

## The Vanguard Court-Martial.

(BY SPECIAL TELEGRAM TO THE BROAD ARROW)

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The court martial on Captain Dawkins and the officers and crew of Her Majesty's ship *Vanguard* was resumed on Friday morning on board the *Royal Adelaide*, lying in the Hamoaze. Admiral John Hay presided.

The President and other members of the court strictly cross examined Captain Dawkins as to his reasons for ordering the pumps to be deserted and the ship to be abandoned. He said he noted on reports made to him by Commander Tandy, Commander Young, and the chief engineer. He did not go below to verify these by personal observation, as it was unnecessary, it being obvious that the ship was sinking. He knew that if water was pouring through No. 99 bulkhead, and that it could not be checked, no pumps could be of any use. He was anxious above everything to save the lives of his crew, and did not know but that at any moment the *Vanguard* would go down bodily. From the situation nothing could prevent the provision room flat filling, and the ship must inevitably founder.

Why were the men ordered into the boats when the pumps had just been manned through the advice of the chief engineer, who had observed the water coming in less rapidly than before?—Because the ship was sinking more rapidly than she had done before, and I had remained by the ship longer than the judgment of my principal officers advised me to do, and it being evident the ship would founder with all of us on board. It was my duty knowing she was lost, to save the lives of the crew. In this opinion the chief engineer concurred acknowledging that he had made a mistake about further pumping, as it was useless.

Was it twenty minutes before the ship foundered when you left the ship?—By the log I had left her a quarter of an hour before she foundered.

Did an hour and twelve minutes elapse between the collision and the foundering of the vessel?—Yes.

Were the whole of the ship's company on board the last time you gave the order for the pumps to cease working?—No. I had previously sent a portion of the men—a couple of boats' crew that I knew could be spared—to the *Iron Duke*, knowing in my own mind at that time—

The President: The simple answer to that question is enough. We don't want the reason. How many men remained?—About two thirds—230 out of 340.

Considering that the ship took an hour and twelve minutes to founder, and that the sea was smooth, can you give any explanation of no attempt being made to stop or check the leak, either by sails outside or materials inside shored up against the site of the leak?—The shoring up of the fracture from inside I consider not practicable at all; at the time I felt the *Vanguard* to be sinking there was no time then to get sails prepared to go over the side; the suggestion of sails was never made to me, neither do I conscientiously believe, when I first knew the *Vanguard* was going, that I could have got them up, or that they would have been ready for service before the vessel foundered.

Considering that the ship took about one hour and twelve minutes to founder, explain why no effort was made to tow the ship on to the banks, with eleven fathoms of water on it, at the time of collision, about eight

cables distant?—I did send a message to Captain Hickley to see if he could take us in tow, and I am not sure whether he received it, but I believe Captain Hickley did not consider it practicable.

Did you?—If the *Iron Duke's* hemp cable had been ready it might have been done, but Captain Hickley entertained the same opinion as myself, that the *Vanguard* would have gone down half an hour before she did.

Believing that your ship could be taken in tow by the *Iron Duke*, did you order Captain Hickley to take the *Vanguard* in tow?—Yes. My message was—"Ask Captain Hickley if he will take us in tow." No answer was received.

Did not your navigating officer suggest to you to take the ship into shallower water?—No.

Does it appear that the ship foundered eight cables from twelve fathoms?—Yes.

Robert Brown, chief engineer of the *Vanguard*, was recalled and examined. He believed there were two covers of the wing passages off at the time of the collision to prevent the generation of a noxious gas from the paint which had been applied. The whole of the double bottomed doors were screwed down tight before the ship proceeded on her cruise, and were not to his knowledge taken off again. The water from the fracture could not have found its way into the wing passages which had the covers off, as they were protected by bulkheads the water tight doors of which were closed. He knew that these doors leaked, but the water had not risen high enough to flow into those passages when they left the ship. Witness believed he was entirely responsible for the water tight space and wing passages. Witness did report to the captain immediately after the collision that the ship was sinking, and he regretted having used the word "sinking," his meaning being not that she would go down at once, but to make the captain understand the serious nature of the injury the ship had sustained.

The cross examination of this witness was continued on Saturday, with a view to fix the liability of the subordinate officers for closing the doors and rigging the pumps, and also to the extent to which the pumps could reach the various compartments. The purport of the answer went to indicate considerable delays in making the compartments watertight. The stoke-hole doors could only be closed one at a time, as the ship had only been supplied with one spanner. When the witness reported to the captain five minutes after the collision that the watertight doors were closed, he meant only the doors requisite to confine the leak, and so he believed the captain understood him. The doors in the 117 bulkhead, as well as those in 25 abaft the sick bay, he knew were open, and as there was no likelihood of the water passing through them, he thought it was quite unnecessary to close them under the circumstances, as they could have been got to at any time. As to the doors in the after parts of the shaft alleys, he judged it of far more importance to close the outer than the inner ones; and when the outer were closed the inner could not be got at, even if there had been no water there. The water got into the provision room principally from the starboard door in 99 bulkhead, from which it ran down into the starboard provision room and thence over the starboard shaft alley through the provision room amidships. There was only a very low combing of 1 1/2 in. to 2 in. above the deck. From the beginning the ship had a list to starboard, and nearly all the water that leaked through the bulkhead above the

lower deck ran down into the starboard, provision room. This accounted for the water never having been at any depth on that deck, and including the leakage from the doors, more water came through the ninety nine bulkhead than could be pumped out by the 7 inch pump continuously worked. He saw no water in any other of the four compartments or spaces abaft 99 bulkhead; when he suggested to Captain Dawkins that the ship might be towed into shallow water, he saw Captain Dawkins look over the side, and say, to some one apparently in a boat alongside—"The chief engineer suggests that the ship should be taken in tow, will you take the message to the *Iron Duke*?" The orders of the Admiralty regarding watertight compartments were complied with while in harbour, but while on cruise it was not strictly worked once a week, but portions of them were examined and worked whilst at anchor.

Captain Hope: It is in evidence that at the time of the collision the engines were moving ahead. Did you, hearing the rush of water, order the bilge injection to be turned on?—No. The *Vanguard* was fitted with surface condensers, and the means provided, instead of bilge injections, was to alter the condensers from surface to common. To effect the requisite changes it was necessary to get below the plates of the engine room floor, and it could not have been done in less than seven minutes for each engine, or half an hour for the four engines, and I saw that it was hopeless to effect these changes before the engine room was flooded. All four engines could have been worked together, with sufficient men that understood them. Two would be required for each engine. The *Vanguard's* engines were fitted with circulating pumps, and by the changes I have indicated the circulating pumps became bilge pumps.

Then was this the only bilge injection possible?—Yes; but besides there were four of the ordinary plunger bilge pumps driven by the engines.

Was the valve in connection with the steam pump and the main drain a stop valve?—Yes. It was the practice to keep it closed, and it was necessary to do so, because there was a suction from the sea on a branch of the same pipe. The engines were also intended to be used as fire engines, and if the sea communication and the valve were open together there was nothing to prevent the ship being flooded through the drain valves. The stop valve could only be got at below the stoke-hole plates.

Is not, in your opinion, the arrangement of the suction communication from the steam pump to the main drain a most objectionable one?—Yes; I consider it should have been a non return valve, and it would also be an advantage if the stop valve was capable of being worked from the lower deck.

When the court reassembled on Monday, the same witness described, in answer to the president, how the water passed into the stokehole:—"There were ventilation holes cut in 85 bulkhead, and also in 67 on both sides of the ship, and after the engine room was full the water would pass in among the coals, and then forward through the opening in 85, after filling the space that was open to be filled in the coal boxes which pass out through 67, just above the athwart ship doors of 67 bulkhead. The ventilation holes were immediately under the lower deck, and were eight inches long and four wide. There was a strip of sheet iron over them, but it was not watertight. These holes were made by the dockyard in June last."