

# Letters to the Editor

## THE VALUE OF MOON SIGHTS

SIR,

I was particularly interested in S. M. Burton's article, *The Value of Moon Sights* (Vol. V, p. 139). I recall that thirty years ago, when I was third officer, the master tried to discourage me from taking Moon sights, pointing out that, to use his own words, 'the Moon travels too fast, does as much in a month as the Sun does in a year, much too fast for accuracy—don't waste your time on it'. However, I persevered with daytime fixes of the Moon and Venus, and after a few months was able to convert the 'Old Man'.

In my experience I found such sights preferable to observations of the Sun, and in 1936 when I was given the job of standardizing and raising the general level of the U.S. Merchant Marine officer examinations throughout the various inspection ports, I introduced such fixes into the examination syllabus of Masters and Mates. Today, at our United States Merchant Marine Academy, our cadet-midshipmen are similarly trained to use such fixes.

Mr. Burton is to be congratulated upon his article. The percentages are, as he says, somewhat surprising.

Superintendent,  
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Yours faithfully,  
Gordon McLintock,  
Rear Admiral, U.S.M.S.

It is interesting to note that B. Chr. Peterson in his investigation of the accuracy of sights (Vol. V, p. 37) concluded that the accuracy of daylight Moon sights probably exceeded that of Sun sights. Members may like to contribute their own views on this matter.—Ed.

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## ADMIRALTY CHART 2649

SIR,

I have studied with interest the coloured contouring of Admiralty Chart 2649, but must admit disappointment in that the colouring stops short at the 400-ft. contour. I realize that there must be many shades of opinion on this problem and that the economics must be considered; nevertheless I would like to emphasize some of the points I made in the discussion reported in this *Journal* (Vol. 3, No. 2, p. 163).

I regard the 200-ft. contour as an extremely important one for a number of reasons. It begins to rise above the radar horizon of a radar aerial 50 ft. above the sea at about 27 miles. This is the kind of distance from land at which the navigator seems to begin to take an active interest in a 'radar' landfall and it is also near the maximum range of many radar sets. If the land at this height has good echoing characteristics from the observer's angle of view it may provide the first identifiable shore target.

The 200-ft. contour is, so to speak, an interesting one. In most parts of the world the land reaches this height in the coastal area; this is much less often true of the 400-ft. contour. The 200-ft. contour frequently has much character,