? There certainly was kept on the Stena Workhorse a Deck/Bridge Log Book, an Engine Log Book, and surely a log book, detailing any activity regarding the ROV.

It is surprising that SAA found it necessary to have a log book specifically printed with company logo and for the Helderberg salvage operation. Rather unusual. Or did they keep them in stock as part of normal office supplies? The above mentioned three log books would fully suffice to cover the operation and serve as a basis for a detailed report.

2. That there are only eight entries covering a complex operation of six hours, is puzzling, and signifies a lack of experience and/or imagination.
3. They obviously took shifts to observe the ROV operation. It is unusual to have each entry signed by the person keeping the log. It is customary and sufficient for the log keeper to sign only at the end of her or his shift.
4. Assuming that events were recorded as they happened, it is fantastic that by chance the box was immediately recognized as the CVR! The FDR does not look so much different, does it!? Given the state of deep water TV – technology at that time, plus a naturally difficult lighting situation, where in water suspended matter interferes with lights, plus possibly more sediment stirred up by the movement of the ROV, and all that in B/W or grayshades, it is a miracle to identify anything in the background of a TV picture that is not still but constantly moving.
5. There is no place in a log book for emotional outbursts. Recorded are EVENTS, no more, no less!! What does the remark: “APU Exhaust Duct Ugly Close” mean?! How close? In metres, inches, miles it would have a meaning, - ugly close - means nothing. These are unnecessary, unprofessional entries, straight from the movies.

Summary

A nice document, which reminds me of Hollywood, and as usual, they lay it up to thick. To get a true picture of what happened when, where, and how, the log books mentioned under 1. would suffice. This log book or sheet is an example of either ignorance, incompetence or lack of imagination, thus a document of irrelevance, entertaining at best.

1.

SAA SOUTH AFRICAN AIRWAYS		"HELDERBERG" SALVAGE OPERATION LOG BOOK		STA:
DATE	TIME	REMARKS	NAME	
99-01-08	09:00 ⁽²⁰⁸⁾	LOCATED COCKPIT VOICE 4. RECORDER. Pos: 3183-1097		
		THIS TIME THE "B" TEAM REALLY DID IT. 5.		←
		APU EXHAUST DUCT VERY CLOSE		
"	10:15	VIDEO TAPE N ^o 83 INSURED.		←
"	10:15	RECORDER SAFELY SECURED AND ROV. ON ITS WAY TO SURFACE.		←
"	10:00	OPS CALAMAR NOTIFIED BY TELCO.		←
"	12:00	SHIFT HANDLED OVER TO WALLY STAMPAKUS WITH ROV. AT 8,100 FT		←
	12:20	Tape (video) no. 84 inserted	B. P. ...	←
	14:10	CVR REMOVED FROM ROV BY DIVER. PLACED IN CONTAINER INSIDE BASKET. ON DECK AT 14:25		←
	15:00	SHIP ON WAY TO PORT ETA 08:00 HRS 7 th JAN		←

2.

3.

The log book entry noting the locating of the CVR and a self-congratulatory pat on the back: "This time the "B"-team really did it."

(DCA)