

AIR-4041:WHH

12 OCT 1966

TENTH ENDORSEMENT on subject record

From: Commander, Naval Air Systems Command
To: Chief of Naval Operations

Subj: Inves. - Death of WEBSTER, Douglas M 1310, LTJG, USN
on 5 December 1965 onboard USS TICONDEROGA (CVA-14); rolling
aircraft over number two elevator outboard guard rail

Ref: (c) NAVAIRSYSCOMHQ Ltr Ser AIR-5376D/14:FWD of 12 Aug 1966

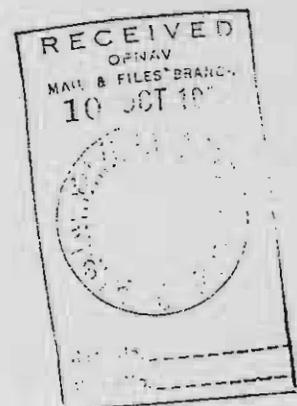
1. Forwarded.

2. Review of ref (b) by ref (c) determined that installation of a 12-inch deck edge coaming definitely offered advantage. However, all present U. S. Naval aircraft have been designed in accordance with General Specification for Design and Construction of Aircraft Weapon Sys 5D-24J, which only provides 6-inch minimum clearance for weapons and aircraft appendages. The Naval Air Systems Command considered that the cost to modify aircraft and associated loading configurations to accommodate the 12-inch coaming would be prohibitive. It was therefore concluded that the deck edge coaming height would be restricted to 6 inches.

B-6

By direction

Copy to:
COMNAVAIRPAC



Op-09BLL/jm
705P09BLL
17 October 1966

ELEVENTH ENDORSEMENT on Captain
of 30 December 1965

ltr

From: Chief of Naval Operations
To: Judge Advocate General

Subj: Inves. - Death of WEBSTER, Douglas M., '1310,
Lieutenant (junior grade), U. S. Navy, on 5 Dec 1965

1. Returned, contents noted.

By direction

All redactions are B-6

77

12

11 1st 1736-66

CVA14
Ser 522.33-658

NINTH ENDORSEMENT on subject record

From: Commander, Naval Ship Systems Command
To: → Chief of Naval Operations
Via: Commander, Naval Air Systems Command

12 AUG 1966

Subj: Inves. - Death of *Boyles M. - 1310* WESTER, Douglas M. - 1310, LTJG, USN
on 5 December 1965 onboard USS TICONDEROGA (CVA14); rolling
aircraft over number two elevator outboard guard rail

Ref: (b) NAVSEC ltr to NAVAIRSYSCOMHQ CVAN68/9110 Ser 6443-131 of
11 July 66 (NOTAL)

1. Readdressed and forwarded to NAVAIRSYSCOMHQ in view of reference (b) which was sent subsequent to NAVAIRSYSCOMHQ SEVENTH ENDORSEMENT of 25 April 66.
2. Recommendation 3 of the Investigation Report states that the removable guard railing on the outboard edge of number two aircraft elevator should be redesigned to incorporate additional strength and height. It is noted that the present height of 6" is required by NAVAIRSYSCOMHQ.
3. Installation of this guard rail was intended as a means to stop tractors and forklift trucks. It was not intended to apply to aircraft. Subsequently, consideration was given to the problem of stopping a sliding or slow-rolling aircraft subject to sliding; either resulting from a slippery flight deck condition. Thus, the function of the stopping means was to arrest a sliding aircraft whose speed is estimated at not more than one knot. This did not extend to rolling aircraft alone since the stopping means was not intended to compensate for aircraft brake malfunction or inattentive aircraft operation, which is the case in point. As a result, ShipAlt CVA 2832 and CVS 500 were issued to install rigid 6" coaming at port and starboard flight deck edges. This did not include the number two deck edge elevator since this area is within the bolter pattern. The 6" limitation for these coamings is also specified by NAVAIRSYSCOMHQ.
4. Recent studies were made by NAVSHIPSYSCOMHQ relative to determining optimum size of coamings to prevent aircraft from skidding off the flight deck and aircraft elevators. The following determinations were made:
 - a. The height of the coaming is more critical than its strength.
 - b. When an aircraft is moving at one knot and the ship is heeled at ten degrees, a 6" coaming will not prevent the nose wheel of any aircraft from rolling over the coaming.
 - c. A 12" coaming would be optimum for the prevention of the nose wheel from rolling over the coaming. It is noted that the accident occurred

CVA14
Ser 522.33-658

as the aircraft was backed on to the elevator. A 12" coaming regardless of its inherent strength will not prevent an aircraft from toppling under similar circumstances.

5. NAVAIRSYSOMHQ, in view of the above, has been requested to comment on the desirability of retaining a 6" coaming or providing a 12" coaming. Implementation of a higher coaming recommended by the Investigation report would be considered if NAVAIRSYSOMHQ accepts the 12" coaming.

Copy to:
COMNAVAIRPAC

B-6

B-6
Deputy Commander for
Fleet Maintenance & Logistics

All redactions
are B-6.

Pers F21-jmy
Ser: F2/985

MAY 11 1966

EIGHTH ENDORSEMENT on CAPT

: ltr of 30 Dec 1965

From: Chief of Naval Personnel
To: Chief of Naval Operations
Via: Chief, Bureau of Ships

Subj: Inves. - Death of WEBSTER, Douglas M.. . . /1310, LTJG, USN
on 5 December 1965

1. Forwarded.
2. The investigation is concerned with the loss overboard of an A-4E jet aircraft during an aircraft movement evolution. It was disclosed that LTJG WEBSTER either failed to respond properly to the director's signal to apply brakes or the aircraft suffered complete failure of the braking system on the Number Two Elevator and rolled over the side. LTJG WEBSTER was not able to extricate himself from the cockpit and was lost at sea.
3. There was no evidence of malfeasance or gross negligence on the part of the handling crew or any other naval personnel which contributed to this accident. In view of the foregoing, no further administrative action is contemplated by the Chief of Naval Personnel.

By direction

NWSA
FSA-ATP
25 April 1966

SEVENTH ENDORSEMENT on subject record

From: Chief, Bureau of Naval Weapons
To: Chief of Naval Operations
Via: (1) Chief of Naval Personnel
(2) Chief, Bureau of Ships

Subj: Inves. - Death of WEBSTER, Douglas M., ^{B-6} 1310, LTJG, USN on
5 December 1965

1. Forwarded, contents noted.

B-6
By direction

BUMED:3331;JLS:als (D)
B-6 7
668086
14 April 1966

SIXTH ENDORSEMENT on subject record

From: Chief, Bureau of Medicine and Surgery
To: Chief of Naval Operations
Via: (1) Chief, Bureau of Naval Weapons
(2) Chief of Naval Personnel
(3) Chief, Bureau of Ships

Subj: Inves. - Death of WEBSTER, Douglas M., B-6/1310, LTJG, USN
on 5 December 1965

1. Forwarded, contents noted.

B-6)
/ By direction

JAG: 332:jce
Bnd #1736-66
6 APR 1966

FIFTH ENDORSEMENT on subject record

From: Judge Advocate General
To: Chief of Naval Operations
Via: (1) Chief, Bureau of Medicine and Surgery
(2) Chief, Bureau of Naval Weapons
(3) Chief, Bureau of Naval Personnel
(4) Chief, Bureau of Ships

Subj: Inves. - Death of WEBSTER, Douglas M. 176/1310, LTJG, USN
on 5 December 1965

1. Forwarded for information and return.
2. Under provisions of the Servicemen's and Veteran's Survivor and Benefits Act (10 USC 1475-1480), payment of the death gratuity is not dependent upon Department of the Navy determination of conduct and line of duty status at time of the death of LTJG ..
3. Payment of other federal death benefits that may be due the survivors will be determined by the Veterans Administration on the basis of the actual facts and circumstances contained in subject investigation and independently of any conclusions and opinions expressed in the report.
4. The proceedings in the attached case have been conducted in substantial compliance with the requirements of the Manual of the Judge Advocate General and are therefore legal.

By direction

B-6

mjc

4-29-66

28 MAR 1966

5830
Ser 011/ 1781

25 MAR 1966

FOURTH ENDORSEMENT on CAPT *B-6* s ltr of 30 December 1965

From: Commander Naval Air Force, U.S. Pacific Fleet
To: Judge Advocate General

Subj: Formal Board of Investigation to inquire into the circumstances surrounding an aircraft accident which occurred on board USS TICONDEROGA (CVA-14), on 5 December 1965 *death of*

1. Readdressed and forwarded.
2. With respect to recommendation 3, the Industrial Manager, USN, San Diego has been requested to determine the feasibility of redesigning the elevator guard rail on the outboard edge of number two elevator to stop and hold aircraft under conditions such as existed at the time of this accident. If the redesign proves feasible considering weight and cost factors, the replacement guard rail will be installed in USS TICONDEROGA (CVA-14) during the post deployment restricted availability.
3. Subject to the foregoing, the proceedings, findings of fact, opinions, and recommendations of the Board of Investigation and the implementing actions by the convening authority, are approved.

Copy to:
COMSEVENTHFLT
COMCARDIV NINE
COMATKCARSTRIKEFORSEVENTHFLT

B-6
B-6
Chief of Staff



*1 with 5 Dec to
apc on board ship
Politz*

Bnd # 1736-66

NAVAL MESSAGE

NAVY DEPARTMENT

P 050854Z
FM USS TICONDEROGA

FILE COPY
1965 DEC 6 01 5
ACTION

TO SECNAV

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PORTIONS UNDERLINED.
DESTROY ALL OTHER COPIES.

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UNCLAS E F T O

EFTO

PERSONNEL CASUALTY REPORT
VA-56

- A. BUPERS MAN ART C-9801
- B. ALPACFLT 84, 85

- 1. FOL REPT IAW REF A AND B:
- A. DOUGL. MOORE, MC *B6* LTJG

USN

- B. ACTIVE DUTY ATKRON 56
- C. DROWNED BODY NOT RECOVERED, ✓ - *B1*
- D. 0514501 DEC -27-35N/131-19E - *B1* A/C MOVING
ON NUMBER TWO ELEVATOR TO BE TAKEN TO FLIGHT DECK, A/C ROLLED OVERBOARD
WITH PILOT IN COCKPIT.
- E. BODY NOT RECOVERED - SEARCH TERMINATED

BUPENS(1)//BUMED(2)...ACT
05...COG

SECNAV 00 09 090 09B 01 03 33 50 56 92(2) 007 JAG IP FP BFR

CORRECTED PER CDO#5/1/LO

CONTROL NO.	PAGE OF	PAGE	TIME OF RECEIPT	DATE TIME GROUP
C05344/1/EW/JL	1	2	2133Z 5 DEC 65	050854Z DEC 65

NAVAL MESSAGE

EFTU

All redactions are B-6

NAVY DEPARTMENT

F. PRIMARY:
CALIFORNIA -- WIFE. (SECONDARY):
WARREN, OHIO -- FATHER:
WARREN, OHIO -- MOTHER
G. NO -- PRIMARY AND SECONDARY
H. LINE OF DUTY
I. 28 SEPT 65
J. 1
CALIFORNIA

[Redacted] B6

HANFORD, B6

2. REQUEST NAS LEMOORE MAKE PAYMENT DEATH GRATUITY

3. SAME AS ITEM NR ONE
K. REQUEST COM 12TH ND ASSIGN
L. CAUCASIAN/PRESBYTERIAN
M. 1. RIO GRANDE NAT'L LIFE INS, CO, POLICY
251 N. FIELD ST
DALLAS, TEXAS

2. SERVICE LIFE INS, CO. 192293
400W VICKERY
FORT WORTH, TEXAS

3. AMERICAN FIDELITY LIFE INS, CO (NUMBER UNKNOWN)
1528 BARRANCAS AVE.
PENSACOLA, FLORIDA

4. SERVICEMAN GROUP LIFE INS.
N. 1. (02) LTJG

2. BP 407.40 DOLS
AVN (CM) 125.00 DOLS
HFP 65.00 DOLS

FSA-T 30.00 DOLS

3. 2 YR 3 MONTHS 12 DAYS
0. REMARK - PILOT ELIG. FOR HOSTILE FIRE PAY FOR MONTHS OF
NOVEMBER - DECEMBER

CONTROL NO.	PAGE	OF	PAGE	TIME OF RECEIPT	DATE TIME GROUP
C05346/1	2		2		050854Z DEC 65

FF/7/AAK:sd
5830 436
Ser N13

4 FEB 1966

THIRD ENDORSEMENT on CAPT *B-6*

Ltr of 30 December 1965

From: Commander SEVENTH Fleet
To: Judge Advocate General
Via: (1) Commander Naval Air Force U.S. Pacific Fleet
(2) Commander in Chief U.S. Pacific Fleet

Subj: Formal Board of Investigation to inquire into the circumstances surrounding an aircraft accident which occurred on board USS TICONDEROGA (CVA-14), on 5 December 1965

1. Forwarded, concurring in the findings of fact, opinions and recommendations of the Board of Investigation.

Copy to:
COMCARDIV 9

B-6

FF3/77:l:bt
1650
Ser 25
21 January 1966

SECOND ENDORSEMENT on CAPT

B-6

tr of 30 DEC 65

From: Commander Attack Carrier Striking Force SEVENTH Fleet
To: Judge Advocate General
Via: (1) Commander SEVENTH Fleet
(2) Commander Naval Air Force U. S. Pacific Fleet
(3) Commander in Chief U. S. Pacific Fleet

Subj: Formal Board of Investigation to inquire into the circumstances surrounding an aircraft accident which occurred on board USS TICONDEROGA (CVA 14), on 5 December 1965

1. Forwarded.
2. The proceedings, findings of fact, opinions and recommendations of the investigation, and the action of the convening authority, are approved.

B-67

Copy to:
COMCARDIV 9

1-192

FB9-CVA(1:jhs)
5830
Ser 409
31 December 1965

FIRST ENDORSEMENT on CAPT

BS

ltr of 30 December 1965

From: Commander Carrier Division NINE
To: Judge Advocate General
Via: (1) Commander Task Force SEVENTY SEVEN
(2) Commander SEVENTH Fleet
(3) Commander Naval Air Force, U. S. Pacific Fleet
(4) Commander in Chief, U. S. Pacific Fleet

Subj: Formal Board of Investigation to inquire into the circumstances surrounding an aircraft accident which occurred on board USS TICONDEROGA (CVA-14), on 5 December 1965

1. Readdressed and forwarded.
2. The proceedings, findings of fact, opinions and recommendations of the Board of Investigation are approved as submitted.
3. By copy of this endorsement the Commanding Officer, USS TICONDEROGA (CVA-14), is directed to implement recommendations 1 and 2 of the Record of Proceedings.

BS

30 December 1965

From: Captain *B-6* USN, 1310
To: Commander Carrier Division NINE

Subj: Formal Board of Investigation to inquire into the circumstances surrounding an aircraft accident which occurred on board USS TICONDEROGA (CVA-14), on 5 December 1965

Ref: (a) COMCARDIV NINE ltr 5830 ser 364 of 8 December 1965

Encl: (1) Report of Formal Board of Investigation

1. As directed by reference (a), a Formal Board of Investigation was convened on 11 December 1965. The original record and 20 complete copies thereof are forwarded herewith as enclosure (1).

B-6
Captain, U. S. Navy
Senior Member

~~RECORD COPY~~
ATTACH
~~DELETED~~

~~FILE~~

FORMAL BOARD OF INVESTIGATION

OF

AIRCRAFT ACCIDENT

5 DECEMBER 1965

INVOLVING

USS TICONDEROGA CVA-14

AIRCRAFT

RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS

of a

FORMAL BOARD OF INVESTIGATION

convened on board

USS TICONDEROGA (CVA-14)

by order of

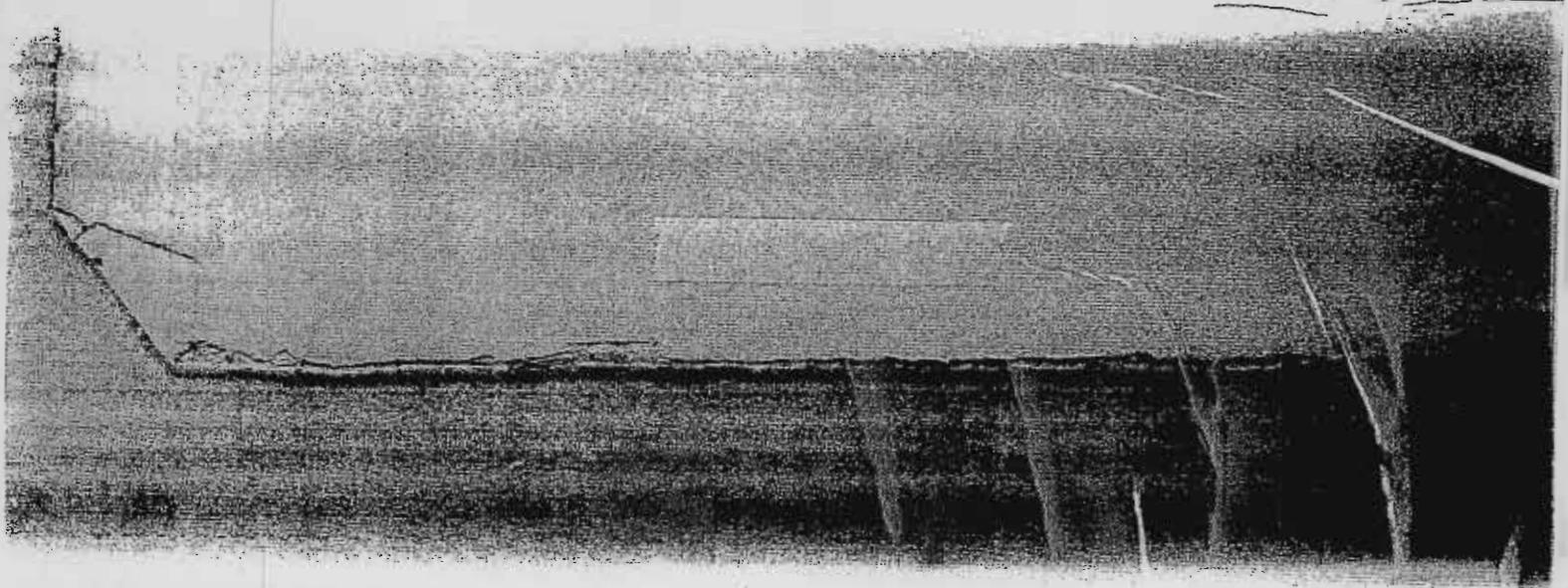
Commander Carrier Division NINE

To inquire into an aircraft accident on board

USS TICONDEROGA (CVA-14) which occurred on

5 December 1965

Ordered on 8 December 1965



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All redactions are TS-6

FIRST DAY TESTIMONY

<u>Name</u>	<u>Duty Assignment</u>	
LT	Flight Surgeon	1
LCDR	Maintenance Officer (VA-56)	3
ABH2	Hangar Bay Two Supervisor	5
, AN	Number Two Elevator Operator	11
, AN	Safety Director	14
, AN	Safety Director	15
, AA	Chock man (Starboard Side)	17
CDR	Weapons Officer	18
AA	Chock man (Port side)	21
, AA	Tie Down Man (Nose Strut)	24
, AN	Safety Director	28
, AA	Tie Down Man (Starboard Strut)	32
, AN	Bomb Truck Pusher	33
, AN	Plane Captain (VA-56)	36

SECOND DAY TESTIMONY

LCDR	Operations Officer (VA-56)	43
	Plane Director	47

THIRD DAY TESTIMONY

LT	Hangar Deck Officer	54
CDR	Navigator	57

FOURTH DAY TESTIMONY

LCDR	Meteorology Officer	61
LCDR	Assistant CIC Officer	62
CDR	Counsel for the Board	63

All witnesses were called for the board.

EXHIBITS

Exhibit 1	Composite Diagram of Hangar Bay Two and Number Two Elevator.
Exhibit 2A	Photograph of A4E on Number Two Elevator - Looking Aft.
Exhibit 2B	Photograph of Number Two Elevator (annotated) - Looking Aft.
Exhibit 2C	Photograph of A4E on Number Two Elevator - Looking Forward.
Exhibit 2D	Photograph of Number Two Elevator - Looking Forward.

COMMANDER CARRIER DIVISION NINE
FLEET POST OFFICE
SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA 96601

FB9-CVA(1:jhs)
5830
Ser 364
8 December 1965

From: Commander Carrier Division NINE
To: Captain _____, USN, /1310

Subj: Investigation to Inquire into the Circumstances Surrounding
the loss on 5 December 1965 of A-4E, BUNO 151022 and the
pilot thereof, Lieutenant Junior Grade Douglas M. WEBSTER,
USN, /1310

Ref: (a) Judge Advocate General Manual

1. In accordance with Chapter V of reference (a), a Formal Board of Investigation is hereby appointed to inquire into the circumstances surrounding the loss on 5 December 1965 of A-4E, BUNO 151022 and the pilot thereof, LTJG Douglas M. WEBSTER, USN, _____/1310. The Board will convene on board USS TICONDEROGA (CVA-14) at 0900 on 9 December 1965, or as soon thereafter as practical.
2. The Board shall consist of you as senior member, CDR _____, USN, _____/1310, and CDR _____, USNR, _____/1315.
3. The Board will conduct a thorough investigation into all the circumstances connected with the loss of a pilot and aircraft as stated in paragraph 1. Report your findings of fact, opinions, and recommendations as to the cause of the incident, the resulting damage and loss of government property, the circumstances attending the death of members of the naval service, and responsibility for the incident including any recommended administrative or disciplinary action.
4. Your duty to designate individuals as parties to the investigation during the proceedings is delineated in section 0302 of reference (a).
5. The Board will be furnished the necessary reporters and clerical assistance for recording and transcribing the testimony of witnesses and assisting you in preparing the report of the results of the investigation. In preparing and submitting your report you will be guided by the provisions of reference (a).

All redactions
are B6

PRELIMINARY STATEMENT

1. Approximately two (2) hours after the loss of an A-4E aircraft and pilot on board USS TICONDEROGA (CVA-14) verbal orders were given by Commander Carrier Division NINE, the senior officer present, to convene an informal board of investigation. Subsequently it was determined that a formal board should be convened. The initial investigative efforts carried out by Commanders B.V. and P.V. within the concept of an informal board of investigation were utilized as the basis for determining selection of witnesses and procurement of evidence for the formal board. All witnesses of the accident were interviewed in an effort to uncover every last detail which might bear on the accident. The witnesses which appeared before the board were selected from those who had specific responsibilities in the movement of the aircraft and those who either observed the accident or participated in the attempted recovery of the pilot. Many people were interviewed who were not called as witnesses because they were unable to add any information of a significant or unique nature.
2. In addition to preliminary interviews, pertinent measurements were made in the area of the accident and photographs were taken. Exhibit 2 is a series of four (4) photographs, taken from the Flight Deck level, of the Number Two Elevator in position at Hangar Deck level. The first two (2) were taken with the camera looking aft and the other two (2) with the camera looking forward. Exhibits 2A and 2C are views of an A4 aircraft positioned on the elevator. The aircraft was not moved between the exposures. Counsel for the board obtained the measurements personally which were then superscribed on the negative and subsequently printed as Exhibit 2B.
3. Exhibit 1 is a composite diagram of the positions of key individuals during the movement of the aircraft. All personnel are depicted in the position they indicated during questioning before the board. No significant disagreement existed in the initial location of the aircraft or the path of its movement or in the positions of the personnel involved as depicted by each person on separate diagrams of the immediate area including Hangar Bay Two and the Number Two Elevator. Thus, Exhibit 1 is submitted in lieu of the ten (10) cumbersome and individually less informative rough diagrams.
4. The board enjoyed the full cooperation of all personnel who were contacted in any capacity on board USS TICONDEROGA and the ships of the destroyer screen in company. Particular effort, in compliance with paragraphs 3 and 4 of the appointing order, was directed toward determining culpability either by commission or omission with attendant designation as party. However, at no time during the preliminary investigation or the subsequent board sessions was it apparent that designation as an interested party should logically be made. No parties were designated.

The board, after inquiring into all the facts and circumstances connected with the accident which occasioned the investigation, and having considered the evidence, finds as follows:

FINDINGS OF FACT

1. That on the afternoon of 5 December 1965, USS TICONDEROGA (CVA-14) was engaged in a ^{B-1} exercise, a phase of which required the movement of aircraft.
2. That the ship was at Flight Quarters for the exercise.
3. That A4E Bureau Number 151022 Model Number 472, assigned to Attack Squadron 56, the aircraft subject of this investigation, was scheduled for movement as part of the exercise.
4. That movement of A4E Bureau Number 151022 from the Hangar Deck to the Flight Deck was an authorized requirement of the exercise scheduled on board USS TICONDEROGA on the afternoon of 5 December 1965.
5. That the brakes on A4E Bureau Number 151022 had been inspected and found satisfactory the previous day, 4 December 1965, by personnel of VA-56.
6. That the brakes of A4E Bureau Number 151022 had been operated satisfactorily by the plane captain during a previous movement of the aircraft on the day of the accident, 5 December 1965.
7. That Lieutenant (Junior Grade) Douglas Morey WEBSTER, USN, ^{B-6} 310, a pilot attached to Attack Squadron 56, was assigned to A4E Bureau Number 151022 for the scheduled movement.
8. That Lieutenant (Junior Grade) WEBSTER was a qualified A4E pilot, with approximately 170 hours flight time in type.
9. That Lieutenant (Junior Grade) WEBSTER had conducted an inspection of the aircraft immediately prior to manning A4E Bureau Number 151022 for the scheduled movement.
10. That Lieutenant (Junior Grade) WEBSTER was in flight gear upon manning the aircraft, except for his flight helmet which the plane captain handed to him in its carrying bag after the pilot had entered the cockpit.
11. That the plane captain removed the ejection seat safety pins after assisting the pilot to strap himself into the ejection seat.
12. That subsequent to LTJG WEBSTER manning the aircraft it was moved from its position in Hangar Bay Two onto the Number Two Elevator by means of plane pushers pushing the aircraft backwards under the direction of a plane director.
13. That the aircraft handling crew designated to effect the movement of A4E Bureau Number 151022 from its parked position in Hangar Bay Two onto Elevator Number Two for further movement to the flight deck was the regularly assigned crew responsible for such evolutions.
14. That safety supervisors were stationed in appropriate positions throughout the movement of the aircraft to aid the plane director in the discharge of his duties.
15. That the canopy of the aircraft remained open throughout the movement from its original spotted position until the aircraft went over the side.

16. That the pilot was not wearing a helmet at any time during the movement of the aircraft.
17. That the plane director gave hand signals and blew his whistle for the purpose of signaling the pilot to apply braking action to the aircraft as it moved into the desired parking position on Elevator Number Two.
18. That no indication of braking action at the main landing gear was discernible to any of the several witnesses.
19. That attempts to stop the movement of the aircraft by the use of chocks were made but were ineffectual.
20. That the guard rail at the outboard edge of Number Two Elevator failed to stop the aircraft and a section of the railing with some of its support brackets was torn off and was lost over the side.
21. That at approximately 1450 India, 5 December 1965, the aircraft continued over the outboard edge of the Number Two Elevator rolling to an inverted position and striking the water inverted.
22. That, as the aircraft fell away from the ship, LTJG WEBSTER's hands were grasping the sides of the cockpit enclosure.
23. That the aircraft sank into the Pacific Ocean in an inverted position at 27-35.2N/131-19.3E where the depth of water is about 2700 fathoms.
24. That "Man Overboard" was sounded on board the USS TICONDEROGA and that procedures were immediately instituted to attempt rescue of the pilot including launching the rescue helicopter within three (3) minutes of the accident to search for the pilot.
25. That visual inspection of Elevator Number Two immediately following the accident revealed no skid marks and the elevator deck to be dry and free of oil.
26. That within ten (10) minutes of the accident USS TICONDEROGA, USS GRIDLEY (DLG-21) and USS TURNER JOY (DD-951) had taken up search positions in the immediate area of the accident.
27. That the search was continued by USS TICONDEROGA until about 1601 India and by the two destroyers until 1730 India.
28. That after search by USS GRIDLEY; USS TURNER JOY and USS TICONDEROGA, including use of a helicopter and lifeboats, the only items located were the pilot's helmet and two parts of a fuel cell of the aircraft.

OPINIONS

1. That LTJG Douglas Morey WEBSTER was well qualified by training and experience to carry out the responsibility of manning and controlling A4E Bureau Number 151022 during the movements it was scheduled to make as part of the exercise.
2. That, insofar as can be determined, LTJG Douglas Morey WEBSTER was in sound health and was adequately rested at the time he manned the aircraft for the scheduled movement.
3. That LTJG Douglas Morey WEBSTER was conscious of his actions at the time he entered the cockpit of the aircraft and that he was aware of the intended movement of the aircraft from the Hangar Deck to the Flight Deck.

4. That, at commencement of movement, A4E Bureau Number 151022 was in satisfactory mechanical condition to be moved safely from the Hangar Deck to the Flight Deck.
5. That the movement of the aircraft was conducted by a complete and well trained aircraft handling crew under the direction of a qualified plane director with an adequate number of qualified safety supervisors.
6. That the members of the aircraft handling crew were in their proper places during the movement of the aircraft.
7. That the movement of the aircraft by the crew proceeded at a safe and normal speed from the time the chocks were removed until the aircraft approached the normal spotting position on aircraft Elevator Number Two.
8. That timely and proper signals were given to the pilot to stop the aircraft, including hand signals and the blowing of whistles by the plane director and one or more safety supervisors.
9. That the whistle signals were of sufficient volume to give a reasonable expectation that the attention of the pilot would be attracted.
- ✓ 10. That the pilot was inattentive to the plane director while the aircraft was in motion.
11. That (1) the pilot failed to respond appropriately to the director's signals to apply the brakes, or (2) the aircraft suffered complete failure of the braking system to both wheels of the main landing gear during the movement of the aircraft.
12. That the chockmen made every reasonable effort to stop the aircraft with the chocks after the plane director's whistle signal was sounded.
13. That the starboard chocks slowed the movement of the starboard wheel swinging the nose of the aircraft to the left.
14. That the port chock was knocked aside by the movement of the port wheel and was therefore ineffectual in slowing the movement of the aircraft which continued in a generally outboard direction.
15. That a section of the safety railing was broken either by the impact of the port main landing gear or by the weight of the aircraft falling upon it as the port wheel rolled off the elevator and into the safety net.
16. That the weight of the aircraft broke the fittings which hold the safety net in place.
17. That the aircraft pivoted on the edge of the elevator causing it to roll to an inverted position as it fell away from the ship.
18. That the pilot did not leave the aircraft prior to its impact with the water although his helmet may have fallen out through the canopy opening.
19. That the aircraft struck the water slightly tail first in an inverted position forcing the canopy toward the closed position.
20. That sudden closure of the canopy by water impact either crushed the pilot's hands between the canopy and the cockpit enclosure or dealt the pilot a blow on the head which rendered him unconscious, in either case preventing his use of any available means of cockpit egress.
21. That immediate and proper action in response to the accident was taken by USS TICONDEROGA and its accompanying destroyers.

22. That USS TICONDEROGA, USS GRIDLEY, and USS TURNER JOY conducted a thorough search for LTJG WEBSTER, without success.

23. That the TICONDEROGA's slight list to port, weather and sea conditions were not significant factors in the loss of the aircraft and pilot.

24. That the removable guard railing on the outboard edge of Number Two Elevator lacks sufficient strength and height to be effective as a physical barrier to an aircraft moving at a nominal speed for routine deck-handling operations aboard aircraft carriers.

25. That the loss of A4E Bureau Number 151022 and the resultant death of LTJG Douglas Morey WEBSTER were not the result of any negligence, misconduct or lack of proper training and supervision on the part of any person or persons in the aircraft handling crew which moved the aircraft or in any supervisory position on board USS TICONDEROGA.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That pilots flying from aircraft carriers be reminded frequently of the importance and necessity for close attention on the part of the pilot to the signals of the plane director during the movement of aircraft on board.

2. That plane directors be required to frequently observe the pilot during the movement of aircraft and if, either by the pilot's appearance or by his failure to react immediately to given signals, the plane director believes the pilot is not devoting his full attention to the ongoing movement, that the director bring the evolution to a halt until he is assured of the proper cooperation of the pilot.

3. That the removable guard railing on the outboard edge of number two elevator be redesigned to incorporate additional strength and such additional height as possible within the limit imposed by the necessity for adequate clearance of the guard rail by the underbody of any embarked aircraft.

*All redactions
are B-6*

Captain, U. S. Navy
Senior Member

Commander, U. S. Navy
Member

Commander, U. S. Naval Reserve
Member and Counsel for the board

-FIRST DAY-

On board
USS TICONDEROGA (CVA-14)

B1
Saturday, 11 December 1965

All redactions are B6.
The board met at 0930.

Present:

Captain _____, U. S. Navy; and
Commander _____, U. S. Navy, members.
Commander _____, U. S. Naval Reserve, member and counsel
for the board.

The court was cleared and the counsel for the board read the appointing order, original prefixed, marked "A".

All matters preliminary to the investigation having been determined, and the board having decided to sit with open doors, the board was declared in session.

The appointed reporter, _____, Seaman, U. S. Naval Reserve, was sworn.

Lieutenant _____, U. S. Naval Reserve, was called as a witness for the board, was duly sworn, informed of the subject matter of the investigation and examined as follows:

DIRECT EXAMINATION

Questions by counsel for the board:

Q. State your name, rank, organization and present duty station.

A. _____, Lieutenant, Medical Corps, U. S. Naval Reserve, attached to Attack Squadron FIFTY SIX, as flight surgeon.

Q. How long have you known, Douglas Morey WEBSTER?

A. Approximately 3 to 4 months, sir.

Q. Will you describe briefly for the board the physical stature of the officer in question?

A. LTJG WEBSTER was of average height, approximately 5 feet 8 inches tall, medium build, approximately 150 pounds.

Q. Will you tell the board about his physical condition?

A. Yes sir. Mr. WEBSTER had a medical examination within the past year, and had passed it, and at the time of the mishap he was physically qualified for the flight. Prior to the time of his flight, he had had an adequate amount of rest and eaten regularly, and for all, apparently, was completely normal regarding physical and emotional conditions.

Q. Do you know of any physical defects LTJG WEBSTER might have had?

A. No sir. As far as I know he had no physical defects.

Q. Has LTJG WEBSTER ever sought your counsel in your capacity as flight surgeon?

A. No sir. If he sought my advice or counsel, regarding anything he may have had, it was nothing other than a trivial medical problem. To the best of my recollection, he has never sought my advice or counsel as a medical officer.

All redactions are B-6

Q. Are you aware of any unusual mental, sociological or psychological considerations which would tend to impair the effectiveness of LTJG WEBSTER as an aviator?

A. No sir, I am not.

Q. Do you know of any circumstances which could have occurred that would have caused loss of hearing of LTJG WEBSTER?

A. No sir.

Q. Do you know of any unusual stresses or strain that may have reflected upon LTJG WEBSTER's condition prior to the mishap?

A. No sir. I am aware of no such condition or problem.

Q. Was a Medical Report of Death entered in the instance of this accident?

A. The Standard Medical Officer's Report as required by Aviation Medical Science, is in the process of being completed now and has not yet been submitted. The Standard Death Certificate has been submitted along with the health record.

Q. Can you tell the board the essentials of the death certificate - name, cause of death and date?

A. The death certificate states that Mr. WEBSTER's death was an accident in which the aircraft rolled off the side of elevator number 2, fell inverted in the water and cause of death was drowning. This occurred on 5 December 1965, at approximately 11:50 hours.

Counsel: Does the board wish to examine this witness further?

Questions by board member, Commander

Q. Dr. _____, are you in the position to know if he needed medical assistance, in other words, what was your relationship to Mr. WEBSTER?

A. My relationship to Mr. WEBSTER was one of reserve and casual personal knowledge. Mr. WEBSTER and I were not close friends and it would have been my opinion that he would have consulted me only in serious or official matters. In other words, I am not of the opinion that he would have consulted me of some personal problem that might not have had any medical significance.

Q. Are you the flight surgeon of that squadron?

A. Yes sir, I am.

Q. If he had a medical problem would he be likely to go to you?

A. Yes sir, that is correct.

Q. Would you be able to tell us WEBSTER's full name and service number?

A. Lieutenant Junior Grade Douglas Corey WEBSTER,

Neither counsel for the board nor the board desired to examine this witness further.

The senior member informed the witness that he was privileged to any further statement that he thinks should be a matter of connection with the accident under investigation.

The witness stated he had nothing further to say.

The witness was duly cautioned concerning his testimony and withdrew from the room.

Lieutenant Commander *B/B* U. S. Navy, was called as a witness for the board, was duly sworn, informed of the subject matter of the investigation and examined as follows:

DIRECT EXAMINATION

Questions by counsel for the board:

Q. State your name, rank, organization and present duty station.

A. *B/B* , Lieutenant Commander, VA-56.

Q. How many years have you been flying the A4 aircraft?

A. Since 1964 - a little over a year sir.

Q. What is your total number of flight hours?

A. Approximately 3100.

Q. How long have you been maintenance officer of VA-56?

A. Eight months, sir.

Q. Will you please describe for the board what is your understanding relative to an accident involving an A4E assigned to VA-56 on the afternoon of 5 December 1965?

A. My understanding sir, is that the aircraft was being moved in connection with an exercise, that the aircraft was manned at the time and the aircraft was being moved on to number 2 elevator, while it was lowered, from the hangar deck in preparation of taking it to the flight deck. It never stopped but went over the side.

Q. Do you know the side number of the aircraft in question?

A. Yes sir - Bureau Number 151022, side number 472.

Q. Briefly, will you state the history of this aircraft?

A. The aircraft, Bureau Number 151022, was in the fifth month of its second tour. The airframe had accumulated 655.1 flight hours and 715 landings, of which 191 were arrested landings. 90.8 flight hours and 56 landings, 47 of which were arrested landings, had accrued since Progressive Aircraft Rework was completed on 16 August 1965. The first-odd-calendar inspection was completed on 21 September 1965 with 88.2 of the total flight hours, 49 of the total landings and 46 of the arrested landings occurring between 21 September 1965 and the time of the accident.

Q. Were there any discrepancies on the "yellow sheet"?

A. There were a few radio discrepancies, however, nothing pertained to the brake system.

Q. What work had been done on the main landing gear and brakes since 1 December 1965?

A. None.

Q. Was a pre-flight inspection performed on this aircraft?

A. Since no flight was actually contemplated, no pre-flight inspection was performed. However, the plane captain had been in the relief plane captain - checking the brake system of the aircraft.

Q. And what was the result of their functional check of the brakes?

A. Operable in all respects.

Q. Would you describe briefly how the brake system operates in this particular model of the A4?

A. This is a hydraulic brake system - a separate system from the utility control and hydraulic system. It's a single disc, three puck system. The outflow from the master cylinder applies pressure to the unit on the wheel. Friction on the disc stops the aircraft slowly.

Q. Is this system independent?

A. No sir, it is not.

Q. In your opinion is this system strong enough to cause a skid on a surface such as exists on number 2 elevator?

A. Yes sir, it is.

Q. In your opinion if the tires skidded, would this leave marks on the elevator?

A. Yes sir, it would.

Q. Mr. *By*, what are the prerequisite steps for ejecting from the A4E?

A. Of course, all safety devices must be removed from the aircraft. Activate one of the two activating levers.

Q. Can you describe the safety devices that must be removed?

A. Yes sir. There are three safety pins plus a lever in the head rest which, when in the down position, mechanically locks the face curtain and an alternate ejection handle. The lever in back of the head rest is commonly called a "head knocker". When in a down position, this lever mechanically locks the face curtain and the alternate ejection handle.

Q. What must be the position of the canopy prior to ejection?

A. It can be open or closed.

Q. If the canopy was in the open position what would be the sequence of events of ejection?

A. The canopy would be ejected followed by the seat.

Q. What difficulties might be present in ejecting into the water from an inverted position?

A. This is something where there is little known, and I know very little.

Q. Assume the canopy was open at the time the A4E left the outboard edge of number 2 elevator. What would you expect would happen to the canopy at the time the aircraft landed on its back?

A. I would expect it to come closed as it hit the water. The canopy would hit the water first, forcing it closed.

Q. Assuming we have the canopy in a closed position, what difficulties might be encountered in effecting an escape from the aircraft?

A. It could have been opened manually or could have been opened by the canopy emergency ejection handle. It could be a pressure differential problem, pressure on the outside not being equal to the pressure on the inside.

All redactions are B-6

Q. If the pilot elected to leave the cockpit by his own power, rather than ejection, how many attachments would he have to unfasten before he would be free?

A. He could do it one of two ways: He could pull his seat release or his harness release handle and he would have his seat and parachute with him. Or, if he chose to; he could unstrap. He would have to loosen four quick snap release fittings - two on his shoulder and two on his waist.

Counsel: Does the board wish to examine this witness further?

Questions by board member, Commander :

Q. Were you the maintenance officer of VA-56 at the time of the accident?

A. Yes sir, I was.

Q. How long have you been maintenance officer?

A. Approximately eight months.

Questions by senior board member, Captain :

Q. Are the brakes independent on this aircraft? In other words, if one brake fails, will the other brake fail also?

A. It would depend on where the failure occurred. In other words, if it occurred down at the unit, the other brake would be good. If it occurred somewhere between the reservoir and the unit then both brakes would become inoperable.

Q. Is there any mechanical back-up to this system?

A. No sir.

Questions by board member, Commander

Q. Is there an emergency brake?

A. No sir.

Q. Or a bottle?

A. No sir.

Neither counsel for the board nor the board desired to examine this witness further.

The senior member informed the witness that he was privileged to make any further statement that he thinks should be a matter of record in connection with the accident under investigation.

The witness stated he had nothing further to say.

The witness was duly cautioned concerning his testimony and withdrew from the room.

Aviation Boatswain Second Class, U. S. Navy, was called as a witness for the board, was duly sworn, informed of the nature of the investigation and examined as follows:

DIRECT EXAMINATION

Questions by counsel for the board:

Q. State your name, rate, organization and present duty station?

A. *B-6*, ABH2, USN, USS TICONDEROGA (CVA-14).

Q. What is your assigned position in V-3 Division?

A. I'm hangar P.O., sir.

Q. Could you describe briefly for the benefit of the board the responsibility of Hangar bay number 2 supervisor in handling aircraft?

A. As hangar deck P.O., whenever they are moving aircraft up and down the elevator or just in the bay itself, it's my job to be there and supervise and to get the job done as fast and safe as possible.

Q. On the afternoon of 5 December 1965, how was the word given to indicate a desired movement of A4E number 472 from the hangar deck to the flight deck?

A. They all come by elevator control - by the phone talker and he is on the line with flight deck control. The word was passed to find out if the aircraft number 472 was ready to be taken topside. I walked over to the pilot and asked him if he would mind getting into the plane because we had to break it down and take the aircraft topside. So the pilot entered the aircraft and the plane captain went up with him and started strapping him in. He was only up there five or ten minutes. The elevator was brought down and we commenced to move the aircraft out and onto number 2 elevator.

Q. Would you describe for the board the term 'break down'?

A. Well a break down is where all the tie downs are taken off and put away, except for 3 - get the checks out and let off the brakes and point the aircraft in the general direction in which the aircraft is to be moved.

Q. Would you describe the actual movement of the aircraft as you witnessed it?

A. Well, from what I seen - I was right next to the pilot on the deck - it seemed to me at the time as we were pushing the aircraft onto the elevator it appeared to me that he was looking at something between his legs or in the cockpit - his instruments or something, I don't know. But the way I feel, he did not pay any attention to the director at all.

Counsel for the board gave a diagram (Exhibit 1) to HOUSE.

Q. Would you draw the movement of the plane as it proceeded on to number 2 elevator and would you locate the position you were in during the movement of the aircraft?

A. The aircraft was right there, here was the director and I was standing right next to him. We proceeded to move the aircraft out and I just walked over there and stopped. The plane was moved onto the elevator and pushed on the elevator. As the aircraft was moved on, it went off the elevator and landed on its top. I didn't see the pilot get out.

Q. *B-6* would like to ask you to comment on the signals and procedures that are used in moving aircraft onto the elevator?

A. Sir, we either use whistle or the hand signals, sometimes both. In this instance the hand signal was given first, to slow the aircraft down. The aircraft did not slow down, the whistle was sounded.

Q. In your opinion was the whistle sounded loudly enough?

A. Yes sir.

Q. Did more than one person blow the whistle?

A. Yes sir.

All redactions
are B-6

Q. I would like to show four pictures of an A4E on the elevator, two pictures, with nothing on it, and two with an A4E on the elevator, and ask if he would determine if these pictures are correct with respect to an aircraft on the spot on the elevator prior to movement to the flight deck. Would you tell the board if this position of the aircraft on the elevator is correct? (Exhibit 2)

A. Well sir, sometimes when the flight deck calls down they want the aircraft spotted on the forward or after part of the elevator, sending up the launch that will be spotted overnight. This time the aircraft 472, was called down on the after part of "2". This aircraft was in the position as this one here. (indicated the pictures with the aircraft in place) Normally we spot them in the middle of the elevator and take it up, unless otherwise told to spot them somewhere else.

Q. Here are 2 pictures looking aft, of number 2 elevator, one with aircraft in position and the other in which the wheel position has been drawn and measurements inserted. To the best of your knowledge, is this the correct spot aircraft 472 was to be moved into on the elevator and on up to the flight deck? (Exhibit 2A and 2B)

A. To my knowledge I would say yes. This is the usual spot in the after part of the elevator, it clears the wing approximately 6 inches.

Q. Did you note the position of the nose wheel of the aircraft at the time the whistle was blown?

A. I was standing by the tracks. The nose wheel started getting about here and the director blew the whistle and it didn't stop. He had a safety man on each wing and two men underneath. The whistle sounded again. I don't know if he sensed anything was wrong, but the pilot didn't pay any attention at all. He just kept going. I had a whistle and started blowing.

Q. Were you able to observe the activity of the personnel who were responsible for placing chocks in position?

A. Well, yes and no. Everything happened so fast. You could hear the chocks hit the deck. I looked and seen the port chock come back out. By this time the port wheel was almost into the net.

Q. Can you describe what happens when a chock is thrown out after being placed in position?

A. Yes sir. The chocks usually have non-skid on both surfaces. Most of the chocks we have now, the non-skid is worn off. Sometimes with a little oil or grease or anything of that nature the chocks have a tendency to skid. When this happens they'll slide right out. It happened many times before.

Q. Does the chock ever fly out because of a twisting action between the tire and the deck?

A. Yes sir.

Q. Could you determine in this instance why the chock had come out?

A. Everything happened so fast that I have no idea.

Question by senior board member, Captain [redacted]

Q. [redacted] could you give us a chronological story of what you saw and heard from the time the aircraft started to move until it went over the side, as best you can?

A. Yes sir. The aircraft was spotted right underneath hangar control on the port side, aft of number 2 elevator. The aircraft was moved out onto number 2 elevator. We have a small ramp that goes from the hangar deck onto the elevator. Well, sometimes if we don't have enough momentum the aircraft will not make it up the little ramp the first try. So, it took two tries before going up the ramp. The director was on the forward part of the aircraft, moving the aircraft onto the elevator. At this particular time I was standing right in here. (Exhibit 1) The aircraft started moving aft on the elevator. I started walking into the elevator where the cables are for the elevator. One thing I left out, there was a bomb cart set out here. (Exhibit 1) As the plane was moved on the elevator the director blew his whistle. This is the first time I noticed the pilot was not paying any attention. The bomb cart was in the way of one of the drop tanks - in this case the port drop tank. The director blew the whistle one time and the plane did not slow down. He clenched his fist, which is the stop sign. At that time the bomb cart was already moved out of the way. The director took him off the brakes and the aircraft continued rolling aft. Like I said before, the nose wheel was right in here (Exhibit 1) where it is usually spotted, two feet across the stripe. The nose wheel was at that point. The yellow shirt and the director blew the whistle. The aircraft did not stop. At the sound of the whistle the blue shirts knew the chocks must go in. The whistle sounded but he did not stop. The chocks went in. From what I seen ever here the port chock came back out. This one here, the wheel rolled over. If the chocks have too much room the wheel has a tendency to run over or just drag the chock along. That is why this chock was thrown out. He tried to kick it back in but it was too late and he rolled out of the way. The port wheel rolled into the safety net and broke. The reason for this is the starboard check held longer than this one, turning it on an angle and going into the net. At that particular moment, while it was sitting in the net, I think the pilot realized for the first time what was going on. I saw him look up clutching the edge of the cockpit. It seemed to be held in midair, then the safety net broke and it rolled over on its top into the water. As it landed into the water I ran over to the edge of the elevator. The Assistant Flight Deck Officer, Mr. *Bb*, passed the word to me from topside to bring the elevator up. I cleared the elevator and took the elevator topside. The elevator has to be raised when the ship goes into a turn. While the elevator was taken topside I was standing on the very edge watching the aircraft go by, and float maybe 100 to 150 yards or maybe less. And I watched all this time and at no time at all did I see the pilot or him trying to get out.

Questions by board member, Commander *Bb*

Q. I call your attention to a time when you said, the break down signal was given to take the tie downs off the aircraft, and at the initial commencement of the movement. The pilot was given the signal to apply the brakes. At this time was there any indication from the pilot that the brakes did not apply as they were signaled.

A. Sir I do not know this. Unless the ship is in heavy weather the plane very seldom moves. Unless the ship is in a rock and roll motion, the aircraft will move that way.

Q. Did the pilot give any signals or indication he had problems?

A. No sir.

Q. Did you observe the pilot at this time?

A. Yes sir. He was looking directly at the director when the word was given to hold your brakes, break her down, chocks out, all the things going out.

Q. Was the canopy open or closed?

A. It was open, sir.

Q. Was the pilot wearing a helmet?

A. No sir.

Q. During the entire movement of the aircraft did you see anything at all that indicated that brakes were applied at any time during this movement?

A. No sir.

Q. Now, after the aircraft went into the water could you tell us how long it floated?

A. Well, when it went by the fantail it was still floating, because I saw underneath the wings, it was still floating upside down.

Q. You have used a term moving aft in your testimony previously. Do you mean this was the movement of the aircraft?

A. Yes sir.

Q. Not necessarily forward and aft in relation to the ship?

A. No sir.

Questions by counsel for the board:

Q. *BK*, will you comment on the deck condition at the time of the accident?

A. Well it appeared to me that it was normal, as a ship has a tendency to roll port to starboard, but overall it was like a regular move - no difficulties.

Q. Would you say the deck was wet or slippery?

A. No sir, not on the elevator.

Q. Are you responsible for the training of the crew on the movement of the aircraft?

A. Well, I don't quite understand you, sir.

Q. I'm attempting to try to determine if this was a properly trained crew?

A. Well, yes and no. It's not my job to train them but it is my job to see they get it done right and if they make any mistakes I try to correct them and help them as much as I can. Same as a first class or chief.

Q. Would you comment on the training of the crew of the aircraft involved?

A. The way I feel, this is a real good crew as far as following orders particularly when there is an aircraft, a life and a lot of money involved in the movement of aircraft. Like the understanding when the whistle sounds that means chocks automatically go in whether the brakes are applied or not. This is a standard rule of the hangar and as far as I can remember it always has been this way. This is a safety precaution.

Q. From your view point were there any mistakes made on the part of any of the crew that were handling the aircraft?

A. No sir.

Questions by board member, Commander *BK*

Q. The people that were handling the aircraft, was it a fall-out?

A. Sir, at the time we were at flight quarters. We do have a full crew other than one man on the phones. The rest of them are involved in the movement of aircraft.

Q. You had the proper number of check men?

A. Yes sir.

Q. Proper number of plane pushers?

A. Yes sir.

Q. Proper number of safety directors?

A. Yes sir.

Q. And the plane director?

A. Yes sir.

Q. Was the cockpit manned?

A. Yes sir.

Q. Were they at flight quarters?

A. Yes sir, they were at flight quarters.

Q. At the time the aircraft commenced its movement where was the pilot looking?

A. He was looking inside his cockpit at something.

Q. Could you tell what he was doing?

A. No sir, not from where I was standing. He was up there. We have no idea of what's going on inside the aircraft.

Q. After the aircraft went over the hump and started on the elevator, what was the pilot doing?

A. He was still looking inside the cockpit.

Q. As the nosewheel of the aircraft approached the yellow line what was the pilot doing?

A. He was still looking inside his cockpit.

Q. At the point of where the port wheel went into the net, what was the pilot doing?

A. All of a sudden he looked up like he was startled, his hands gripping the sides of the cockpit and the aircraft went over and commenced falling.

Neither counsel for the board nor the board desired to examine this witness further.

The senior member informed the witness that he was privileged to make any further statement that he thinks should be a matter of record in connection with the accident under investigation.

The witness made the following statement:

Witness: Well, on an F-8 sometimes we ask the plane to pump the brakes. Sometimes he does and does not, and we have to pump them up.

Questions by senior board member, Captain B. B.:

Q. Who has to pump them up?

A. The pushers are right under the port wheel - a little handle about that long - and you have to pump them up. Then he'll give you the sign he has brakes.

Q. We are talking about an F8 aircraft?

A. Yes sir. With the A4, unless he don't have brakes, the plane captain or the pilot usually tells us 'we don't have brakes', or 'I don't have port brakes', or 'starboard brakes'. As far as I ever heard, I've never heard of both brakes going out at the same time on an A4. On an F8 sometimes during the process of sitting still it loses brakes and while he is off the brakes and doesn't know and you tell him to slow down or blow the whistle and the plane does not stop instantly. That is why the checks are thrown in and this way we save many planes - because of the alertness of the checkmen. If the checks are thrown in at the same time the aircraft will stop. If a check is thrown in faster on one side than the other, the aircraft will jerk either way and if the check is thrown faster on the port side, the starboard will jerk. In this particular case, plane 472, we threw them in there and you can easily tell by the sound of the checks whether they both hit at the same time or one before the other. And it seemed to me the check that was on the after part hit a split second before - thump, thump like that - and this is why the aircraft turned to the side and the port wheel went in first instead of both of them going in at the same time.

Q. When this happens does this tend to throw one of the checks out?

A. Sometimes, yes. When you throw one in first then the one wheel will stop and the other one will slide and this has a tendency to kick the other check out and I think this is what happened in this particular instance.

The witness was duly cautioned concerning his testimony and withdrew from the room.

^{B6} Airman, USN, was called as a witness for the board, was duly sworn, informed of the subject matter of the investigation and examined as follows:

DIRECT EXAMINATION

Questions by counsel for the board:

Q. State your name, rate, organization and present duty station.

A. ^{B6} Airman, USN, USS TICONDEROGA (CVA-14).

Q. What is your responsibility relative to movement of aircraft onboard TICONDEROGA?

A. I'm the elevator operator sir.

Q. As such, will you explain what your function is in the movement of aircraft from the hangar deck to the flight deck?

A. We receive word from flight deck control which aircraft to take up and I pass the word to my crew and they break it down and have it ready to go onto the elevator. I bring the elevator down, the aircraft is pushed onto the elevator and I take it topside.

Q. Will you describe for the benefit of the board the movement of aircraft side number 472 as you saw it on 5 December 1965?

A. Well, flight deck control asked for 472 to be broken down and take it on the elevator at hangar deck level, bring it on the spot on the elevator. Just as they started pushing it over the hump I looked the other way. I heard the director yell for the pilot to slow it down. I turned back towards the aircraft as it was moving on the elevator very fast. He blew the whistle. I looked down at the check men. I didn't know who it was at the time, but I found out later it was a friend of mine. He threw the check in but it came back out. The aircraft kicked the check out. He tried to put it in again and it came back out the second time. He was never able to put it in a third time.

Q. Did you observe any unusual action on the part of any member of the crew in the movement of the aircraft onto the elevator?

A. How do you mean by unusual, sir?

Q. Have you observed a number of movements of aircraft onto the elevator?

A. Yes sir, I have.

Q. Was there anything unusual or different from the movement of this aircraft onto the elevator than what you normally see?

A. No sir, nothing unusual about it.

Q. Did you hear the whistle blow?

A. Yes sir, I did - a number of times - about three times. The director blew it twice and then blew it again. And the safety men also blew their whistles. The plane did not stop or give any indications of trying to slow down or anything. It just kept right on going.

Q. *B-6* have a diagram here of hangar bay 2 with the deck edge elevator here. Will you mark the position in which you consider the aircraft nose wheel to have been when the whistle was blown?

A. (Exhibit 1)

Q. *B-6* will show you some pictures of an A4 aircraft spotted on number 2 elevator. There are two pictures of the elevator with and two without an aircraft on it and I request that you make a statement regarding where this aircraft is spotted in comparison with the proper position for an aircraft which is being moved to the flight deck?

A. It was spotted on the after part of the elevator in the proper position for taking to flight deck level. There is enough room here to place another aircraft here in the forward part of the elevator. (Indicating the pictures, Exhibit 2) This is approximately the position the aircraft was located in when the whistle was blown.

Q. Will you restate the number of times the whistle was blown?

A. About three times, sir. The director blew it twice, and a third time. The safety men and the director also blew the whistle.

Q. Were you looking directly at the aircraft as it went over the side of the elevator?

A. Yes sir, I was.

Q. Could you describe the movement of the aircraft as it fell over

A. As it went off the back edge of the elevator the port wheel struck the safety net first and spun the nose in a forward position. The port drop tank hit, and it flipped over on its back when it hit the edge of the elevator.

Q. What happened to the aircraft after that?

A. It fell over on its back and landed into the water.

Q. What was your action when the aircraft went over the side?

A. As it went over the side I called the flight deck and informed them that an aircraft went over the side.

Q. What means did you use to call the flight deck?

A. I called the flight deck elevator number 2 indicating elevator number 2 calling flight deck control.

Q. This is on sound powered phones?

A. Yes sir, it is, and indicating that 472 was in the water on the port side. The check men on the port wing, I saw one of them get hit with the plane.

Q. Was he injured?

A. He was uninjured - he got up. The director cleared the elevator and I took the elevator up to flight deck level.

Q. Did you observe the pilot during any movement of the aircraft onto the elevator?

A. No sir, I did not see him after they started moving the aircraft. I did see him while they were preflighting the aircraft.

Does the board desire to question this witness further?

Questions by board member, Commander B-6

Q. Were you on number 2 elevator?

A. Yes sir.

Q. How long have you been an elevator operator?

A. About a year, sir.

Q. You already told us where the nose wheel was when the first whistle was blown, where was the nose wheel when the second whistle was blown?

A. Approximately a foot outboard of the line.

Q. When the whistles were blown by the safety directors and all, how much further away from the yellow line was the nose wheel?

A. I didn't notice, sir. I was looking at the check men while they were trying to place the checks. All of them blow the whistle here - this space closing between the main wheel and the deck edge - when it was two feet away.

The senior member informed the witness that he was privileged to make any further statement that he thinks should be a matter of personal discretion with the accident under investigation.

The witness stated he had nothing further to say.

All redactions are B6

The witness was duly cautioned concerning his testimony and withdrew from the room.

, Airman, USN, was called as a witness for the board, was duly sworn, informed of the subject matter of the investigation and examined as follows:

DIRECT EXAMINATION

Questions by counsel for the board:

Q. State your full name, rate, organization and present duty station.

A. Airman, USN, USS TICONDEROGA (CVA-14).

Q. Will you describe for the board what your responsibility is in the movement of aircraft onboard USS TICONDEROGA?

A. I'm an aircraft director in hangar bay number 2, and, when I'm not directing, I'm safety man on the port or starboard wing or tail of the aircraft.

Q. I understand you are a qualified plane director?

A. Yes sir, I am.

Q. Were you operating in that capacity on the afternoon of 5 December 1965?

A. I was a safety man on the port wing.

Q. Will you describe for the board the movement of the aircraft, side number 472, onto the elevator, starting with the aircraft in its position in the hangar bay before the movement started?

A. We got the word over the hangar bay number 2 phones to move 472 topside. We broke it down. It was on the port side nose under hangar deck control pointing outboard. We broke it down and began the moving procedure - moved it backwards onto the elevator. The nose gear should be stopped on the centerline of the elevator when the elevator is down. The center line on the elevator lines up with the flight deck. As a safety precaution we stop the nose gear on this center line. It will clear the elevator top side and have plenty of room out of the elevator - no chances of slipping. It's a good safety precaution to stop it on the yellow line. As the nose gear passed the center line I started blowing my whistle - blew it hard - and still nothing happened. The chockman tried to get his chock in. The plane twisted and the chock came back out. He tried it again - no good! So I told them to get out of the way before one of them got hurt themselves. Up until this time the pilot was not paying attention to the director. After the plane hit the stanchion, the pilot looked up and braced himself. And then the stanchion broke and it started flipping over. Then the safety man on my side yelled to the phone talker, 'plane in the water'. The plane flipped on its back when it hit the water.

Q. Now, would you indicate, in your estimation if the movement of the plane onto the elevator was at a normal speed?

A. Yes sir, it was.

Q. Were you the first one to blow your whistle to stop the aircraft?

A. No sir, the plane director [redacted] as the first one to blow his whistle.

Q. [redacted] this is a diagram of hangar bay number 2, with the elevator indicated there. Would you indicate the movement of the aircraft and where you were located at the time [redacted] blew his whistle?

All redactions are B56

A. Well, sir, at the time blew his whistle I was here. (Exhibit 1)

Q. How many attempts were required to get the aircraft on the elevator?

A. There is a hump on the elevator from the hangar bay. There were two attempts. The last was not an attempt. It was half on and all we had to do was lean on it a little more. It rolled back and then went over.

Q. Did you observe any application of the brakes during the movement at any time?

A. No sir, I did not.

Q. I have a series of four pictures here, (Exhibit 2), two of an A4 aircraft on the elevator. I would like to have you indicate if this is the proper position for an aircraft being moved from the hangar deck level to the flight deck level?

A. Well, this is according to where they want the plane. Sometimes they put planes on the elevator, one forward and one aft. When we have only one plane coming, we'll put it in the center spot, forward.

Q. HALL, would you estimate the number of times the whistle was blown by or yourself or any other safety man?

A. There were a long blast of whistles. I really cannot indicate how many were blown. There were four safety men and one director on the scene. I'd say blew his whistle right as the nose wheel was at the center line. And, when the nose wheel crossed the center line, he blew his whistle harder and then every one started blowing their whistles. I was standing between the wing and the tail on the port side. I was still safety man, for the port wing and, more or less, for the tail, too. When you spot an aircraft in the correct spot you don't have to worry about a crunch and there's no need to have one guy standing by the tail.

Neither counsel for the board nor the board desired to examine this witness further.

The senior member informed the witness that he was privileged to make any further statement that he thinks should be a matter of record in connection with the accident under investigation.

The witness had no further statement to make.

The witness was duly cautioned concerning his testimony and withdrew from the room.

Airman, USN, was called as a witness for the board, was duly sworn, informed of the subject matter of the investigation and examined as follows:

DIRECT EXAMINATION

Questions by counsel for the board:

Q. State your name, rate, organization and present duty station.

A. Airman, USN, USS TIGONDEROGA (CVA-14).

Q. Will you describe for the board what your function is in the movement of aircraft onboard USS TIGONDEROGA?

A. I am the safety man, or director, or yellow shirt. I help in the movement of the plane. I direct them and safety them whenever I can. I get off with different guys.

Q. Do I understand you are both a safety man and director?

A. Yes sir.

Q. Will you describe for the board what your function was in the movement of aircraft side number 472 on 5 December?

A. I was starboard wing tip safety man.

Q. *Bb*, will you describe the movement of this aircraft from its parked position, as you saw it, and describe your position relative to the aircraft as it moved?

A. I was on the starboard wing tip. The nose was aft and the tail was running forward, parked on the port side. And we got word to move it and bring it topside. We broke the plane down and started shoving the plane forward and aligned it with the elevator and moved it on the elevator. We brought it up over the ramp, couldn't make it, so we brought it back down and pushed it back up over the ramp and made it this time. I was on the starboard side aft of the wing tip. I heard the plane director tell the pilot to slow it down and the plane did not seem to slow down any or any braking at all. It didn't give any indication of anything. We got to the middle of the elevator where we generally stop, blew the whistle and it still failed to stop or put on his brakes. Three yellow shirts blew their whistles but it still failed to put on brakes. If he had any brakes he didn't show any indications of it.

Q. Was there any time during the movement of the aircraft that you noticed the brakes being applied?

A. No sir.

Q. *Bb* I have a diagram here of hangar bay number 2 and the elevator. I would like to have you draw the movement of the path of the aircraft. (Exhibit 1)

A. Just before the yellow line he was given a signal to slow down. After the plane hit the center line we blew whistles and the plane kept on moving.

Q. Which part of the aircraft are you speaking of?

A. The nose wheel right on the center line, this is generally where we stop the plane. The plane did not slow down but kept right on moving and it just seemed like it speeded up after it hit the line. The safety men blew the whistles and threw the chocks in - but one chock jumped out. The chock men tried to kick it back in, but couldn't put it back in. I don't know who yelled to get out, but I heard it. He jumped over the chock, I don't know how close it came to taking him with it, but the tow bar caught the back of his pants.

Q. Were you able to observe the pilot during any part of the movement of the aircraft?

A. Yes sir, when the director told him to slow it down, I glanced at the pilot. The pilot seemed to be looking at something in the cockpit. I couldn't see his face - he had his head down.

Q. Let me show you some pictures, and would you indicate if this aircraft is correctly positioned for movement from the hangar deck level to the flight deck level? (Exhibit 2)

A. Yes sir, it is. That's about where he blew the whistle the plane didn't slow down or nothing. I was on the starboard wing tip. I blew the whistle and I looked up into the cockpit. It appeared he was checking something in his cockpit - I don't know what it was - but it was right in here.

Q. How many times would you say the whistle was blown?

A. In an attempt to stop the aircraft, I would say three, sir.

Q. Who was the first one to blow his whistle?

A. The plane director, sir.

Q. How many times did you blow your whistle?

A. I didn't blow mine. There were two safety men there, and the two yellow shirts on the other side blew theirs. I was ready to blow mine, just before it was at the edge - but I didn't. It was too late to stop it. I was waiting for the checkmen to get out.

Neither counsel for the board nor the board desired to examine this witness further.

The senior member informed the witness that he was privileged to make any further statement that he thinks should be a matter of record in connection with the accident under investigation.

The witness had nothing further to say.

The witness was duly cautioned concerning his testimony and withdrew from the room.

B-6 Airman Apprentice, USN, was called as a witness for the board, was duly sworn, informed of the subject matter of the investigation and examined as follows:

DIRECT EXAMINATION

Questions by counsel for the board:

Q. State your name, rate, organization and present duty station.

A. B-6 Airman Apprentice, USN, USS TICONDEROGA (CVA-14).

Q. Will you state for the board what your responsibility is relative to the movement of aircraft onboard USS TICONDEROGA?

A. I'm a check man.

Q. Relative to the aircraft that was lost over the side what were your responsibilities?

A. Well, to put the check in, right between the wheel.

Q. Where is your duty station during the movement of the aircraft?

A. Right underneath the aircraft on the starboard side.

Q. What do you use as a signal for you to put the check in?

A. When I hear the whistle blow I put the check in.

Q. Will you describe briefly for the board the movement of the aircraft from its parked position until it was on the elevator?

A. We were moving at the same speed we normally move on the after part of the elevator and it just kept going!

Q. Start from the beginning. You removed the check from the starboard wheel - at the beginning of the movement?

A. Yes sir.

Q. Where were you during the movement of the aircraft?

A. Between the drop tank and the wheel covers.

Q. And did you carry the choek with you?

A. Yes sir.

Q. Will you repeat to the board what success you had in placing the choek in position when the whistle was blown?

A. I heard several whistles blown.

Questions by board member, Commander B-6

Q. The choek you were using, did it have non-skid?

A. On most of the checks it is all worn off.

Q. The choek you were using, did it have non-skid on it?

A. I don't think so, sir.

Q. You said you put the choek around the wheel and it held. What did the wheel do?

A. The wheel went over it. There is so much clearance, so the wheel rolled over it.

Question by counsel for the board:

Q. Your feeling is that when your choek held, the aircraft turned?

A. Yes sir.

Questions by senior board member, Captain B-6:

Q. When you applied your choek, did it stop the wheel you were applying it to, or did the choek move with the wheel?

A. The choek moved with the wheel. It didn't stop it. It stopped it for a few seconds.

Q. In other words, it slowed it down somewhat. It did not stop it?

A. Yes sir, that is correct.

Neither counsel for the board nor the board desired to examine this witness further.

The senior member informed the witness that he was privileged to make any further statement that he thinks should be a matter of record in connection with the accident under investigation.

The witness had nothing further to say.

The witness was duly cautioned concerning his testimony and withdrew from the room.

Commander B-6 U. S. Navy, was called as a witness to the board, was duly sworn, informed of the subject matter of the investigation and examined as follows:

DIRECT EXAMINATION

Questions by the counsel for the board:

Q. State your name, rank, organization and present duty station?

A. B-6, Commander, USN, Weapons Officer, USS TICONDEROGA (CVA-14).

Q. Commander, will you indicate to the board what your position was at the time of the loss of this aircraft?

A. I was standing in the middle of the hangar bay looking forward toward number 2 elevator and was watching the aircraft being rolled onto the elevator.

Q. At what point in the movement of the aircraft did you first begin to observe it?

A. Actually, I was observing it before it reached the elevator. It was parked in a spot just aft of the elevator. I watched as they backed it around and onto the elevator. I was still watching it while it was in hangar bay two.

Q. Were you able to observe the activity of the plane crew as they moved the aircraft onto the elevator?

A. When I started to observe the aircraft I was looking at the pilot. I was trying to identify who he was. I thought I might have known who he was. It wasn't until it got on the elevator that I switched my attention to the crew handling the aircraft. First time I observed them was after the nose wheel passed the center line that goes across the elevator. After that I shifted my attention to the crew.

Q. Did you observe the crew as far as any difficulties in moving the aircraft across from the hangar bay into the elevator?

A. It didn't appear to have any unusual amount of difficulties. I have nothing on which to base a comparison. I wasn't watching them move another aircraft onto the elevator earlier so I have nothing to go on. But it didn't appear they had any outward signs of distress.

Q. Could you determine, during the time you were looking at the pilot in the cockpit, where his attention was directed?

A. At the time the plane was rolled onto the elevator he appeared to have his helmet in his hands - helmet up like he was getting the microphone cord straightened out in preparation for putting it on. He did have it out in his hands and at the time the main mounts crossed onto the elevator. Then I switched my attentions away from him to the plane crew. I didn't notice anything further about him.

Q. Did you hear the whistle blow anytime during the movement of the aircraft?

A. Yes, I did. I shifted my attention to the crew and about the time where I expected it to start slowing up and be choked up I heard him blow the whistle. The plane director blew the whistle and I noticed the airplane hadn't slowed down at all. And then he blew it repeatedly until just about the time the port main mount went off the elevator.

Q. Did you observe the aircraft after it went into the water?

A. No, I did not. The last I saw of the aircraft was a plan view from the bottom. Then it went over on its back. I did not run over. I went to a phone in the other direction away from the aircraft.

Q. Can you relate for the benefit of the board just briefly what your experience is relative to flying aircraft?

All redactions are B6

A. I am a heavy-attack pilot. I have served with carriers on the East Coast. I've been on this aircraft carrier for over two years as a member of the ship's company, and have observed deck handling operations quite often.

Question by board member, Commander

Q. Commander you said you saw the aircraft move out onto the elevator. Once it got onto the elevator what did its speed of movement appear to you?

A. Well, it was a smart movement. It didn't look alarming until he blew the whistle and he ceased to slow down. Normally as he starts going down he slows down and they check them in. The speed continued almost without any deceleration at all until at the last movement they seemed to be working around the wheels trying to get the chocks under it to stop it. It appeared he slowed down the starboard main mount and got a chock under it. Then the port main mount started rotating to the left - counterclockwise. And the port main mount didn't slow down and finally rolled over the deck edge and into the safety net. That was the only big change in speed.

Question by senior board member, Captain

Q. On the basis of your experience onboard aircraft carriers, would you say a roll or pitch was significant at the time of this incident?

A. No, captain. I had noticed the sea state and, standing in hangar bay 2 looking across, I noticed it had a slight port list. It was steady and not moving at all. The sea state was calm and the ship did not make any turns. Compared to sometimes when we have operated, I would say it was quite steady.

Question by board member, Commander

Q. Could you hear these whistles being blown?

A. Yes sir, they were blowing loudly enough.

Neither counsel for the board nor the board desired to examine this witness further.

The senior member informed the witness that he was privileged to make any further statement that he thinks should be a matter of record in connection with the accident under investigation.

The witness stated that he had nothing further to say.

The witness was duly cautioned concerning his testimony and withdrew from the room.

The board recessed at 1115, 11 December 1965.

All redactions
are T56

The board opened at 1300, 11 December 1965.

Lieutenant Commander
a witness for the board.

U. S. Navy, was recalled as

DIRECT EXAMINATION

Questions by counsel for the board:

Q. Mr. [redacted] when was the brake system last checked?

A. On 4 December 1965 all brake systems were checked. The plane was last flown on 1 December 1965 and was setting idle. Because of the change in temperature, which was our situation, all brake systems were checked by troubleshooters on 4 December 1965.

Q. Were any discrepancies found?

A. No sir.

Neither counsel for the board nor the board desired to examine this witness further.

The senior member informed the witness that he was privileged to make any further statement that he thinks should be a matter of record in connection with the accident under investigation.

The witness stated that he had nothing further to say.

The witness was duly cautioned concerning his testimony and withdrew from the room.

[redacted], Airman Apprentice, USN, was called as a witness for the board, was duly sworn, informed of the subject matter of the investigation and examined as follows:

DIRECT EXAMINATION

Questions by counsel for the board:

Q. State your name, rate, organization and present duty station.

A. [redacted] Airman Apprentice, V-3 Division, USS TICONDEROGA (CVA-14).

Q. Will you tell the board what your responsibilities are with respect to moving of aircraft onboard USS TICONDEROGA?

- A. On that aircraft, I was port chockman.
- Q. Will you describe your responsibilities as port chockman?
- A. The main purpose is chock up the plane when he blows the whistle - to get the chock in as fast as you can.
- Q. Will you describe how the events happened on the afternoon of 5 December with regard to your activities and your responsibilities in the movement of the aircraft?
- A. We moved the aircraft on a spot on the elevator like we always do. The director said to slow it down, but nothing happened. The director blew his whistle. I tried to get a chock in but it came back out. I tried to get it back in again but it kept right on going.
- Q. Do you carry the chock with you during the movement of aircraft?
- A. Yes sir.
- Q. Can you describe the actual contact between the port main landing gear and the chock and what happened as you intended to put the chock into position?
- A. The second time the director blew the whistle I put it in. It was going too fast to stop it and it kicked it back out. I grabbed hold of it again and put it back in but just couldn't quite get it.
- Q. When you take the chock out do you keep it in a position wider than the wheel?
- A. Yes sir, we usually open it up a couple of inches wider than the wheel because its easier when we put the chock under.
- Q. It goes under the wheel extended?
- A. Yes sir.
- Q. How many whistles did you hear?
- A. As the aircraft was being moved I heard three blown.
- Q. Can you describe approximately what position the aircraft was in when you heard the first whistle blown?
- A. It was about two feet from the regular spot and just kept right on going.
- Q. Two feet in front of the yellow line?
- A. Yes sir.
- Q. I'm going to show you some pictures of aircraft on number 2 elevator. Would you indicate for the board if the aircraft are positioned in the proper spot, or whether forward or aft, or inboard or outboard of the correct spot? (Exhibit 2)
- A. The first picture is just forward and inboard. (Exhibit 2A)
- Q. Did you have any difficulty in placing yourself in position to place the chock around the wheel?
- A. No sir.
- Q. For how long did you attempt to place your chock in position?

A. I tried to get it into position until I heard the crack of the rail and then I tried to get out.

Q. Did you indicate to the board how many whistles you heard blown?

A. It was three, sir.

Q. Can you describe the movement of the aircraft as it proceeded off the outboard edge of the elevator?

A. One side went off first, it went off on an angle.

Q. Were you injured at all in the movement of the aircraft?

A. Yes sir, I have a bruise. The tow bar hit me in the back of the hip.

Q. Did you have this looked at?

A. No sir.

Q. Did you have any difficulty in walking afterwards?

A. No sir.

Q. Did you observe the aircraft in the water?

A. Yes sir. It was upside down.

Questions by board member, Commander *B-6*

Q. The check you were using, did it have any non-skid on it?

A. I don't believe it did, sir.

Q. Did you ever see a check thrown back out like that?

A. No sir.

Q. Was the check put in properly?

A. Yes sir. It was just too much speed on the plane.

Q. Is there some possibility that the starboard chockman could have put his check in and causing the plane to pivot before you placed your check into position?

A. Yes sir.

Q. How long have you been in your position as a chockman?

A. The phone talker and I switch off sometimes.

Q. Are you experienced in this procedure?

A. Yes sir.

Q. You had no doubt what your responsibility was in the movement of the aircraft?

A. No sir.

Questions by senior board member, Captain *B-6*

Q. Where were you in position in relation to the aircraft when you were walking along carrying the check?

A. Between the wing tank and the wheel cover.

Q. You were right up against the wheel cover?

A. Yes sir.

Q. After the whistle sounds how long does it take for an A4 type aircraft to stop?

A. This is difficult to answer, sir.

Q. How far does it travel?

A. About six to eight inches, sir.

Q. Did you hesitate in putting your chock under the aircraft?

A. No sir.

Q. You said, "when you heard the whistle, you started to put the chock in?"

A. Yes sir.

Q. Approximately how long after you heard the whistle blow - could you estimate how long it took you to put the chock in?

A. It was only a matter of seconds before it was around the wheel.

Q. Was the chock in position in your hand to go around the wheel, or did you have to move it around your body before you could apply it to the plane?

A. I had the chock in my hand ready to slide it in.

Q. You were expecting the whistle signal?

A. Yes sir.

Question by counsel for the board:

Q. When the port wheel left the elevator did it actually break the railing?

A. Yes sir.

Neither counsel for the board nor the board desired to examine this witness further.

The senior member informed the witness that he was privileged to make any further statement that he thinks should be a matter of record in connection with the accident under investigation.

The witness stated he had nothing further to say.

The witness was duly cautioned concerning his testimony and withdrew from the room.

B-6 Airman Apprentice, USN, was called as witness for the board, was duly sworn, informed of the subject matter under investigation and examined as follows:

DIRECT EXAMINATION

Questions by counsel for the board.

- Q. State your name, rate, organization and present duty station.
- A. *B-6* Airman Apprentice, USN.
- Q. Will you describe for the board what your position and responsibility was with respect to the aircraft?
- A. My duties were as tie down man - to hook the tie downs onto the aircraft immediately after it stops. That's my one and only job I have.
- Q. Did you assist in pushing the aircraft onto the elevator?
- A. Yes sir, I did.
- Q. Do you normally do both these things as tie down man?
- A. Yes sir.
- Q. What set of tie downs were you responsible for?
- A. I'm just responsible for one set of tie downs on the front nose strut.
- Q. In the movement of the aircraft, was there anything unusual that you noted - in this particular instance?
- A. None that I can remember - no I don't believe so. Everything appeared normal.
- Q. Do you recall whether this aircraft was moved onto the elevator in one movement or was it necessary to stop it and push a little harder to get it over the hump?
- A. I don't remember if it took more than normal effort to get it over the hump.
- Q. Did you hear the whistle sounded to stop the aircraft?
- A. Yes, I did.
- Q. What was your position relative to the aircraft when the whistle sounded?
- A. I was on the starboard side of the aircraft at the nose. That was when I first heard the whistle blow. We got about 8 feet on the elevator.
- Q. Can you tell me when the first whistle was blown in relation to the movement of the aircraft?
- A. The first blows when the front strut reaches the yellow line - that is when the whistle had been blown.
- Q. And at that time how far were you from the nose strut of the aircraft?
- A. About four feet from the nose strut - on the starboard side.
- Q. About what position did you stop pushing the aircraft?
- A. About two feet short of the yellow line I stopped pushing the aircraft - about 15 to 16 feet after it entered onto the elevator.
- Q. You continued pushing until the whistle was blown?
- A. Yes sir, I did.
- Q. Did you notice whether the plane pushers continued to push?

A. I don't remember, sir.

Q. Do you remember what the condition of the surface of the elevator was that day, was it slick, oily, or wet?

A. I don't know what the elevator was but I do remember that morning they were using fuel by the gas station and there was fuel on the deck mixed with water.

Q. Was this on the hangar deck or elevator?

A. This was on the hangar deck where the plane was sitting in the area. Aviation fuel was on the deck.

Q. Did you note any significant roll of the ship?

A. No sir.

Q. Approximately how many whistles did you hear?

A. I heard three whistles that I can remember.

Q. Did you observe the aircraft as it continued over the side of the elevator?

A. As I saw it, after the first whistle had blown I tried to put the tie down on it, but the aircraft was moving and I missed. I tried again but missed. I didn't try to put it on again. There was nothing I could do to stop it. The chocks didn't stop it. It seemed to have too much weight. The port wheel was the first to go over. I remember seeing the port tank either bend or break - I don't remember which. It broke the stanchion, then it went up in the air, hesitated and went into the water on its back.

Q. At what point did you observe the pilot in the aircraft?

A. At the time the second whistle had blown - this is when I looked at the pilot, the plane captain and the plane. I heard one of the directors yell to slow it down. The director blew the whistle. Then I looked up at the pilot, but he wasn't paying any attention until the time he started going over. That's all I can remember.

Q. Did you observe whether the pilot was wearing a helmet?

A. I don't remember, sir.

Questions by board member, Commander B-6

Q. On the movement of this aircraft, when it entered the elevator was the aircraft moving at a normal speed?

A. I would say it moved from the hangar bay to the elevator at a normal speed. I would say after it passed the hump it picked up a little momentum. At the time of the first whistle it was moving at a normal rate of speed.

Q. Did you say the plane director told him to slow the plane down?

A. Yes, I believe his exact words were, "Slow the plane down, sir. Slow the plane down, sir".

Q. You mentioned aviation fuel on the hangar deck. Was this JP-5, or lube oil or what kind of fuel and what quantity of it?

A. Just before the flight I remember them changing nozzles or something and one of the hoses spilled some JP-5 out-maybe a half gallon or more - onto the deck and there was some water on the deck where spray from the waves came into the hangar bay that morning and it was in the vicinity of where the aircraft was parked.

Q. Were men engaged in cleaning up this fuel?

A. I don't remember, sir. I don't remember seeing anyone cleaning it up.

Questions by senior board member, Captain Bb

Q. Did the plane pushers have any difficulties in pushing the plane on the elevator?

A. I don't think so, sir.

Q. You mentioned that you stopped pushing and started putting on the tie down. What part of the tie downs were you referring to?

A. The chain part that attaches to the deck. I went for the nose strut once and missed. That is when I realized that the plane was going backwards. Usually, when the whistle blows, this is where I put the chain in and hook it up and get off the elevator fast. But when I put the chain in and looked up and tried to put the tie down on, I went for it again and missed. That is when I heard someone yell "Hey! Don't you have any brakes?" Then the director said to "slow down, sir" - and the plane kept going over the side.

Q. You said you looked at the pilots eyes at that point, where was the pilot looking?

A. Looking at something - not something specific - just kept moving from side to side like this. His eyes were moving fast in a pattern back and forth.

Q. When you failed to make your hook-up before the aircraft went over the side, you said you looked up at the pilot. Did you see him at the time?

A. Yes sir.

Q. And what was he looking at - at that particular moment?

A. I don't think it was anything particular just a movement of the eyes. It might of been something in the cockpit or outside the plane, but there was no movement of his head. He could have been reading something or looking at something or that sort of thing. He could have been looking down at the airplane directors, but he didn't hear him. His mind was blank. His eyes wandered too fast back and forth to be looking at anything specific.

Questions by board member, Commander B-b

Q. How are aircraft moved from the hangar bay to the elevator. Are they moved with a tractor or are they pushed by hand?

A. If we are in a rush, we use a dolly and push the plane to a spot in the open and push them on the elevator with a dolly. With it are two chockmen and two tie down men to tie it down. Or if we push it on we get some blue shirts to give us hand.

Q. When you say dolly do you mean a tractor?

A. More or less of a fork lift.

Q. Is this a powered vehicle?

Neither counsel for the board nor the board desired to examine this witness further.

The senior member informed the witness that he was privileged to make any further statement that he thinks should be a matter of record in connection with the accident under investigation.

The witness stated he had nothing further to say.

The witness was duly cautioned concerning his testimony and withdrew from the room.

B-6, Airman, USN, was called as a witness for the board, was duly sworn, informed of the subject matter of the investigation and examined as follows:

DIRECT EXAMINATION

Questions by counsel for the board:

Q. State your full name, rate, organization and present duty station.

A. B-6 Airman, USN, USS TICONDEROGA (CVA-14).

Q. Will you explain what position you have relative to the movement of aircraft?

A. When I'm not a director I'm a wing walker or safety supervisor. When we were moving the aircraft onto the elevator I was a wing walker - on the port wing at that time.

Q. How long have you had this assignment on the TICONDEROGA?

A. Since about April 1964.

Q. Will you describe the movement of the aircraft under investigation from the point at which it was parked until it was lost over the side?

A. It was parked on the port side just aft of number 2 elevator, nose aft - and we started moving it out. I was on the port wing. We were moving it onto the elevator and was going to spot it on the after part of number 2 elevator. A bomb rack was on the elevator, so we told them to move it on the forward part of the elevator. Then someone ran out and moved it. The director or the safety man on the starboard side blew his whistle because of the truck parked there. The pilot did not hit his brakes but the bomb truck was moved out of the way. We were moving aft. Myself and one of the directors named B-6 were on the port wing and all of a sudden I looked up at the pilot and he didn't seem to be paying any attention to the director. I guess he was looking at something in the cockpit because he was looking down - but he was not looking at the director. The plane just kept moving back on the elevator. There is a yellow stripe and this is where we normally stop the nose wheel of the plane - right on the yellow stripe. It gives you enough room. In case a bird on the flight deck level is extending over we can miss it. Well, I blew my whistle and the other director with me blew his - and the plane didn't stop. The check man threw their checks in and the port check came back out and the man tried to put the check back in. But it was too late - because of the guard rail.

Q. Did he fall out of the way or was he pushed or did he jump?

A. As the nose wheel was going up, the tow bar swung around the port side and hit him in the hip. I looked up at the pilot and he was surprised. He looked like he didn't know what was going on.

Q. Did the pilot have his helmet on?

A. No sir.

Q. *B-V* I'll give you a diagram of number 2 hangar bay and elevator and ask you to draw the movement of the aircraft from its initial point onto the elevator and place an "X" where you were located as the aircraft moved along.

A. The aircraft was on the port side of the hangar bay, just aft of the elevator. The aircraft was then pushed onto the elevator. (Exhibit 1)

Q. Here are four pictures of number 2 elevator (Exhibit 2). Would you indicate whether this aircraft is in the position where you normally position it?

A. This picture is exactly where we would have it usually - if they have a bird at flight deck level on the forward part of the elevator. We put the bird on the after part of the elevator so that it will give enough room on the elevator so when they raise the elevator one section of the plane will not be hit by the plane wing.

Q. Approximately how many whistles did you hear?

A. I'd say about three or four.

Q. Will you state once again the exact position where the plane was when the first whistle was blown?

A. When the first whistle was blown the aircraft was not on the elevator. That is when the bomb truck was directly behind it. The next time the whistle was blown was when the nose wheel was spotted on the yellow line.

Q. Did the pilot apply the brakes when the whistle was blown the first time?

A. No sir.

Q. Did you observe the brakes being applied at anytime during the movement?

A. No sir.

Q. Can you describe the condition of the deck on the elevator and hangar deck?

A. The conditions were better than usual, I'd say. When we have been operating, the deck has been wet and the ship would be in a big roll - port to starboard list.

Q. On this occasion how would you describe it? Would you say the deck was dry?

A. Yes, sir.

Q. Was there any trace of oil?

A. No sir, none at all.

Question by board member, Commander *B-V*

Q. When was the first occasion you saw the pilot in this move?

A. Just before we started to move the aircraft.

Q. Was the canopy open?

A. Yes sir.

Q. Did the pilot have his helmet on?

Q. Was the pilot looking at the plane director then?

A. Yes sir, he was.

Q. When was the next occasion you looked at the pilot?

A. Well, just before the whistle was blown to stop the brakes.

Q. Did the pilot have his helmet on?

A. No sir.

Q. At the time the aircraft was being moved did he have his helmet on?

A. No sir.

Q. Was he looking at the plane director?

A. I don't think so.

Q. What did you see when you looked at him?

A. He was looking down, it seemed to me that he was looking at his cockpit. If I may say, the chief that was in his squadron was a monitor on us.

Q. Was he a witness?

A. No sir. But later I asked him if the pilot wasn't paying attention, and he said, "yes".

Q. When was the next time you looked at the pilot?

A. Just before the aircraft went over the side.

Q. Is it normal for a pilot to be looking down while his aircraft is being moved?

A. No sir.

Q. Was the aircraft moving on the elevator at a normal speed?

A. I would say slower than usual. When we have big rolls on the ship - port to starboard list - we will push it on from the hangar deck to the elevator and then once it is over, we slow it down. But since it was not rocking, this was not necessary.

Q. What means do you use to slow down the aircraft?

A. The hand signals slow it down. If that doesn't work then we hit the whistles - blow the whistles.

Q. What is required when the whistles are blown?

A. The checkmen put the chocks in - in case he doesn't have any brakes.

Questions by senior board member, Captain 13-6

Q. You mentioned that you were talking to someone during the movement of the aircraft onto the elevator?

A. Yes sir.

Q. With whom were you talking?

A. To the director, B-6

Q. Was he the safety director?

A. Yes sir.

Q. What was his job during the movement?

A. His was the same as mine. We were both on the port wing.

Q. Was he watching the stern more so than the port wing?

A. Well, he was watching the port wing.

Q. Were you paying attention to what you were doing during this movement or were you interested in your conversation?

A. I was paying attention to the movement.

Q. At the time you heard the whistle blow where was the nose wheel?

A. Passing the yellow line.

Q. Did you look up at the pilot to see if he was responding to the whistle signal?

A. I looked up at the pilot. I also looked at the chock men to see if they put the checks in.

Q. Was there any response on the part of the pilot?

A. No sir.

Q. Did he give any signal to indicate he didn't have any brakes?

A. No sir.

Q. Did he say anything, as best you could tell?

A. Nothing at all.

Q. Did you have a good view of him at that time?

A. Being on the port wing, yes sir. As a wing walker you are in a good position to watch the nose, tail section and the port side of the aircraft.

Neither counsel for the board nor the board desired to examine this witness further.

The senior member informed the witness that he was privileged to make any further statement that he thinks should be a matter of record in connection with the accident under investigation.

The witness made the following statement:

Witness: A lot of times as we move the planes from the hangar deck to the elevator the pilots tend to pay attention to someone else instead of the director.

Questions by senior board member, Captain B-6

Q. To whom else?

A. To the fuel crew, the plane captain, or anyone but the director. In the movement of aircraft, we are responsible if the bird gets crunched - nobody else, just us. Especially on number 1 elevator, they tend to pay attention to everyone else.

Q. Do you feel the pilot in this instance was paying attention to someone else - in this case?

A. Not this time.

The witness stated he had nothing further to say.

The witness was duly cautioned concerning his testimony and withdrew from the room.

B-6, Airman Apprentice, USN, was called as a witness for the board, was duly sworn, informed of the subject matter of the investigation and examined as follows:

DIRECT EXAMINATION

Questions by counsel for the board:

Q. State your name, rate, organization and present duty station.

A. *B-6* Airman Apprentice, USN, USS TICONDEROGA (CVA-14).

Q. Will you explain to the board what your function was in respect to the movement of this aircraft.

A. My duties were to break the bird down - take the tie downs off the bird, push it onto the elevator, and put the tie downs on again.

Q. What set of tie down chains were you responsible for?

A. I was on the starboard main strut.

Q. Did you aid in pushing the aircraft?

A. Yes, until the point where the plane went over the hump there is on number 2 elevator. After that I moved into the strut - ready for the tie down.

Q. Will you relate if anything unusual happened while moving the aircraft onto the elevator?

A. Nothing unusual that I can think of.

Q. Will you comment of the speed of the aircraft?

A. It seemed normal - except when the whistle blew. It should have stopped, but didn't.

Q. Can you describe the position of the aircraft when the whistle was first blown?

A. The aircraft was forward of the yellow line where it should be stopped.

Q. How many whistles did you hear?

A. I know it was either two or three times.

Q. Can you describe the movement of the aircraft after the whistle was blown?

A. Not actually, sir.

Q. Where had you moved the bomb truck from?

A. The bomb truck was aft on number 2 elevator and had to be moved forward. It was first brought from the hangar bay to be taken topside.

Q. Were you able to observe the movement of the aircraft onto the elevator?

A. Yes sir.

Q. Will you describe for the board how the movement of the aircraft appeared to you?

A. Yes sir. The aircraft was positioned right next to the fuel station. The rear end was just aft of the elevator. It was just aft of the elevator on the port side.

Q. Were you able to observe the pilot during the movement of the aircraft?

A. Not until the very end of it. When the nose gear went up in the air was the only time I looked at the pilot.

Q. Did you note if the pilot had his helmet on at the time?

A. The pilot did not have his helmet on.

Q. Did you observe the helmet anywhere?

A. No sir, I did not.

Q. Could you observe the aircraft after it went off the elevator?

A. Yes, I could.

Q. Would you describe for the board what happened?

A. The nose strut was at a slight angle. The wing tank hit and the plane tipped over.

Q. In what position was it when it hit the water?

A. It was upside down - belly up.

Q. Did you see the aircraft in the water?

A. Yes, I did.

Q. Did you see anything else in the water?

A. No sir, I did not.

Q. How long did you watch the aircraft in the water?

A. It must have been about 5 seconds - not very long - because when the plane went into the water a yellow shirt chased everyone off the elevator.

Questions by senior board member, Captain *B-6*

Q. Have you observed a lot of movements of aircraft onto the elevator?

A. I would say yes, sir - captain.

Q. What is your estimate about the speed of the aircraft as it was moving - as it came down on the elevator?

A. I would say fast - extremely fast.

Q. At what point did you note it was moving fast - as it went to the edge, or over the hump?

A. When I first noticed it coming over the hump, I noticed the speed.

Q. At which time were you moving your bomb truck?

A. Just as they started pushing, and I noticed too they were moving it onto the elevator, so I moved the bomb truck forward.

Q. When they started to move the aircraft onto the elevator you moved your bomb truck forward?

A. Yes sir.

Q. Was the bomb truck completely out of the way when the aircraft entered the elevator?

A. That is correct. It was out of the way when the aircraft entered the elevator.

Q. What do you attribute the speed to? Was there a great many men pushing it?

A. Yes sir.

Q. How many?

A. I couldn't say how many, sir. But there were a heck of a lot of people pushing the aircraft and when the aircraft went into the water, it was packed with people.

Q. Did you hear whistle signals given by the directors or safety men or anyone else?

A. The only time I heard the whistles blow myself was when the airplane was about five feet from the guard rail - when I heard the whistles blow.

Q. Were you paying particular attention to the signals?

A. No I wasn't, sir.

Questions by board member, Commander B-6

Q. You said you were concerned with the speed. Was there any indication to you that someone was trying to slow the aircraft down?

A. As the plane was coming over the hump I heard someone say to slow it down when it entered the elevator. But there was no indication whatsoever.

Q. At what point on the elevator was the aircraft when the whistle blew the first time?

A. I can't honestly say. I would have to guess.

Q. At what point on the diagram was the nose strut when you heard the first whistle.

A. Extremely close to the outer edge. I say five feet.

Q. How far outboard would you estimate it was?

A. Seven to eight feet outboard - it all happened so fast.

Neither counsel for the board nor the board desired to examine this witness further.

The senior member informed the witness that he was privileged to make any further statement he thinks should be a matter of record in connection with the accident under investigation.

The witness stated he had nothing further to say.

The witness was duly cautioned concerning his testimony and withdrew from the room.

B-6, Airman, USN, was called as a witness for the board, was duly sworn, informed of the subject matter of the investigation and examined as follows:

DIRECT EXAMINATION

Questions by counsel for the board:

Q. State your name, rate, organization and present duty station?

A. *B-6*, Airman, VA-56, USS TICONDEROGA (CVA-14)

Q. Will you explain to the board what your responsibilities are in handling aircraft?

A. The responsibilities of plane captain.

Q. Were you plane captain of the aircraft in question?

A. Yes sir.

Q. You are with VA-56?

A. Yes sir.

Q. How long have you been a plane captain in VA-56?

A. Since April of last year.

Q. How long were you plane captain of aircraft side number 472?

A. Since September 28th.

Q. What actions were taken to locate the aircraft in the position to which it was finally moved?

A. I don't understand, sir.

Q. How did the aircraft arrive in the position in which it was located before the exercise started?

A. At approximately 1200 on the afternoon in question 472 was moved from the starboard side of hangar bay 2 to the port side aft of number 2 elevator.

Q. Did you check the brakes when you entered the cock-pit?

A. Yes sir.

Q. Will you describe for the board how the brakes functioned?

A. In normal fashion, sir.

Q. Did you check the time before the aircraft moved to its position in the hangar bay?

A. It was approximately 1200 hours.

Q. Was there any work done on the brakes before the accident?

A. A screw on the bottom of the brakes needed tightening but that was done a couple of days before the accident. It hadn't required further repair since then.

Q. What preflight action was carried out on the aircraft prior to the movement to the flight deck?

A. A complete preflight briefing, and the brake reservoir was checked - the pilots inspection.

Question by court member.

Q. Did he check the reservoir?

A. No sir.

Questions by counsel.

Q. At what time did you check the brake reservoir?

A. About 1000 hours.

Q. Will you indicate to the board how positive you are of the position of the following items prior to movement of the aircraft onto the elevator: The landing gear handle?

A. It was up.

Q. It was up?

A. No. It was down.

Q. How positive of this are you?

A. I'm positive it was down. This is really not an item on the preflight check off.

Q. Was the canopy up?

A. Yes sir, it was.

Q. What was the position of the canopy actuation handle in the cockpit?

A. It was in the proper place.

Q. The handle in that position indicates what?

A. That it is in the safety position. Pull the handle release and it pops.

Q. I'm not talking about the ejection handle. I'm talking about the handle which he uses to open or lock the canopy?

A. The handle was opened in the unlocked position.

Q. In the unlocked position?

Q. Will you indicate the position of the ejection seat safety pins prior to the movement of the aircraft?

A. They were out, sir.

Q. Can you identify from your own acquaintance the pilot that got into the cock-pit?

A. Yes I can.

Q. Will you name the pilot?

A. LTJG WEBSTER.

Q. Please tell the board the extent to which LTJG WEBSTER prepared himself in the cock-pit?

A. When he got into the cockpit I pulled the pins and put his starboard shoulder strap on. He already had his leg straps on and he told me he would get the rest, then I gave him the helmet. He was fixing his port shoulder strap when I got off the ladder.

Q. All that remained was his port shoulder strap for him to be completely strapped in?

A. Yes sir.

Q. Did you observe the movement of the aircraft after you took the ladder away from the aircraft?

A. Yes sir, I did.

Q. Will you indicate on the diagram the movement of the aircraft onto the elevator?

A. The plane was sitting aft of number 2 elevator in the hangar bay. We then moved it out onto the elevator. (Exhibit 1)

Q. Did you notice anything unusual about the movement of the aircraft onto the elevator?

A. No sir, not especially.

Q. Did you observe any braking action on the part of the aircraft at any time?

A. No sir.

Q. Did you observe the pilot any time the plane was being moved onto the elevator?

A. Yes sir.

Q. Could you tell where the interest of the pilot seemed to be located?

A. He was looking out the starboard wind screen and across the hangar deck - maybe at another pilot.

Q. At what point in the movement of the aircraft was this?

A. It was as we were backing it onto the elevator.

Q. Did you observe the director of the plane?

A. Yes sir.

Q. Did you hear him say anything?

A. No sir.

Q. Did you hear him give the pilot any signals?

A. Yes sir, I heard him blow his whistles for the brakes.

Q. Did you observe any application of brakes on the hangar deck or the elevator?

A. No sir.

Q. Do you feel the signal was given at the proper time?

A. Yes.

Q. Did you hear any other whistles after the first whistle?

A. Yes sir, the first whistle I heard was for it to slow down was when the yellow cart was on the elevator, but it didn't stop, or slow down once it got on the elevator.

Q. Did you observe any braking action at this time.

A. No sir.

Q. Did you hear the whistles of the safety director?

A. Yes.

Q. Can you describe the motion of the aircraft as it passed through the normal position as it was going over the hump in the elevator?

A. There was a bomb cart behind it on the elevator. The director blew the whistle for it to slow down but it appeared to me that it didn't slow down. When it got back to the yellow line, he blew the whistle but it didn't stop. He was looking at the starboard wind screen.

Q. As the aircraft started moving off the outboard edge of the elevator, did the aircraft go straight off, or did it turn or pivot or anything?

A. It pivoted and then went off backwards.

Q. Where was the position of the aircraft the last time you observed the pilot?

A. Going off the back edge of the elevator.

Q. Can you determine where his interest was at this time?

A. Going off the back edge of the elevator he looked up and appeared startled.

Q. Did you observe the aircraft in the water?

A. Yes sir.

Q. What was the position of the aircraft in the water?

A. It was in upside down.

Q. How long were you able to observe the aircraft?

A. I looked at it for a minute then started to look for the pilot. I was looking more or less to see if the pilot got out.

Q. Do you have any idea how long the plane floated?

A. No sir, I don't.

Does the board wish to examine this witness further?

Questions by board member, Commander *Bb*:

Q. When the pilot got in the cock-pit, was he in full flight gear?

A. Yes sir, he was.

Q. Was he in the normal gear they use for flying?

A. Yes sir he was.

Q. How big of a man was the pilot?

A. Small - about 5 feet 2 inches tall.

Q. When you strapped him in the cockpit and assisted him to get in the cock-pit, could he reach the brake pedal?

A. Yes sir.

Q. You could see this from where you were standing?

A. I couldn't see this from where I was standing.

Q. You said as the plane started out onto the elevator, the pilot was looking out the starboard side of the cockpit. Where was the plane director at that time?

A. On the port side, sir.

Q. When you move the aircraft from the hangar deck onto the elevator, how do they normally move it - with a tractor, or do they push it by hand?

A. Normally they push it by hand.

Q. When the first whistle was given to slow the aircraft down, where was the nose wheel relative to the lip of the elevator - the hump?

A. It was at the hump.

Q. When the next signal was given to stop the aircraft, where was the nose wheel?

A. It was about five foot forward of the line.

Q. Did you look at the pilot at that time?

A. Yes sir.

Q. Where there any signs that the pilot was having difficulties?

A. No sir.

Q. Were there any signs of him having difficulties on the hangar deck?

A. He may have looked concerned in the hangar deck but he wasn't excited.

Q. Did the pilot appear to be looking at any other handling crew besides the director?

A. No sir, he was not.

- Q. Did he appear to be looking at the plane director?
- A. No sir, he did not.
- Q. Was there anything else going on at the time that might avert his attentions?
- A. I don't remember sir. He might have been watching another pilot or loading crew.
- Q. How many whistle signals were given that you heard?
- A. Two.
- Q. Did you observe any of the check men?
- A. No, I did not.
- Q. Was there any skylarking around the aircraft during this movement?
- A. None that I saw, sir.
- Q. Did the movement of this aircraft - up until the time the aircraft reached its extreme - did this movement appear normal to you?
- A. Yes sir, it did.
- Q. Did you see the pilot do anything to try to escape?
- A. No I did not, sir.
- Q. There was no effort on his part to get rid of his shoulder straps or otherwise disengage himself from the cock-pit?
- A. No sir, I didn't see him.
- Q. At that time did he have his helmet on?
- A. No.
- Q. Did he try to stand up in the aircraft?
- A. No.
- Q. Could you see his hands?
- A. Last I saw of his hands they were gripping the side of the aircraft.
- Q. In your opinion was the pilot conscious at the time he went over the side?
- A. Yes sir.
- Q. Was he looking around when it went off?
- A. I can not say.
- Q. Did he make any effort to grab hold or brace himself or anything of that sort?
- A. As the wheel tumbled into the safety netting I could see him gripping the sides of the aircraft with his hands.
- Q. When you strapped the pilot into the cock-pit did he seem overly concerned with anything?

A. No sir.

Q. Did he appear to be normal?

A. Yes sir, he was acting normal.

Question by counsel for the board:

Q. You said you helped him get into the cock-pit?

A. Yes sir. I helped him fix his shoulder strap. I asked him if he wanted me to help him with his shoulder strap, and he said, "yes". Then I handed him his helmet.

Question by senior board member, Captain Bb:

Q. When you handed him his helmet was it in the carrying bag?

A. It was in the bag.

Neither counsel for the board nor the board desired to examine this witness further.

The senior member informed the witness that he was privileged to make any further statement that he thinks should be a matter of record in connection with the accident under investigation.

The witness had no further statement to make.

The witness was duly cautioned concerning his testimony and withdrew from the room.

The board adjourned at 1455, 11 December 1965.

-SECOND DAY-

On board
USS TICONDEROGA (CVA-14)

B1
Monday, 13 December 1965

The board reconvened at 0902.

Lieutenant Commander *B6* U. S. Navy, was called as a witness for the board, was duly sworn, informed of the subject matter of the investigation and examined as follows:

DIRECT EXAMINATION

Questions by counsel for the board:

Q. State your name, rank, organization and present duty station.

A. *B6*, Lieutenant Commander, USN, VA-56 Operations Officer, presently serving onboard USS TICONDEROGA (CVA-14).

Q. Will you inform the board how long you have known Douglas Morey WEBSTER?

A. I have known LTJG WEBSTER since approximately the middle of September at which time he reported onboard VA-56 from CRAW training at VA-125.

Q. Would you comment, from what you know, on his back ground as a aviator?

A. LTJG WEBSTER reported directly to CRAW training from the Training Command and he had approximately 470 flight hours - 170 in the A4 aircraft at the time of the accident.

Q. Was LTJG WEBSTER assigned as a pilot in an A4E on the afternoon of 5 December 1965?

A. He was.

Q. Are you aware of the Bureau Number and Side Number of the Aircraft?

A. Yes sir, the Bureau Number was 151022, and the side number was 472.

Q. Will you tell the board whether you are aware of any unusual happenings with regard to the evolution of the aircraft on 5 December 1965?

Q. No sir. To the best of my knowledge it was a *normal* exercise and up until the time of the accident everything was normal in every way.

Q. Mr. *B6* what is the proper response to the sound of a whistle being blown during the movement of an aircraft on deck?

A. The instant application of the brakes.

Q. Do you feel LTJG WEBSTER was aware of this required response at the time he was assigned to the aircraft in question?

A. Yes sir, I do.

Q. Do you have any other questions for LTJG WEBSTER?

Q. Commander ^{B/b} are you aware of any hearing loss on the part of LTJG WEBSTER?

A. No sir.

Q. Where is the most likely place for the helmet during an evolution such as this?

A. In this type of aircraft, when it is on the hangar deck, the most likely place is normally up on the canopy bow. When the aircraft is on the elevator and the elevator starts going up we normally put our hard hats on.

Q. In the evolution which was taking place on 5 December 1965, LTJG WEBSTER had not yet put on his helmet, and I'm wondering where it might have been placed so that he would have had it ready to put it on. You said most people put it on the canopy bow. Don't some place it on the stick in the cockpit or on their lap, so to speak? If it was placed on the canopy bow, it would have been clearly visible to the people who were observing the exercise.

A. Sir, if it was in the cockpit it would not be visible.

Q. Mr. ^{B/b} what are the prerequisite steps for ejecting from the A4E aircraft?

A. This is a very simple evolution in the A4. There are two ways of getting out of the aircraft. One is the face curtain and the other is the alternate ejection handle, which is located between the legs.

Q. Will you explain to the board what preliminary steps or preparatory steps the pilot must take so he can effect an ejection?

A. I'm sorry sir. You will have to be a little more specific - with the canopy opened or closed?

Q. Let's take it first with the canopy open.

A. In order for the ejection seat to fire, the canopy must first leave the aircraft. The initial travel of the face curtain or alternate ejection handle automatically jettisons the canopy and arms the seat. If the canopy does not leave the aircraft NATOPS recommends that the canopy release handle be pulled and then actuate the seat with the primary or alternate ejection system.

Q. Can you use this procedure with the canopy open or closed?

A. Yes sir.

Q. Will you comment on the necessity for pulling the safety pins from the ejection seat?

A. The safety pins have to be removed prior to ejection.

Q. Are there any other pins that have to be removed - other than these safety pins?

A. No sir.

Q. What special difficulties might be present in effecting an ejection in the water from an inverted position?

A. To my knowledge there are no special precautions that have to be taken in ejecting underwater. Everything seems to work the same underwater as it does in the air. In either case, it would be necessary to get rid of the canopy first.

Q. If the canopy were fully closed all the pilot would have to do is pull the certain assuming he had disconnected his oxygen and so forth?

A. He doesn't have to disconnect his oxygen this comes out automatically.

Q. If the canopy was closed, but not locked, would it be necessary to for the pilot to remove the canopy by another means?

A. The canopy would theretically leave the aircraft when the primary ejection system was utilized irregardless of whether or not the canopy was locked closed. However if the canopy did not come off it would be necessary for the pilot to remove the canopy by another means prior to ejecting.

Q. Assuming the canopy was open, as with the A4E in which Mr. WEBSTER was the pilot, as it went over the outboard edge of the elevator what would you expect to happen to the canopy as the aircraft landed in the water on its back?

A. I'd expect the canopy to close immediately.

Q. Is there any possibility that it would not close?

A. Under these circumstances I don't believe so, sir. The possibility of setting the latch on the canopy takes a considerable amount of force. Actually the canopy has to come down and then it slides forward about an inch or so.

Q. How does the pilot normally lock the canopy closed?

A. Normally he reaches up, pulls the canopy down, holds it down with one hand and, once the two latches engage the rollers on the canopy latch mechanism, then he pushes the over center handle down. And as you said it takes considerable pressure to push this handle.

Q. To your knowledge did LTJG WEBSTER ever display any unusual lapse in paying attention?

A. No sir.

Counsel: Does the board desire to examine this witness further?

Questions by board member, Commander B-6;

B1

Q. Did this exercise require the movement of this aircraft?

A. Yes sir, it did.

Q. What movement was required?

A. The movement, that was required was to move the aircraft from the hangar deck to the flight deck to simulate a launch.

Q. Did this movement require a pilot in the cockpit?

A. Yes sir, it did.

Q. Was LTJG WEBSTER the assigned pilot?

A. Yes sir, he was.

A. There were none to my knowledge. I've been very close to him in the ready room and in flying with him, but there were no psychological problems that I know of.

Questions by senior board member, Captain B-6

Q. Do you consider Mr. WEBSTER to have been a qualified pilot?

A. Yes sir, I do. He completed the complete CRAW syllabus and had flown with the squadron during the ORI and the NORM. He flew 22 combat sorties during the month.

Q. In your opinion, LTJG WEBSTER was fully qualified in the attack CVA aircraft?

A. Yes sir.

Q. With or without power?

A. Yes sir.

Q. In regards to previous questions about his helmet, if his helmet had fallen to the floor boards of the cock-pit, could he have had use of the brakes?

A. It would be very difficult for the hard hat to fall to the floor of the cock-pit. There is not that much room in the cock-pit. He may have had it on the stick. To my knowledge, I don't believe it can get between the stick and the instrument panel. I'm positive that if there were any braking action that he might have wanted to take, the helmet would not have interfered. However, if the helmet had fallen off the stick - if that's where he had it - he could have reached down to retrieve it and could have been distracted.

Q. In the adjustment of the brakes themselves - the brake pedals - is there any difficulty in making such an adjustment - as, for example, when a tall pilot or a plane captain leaves the airplane and a short pilot takes over control of the aircraft?

A. The brakes in an A4 are certainly not the easiest to adjust and since we have these new soles on our flying boots - the non-slip soles - it's awfully difficult to push the lever with your foot without having the soles hang-up on the lever. It has been my experience that it has been a lot more difficult to adjust these pedals with the new soles. However, I don't think the problem comes in reaching the pedals to adjust them. I don't believe the rudder pedals in the fully extended position are that far away from the seat in an A4 aircraft.

Q. In other words no matter what position the rudder pedals were in, LT WEBSTER could have reached to them with his feet to activate the brakes?

A. This is my opinion. I think it is much easier for a short person to reach the brakes than it is for a tall person, due to the position of the brakes under the instrument panel. From what I can gather from talking with other pilots in the ready room, the biggest problem for tall personnel in reaching the brakes in an A4 is that when the seat is up, you can't get your legs up under the instrument panel to reach the top of the brakes. However I don't feel a short person would have this problem at all.

Questions by counsel.

Q. Would you estimate Mr. WEBSTER's height?

A. I would say he is 5 foot 9 inches - or 10 - I'm really not sure.

Q. And would you say his body was normally proportioned between trunk and legs?

A. Yes sir.

Neither counsel for the board nor the board desired to examine this witness further.

The senior member informed the witness that he was privileged to make any further statement that he thinks should be a matter of record in connection with the accident under investigation.

The witness stated he had nothing further to say.

The witness was duly cautioned concerning his testimony and withdrew from the room.

B-6, Aviation Boatswains Mate Third Class, USN, was called as a witness for the board, was duly sworn, informed of the subject matter of the investigation and examined as follows:

DIRECT EXAMINATION

Questions by counsel for the board:

Q. State your name, rate, organization and present duty station.

A. B-6, ABH3, USN, V-3 Division, USS TICONDEROGA (CVA-14).

Q. Will you describe for the board what your responsibility was with respect to the movement of this aircraft?

A. I was director, sir.

Q. And as a plane director will you describe what your responsibilities are?

A. My responsibilities are to spot - move it out of spot.

Q. Are you the one who gives the signals for the correct movement, so that the aircraft follows a particular course over the deck?

A. Yes sir. When you start to move the aircraft you give hands up to let him know that you are directing. You are also more or less the safety man also. You have safety men on the wings, but you are a safety, also.

Q. How were you informed of the necessity to move A/E number 472?

A. The word was passed that they wanted 472 to be brought topside right away. The hangar deck PO went over and asked him - the pilot - if he was ready, and he said, "yes". The plane captain got on the ladder and started harnessing him in. When flight-deck control wants a plane right away we rush as much as we can. We informed the plane captain that they wanted it right away and he had to get out. The plane captain got down and we took the ladder off. I told the pilot to hold the brakes and we would break it down. After that I told him off the brakes, going aft. We started out and started to turn to go onto the elevator. I told him to keep it slow. Moving it on the elevator I noticed a bomb cart on the elevator behind the aircraft so I told the pilot to keep it slow. We rolled it up on the ramp and it rolled back. By that time the bomb cart was moved. I gave him 'off the brakes' and went aft on it. On the elevator there is a yellow line running across the elevator. When the nose wheel is on this line you are supposed to stop. When the aircraft reached this spot, I blew my whistle - but it just kept moving. I blew my whistle, but it kept moving. The wing walker safety men more or less both blew their whistles - but it kept moving. The shock men threw their chocks in, but the port chock came back out. He tried to put it back in but didn't have time. It just went over.

A. The aircraft was moving aft and we started in the hangar deck over the ramp onto the number 2 elevator. At the yellow line the plane was supposed to stop - there. (Exhibit 1)

Q. Then, when the nose wheel reached the yellow line, it was your intention to stop the aircraft?

A. Yes sir.

Q. Was there any deviation in your movement of the aircraft up until it reached the yellow line?

A. No sir.

Q. Throughout the movement, prior to your blowing the whistle, was your entire crew in the proper position?

A. Yes sir.

Q. Would you draw on the diagram what the proper position is for the crew at the time the aircraft is in the desired spot on the elevator?

A. (The witness proceeded to draw the proper position of his crew.) (Exhibit 1).

Q. Your position was about 10 feet in front of the nose wheel of the aircraft and on the port side?

A. Yes sir. From that position I can see above, under and on both sides of the plane.

Q. During the movement of the aircraft did you observe any braking action being applied to the wheels of the aircraft?

A. No sir. When it rolled onto the ramp it rolled back. They usually do that when we don't have enough power to push it over.

Q. Do you believe the pilot had taken any braking action on the aircraft when it started rolling back into the hangar bay?

A. I don't know - I wouldn't say so. The aircraft looked pretty heavy it was fueled up and everything, I couldn't say.

Q. ^B here is a picture of an A1F aircraft on number 2 elevator. (Exhibit 2) Would you indicate to the board whether you feel it is properly positioned there for movement to the flight deck?

A. Yes sir. This is the spot where we move it to the flight deck. This is the spot on the elevator. And when the aircraft gets to the yellow line, I blow the whistle.

Q. We have a similar picture here which shows the nose wheel position here, and the two main mounts in position here, and a sketch of the distances involved. Is this the way it looks to you as a plane director? Are these distances correct? (Exhibit 2B)

A. They are correct, commander.

Q. Does this appear to be a safe distance?

A. Yes sir.

Q. Do you feel that normally you can control an aircraft to be stopped in that distance?

A. If he had brakes and hit them, it would stop right away.

Q. Do you feel the pilot was paying the proper amount of attention to you as plane director?

A. Well I don't know, commander. When I moved him out of the spot, he was watching me. After we started to move it out in the hangar bay, I was watching his wings and underneath the aircraft.

Q. At the time the plane was moved onto the elevator, do you feel the pilot was paying attention to your signals?

A. I don't know, sir. I wasn't paying attention to him.

Q. What are you normally doing at that time?

A. Controlling the movement of the aircraft - watching the wings and underneath the aircraft.

Q. Did you observe the pilot at the time you blew your whistle?

A. No, I was watching the yellow line. I started to blow my whistle but he kept moving.

Q. After you started blowing the whistle did you observe the pilot?

A. No sir.

Q. Will you describe the movement of the aircraft as it went off the elevator?

A. It went on the elevator and was supposed to stop - like the aircraft in the picture. The port side went off first - fell off and went backward. The tow bar hit one of the men on the side.

Q. Did you see the aircraft hit the water?

A. I can't say I saw it hit the water, because I was standing half way on the elevator. As it fell on over, people started running on the elevator. Then the elevator was cleared and went topside.

Q. Did you clear the elevator at that time?

A. Yes sir.

Q. Did you see the aircraft in the water at any time?

A. Yes sir.

Q. What was the position of the aircraft in the water?

A. It was on its back.

Q. Were you able to observe how long the aircraft floated?

A. No sir, I wasn't.

Does the board desire to examine this witness further?

Questions by board member, Commander B-6

Q. You said you were director. Are you in charge of the handling crew in the movement of the aircraft?

A. No sir. Actually all I do is direct the movement of the aircraft in hangar bay number 2.

- Q. At this particular movement, you were in charge of the handling crew as director?
- A. Yes sir.
- Q. How was the aircraft spotted when you decided to start the movement?
- A. Spotted on the port side, nose aft, just aft of number 2 elevator in hangar number 2.
- Q. When you gave the signal to break down, that is remove the tie downs, did you give any other signals at that time?
- A. First of all I told him to hit the brakes - by raising my hand and making a fist - tie downs off, chocks out, off the brakes, going aft on it.
- Q. Did you look at the pilot when you gave him this signal?
- A. Yes sir.
- Q. Did he seem aware of the signal you gave him?
- A. I think so, sir. He got off his brakes and we started moving.
- Q. Did he have his helmet on?
- A. No sir.
- Q. Did he have his helmet off?
- A. Yes sir.
- Q. As you started moving the aircraft backwards did you use a tractor, or were men pushing it?
- A. Men were pushing it.
- Q. As you moved the aircraft into position for movement to the elevator did you observe the pilot at any time?
- A. I wouldn't say so. I was watching the tail and the wings.
- Q. You say the crew pushed the aircraft up over the lip onto the elevator. It rolled back again and you had to push it a second time. During this particular part of the movement did you give any signals to the pilot at all?
- A. I don't recall, sir.
- Q. Do you normally have a little trouble getting the aircraft over the hump?
- A. Most of the time.
- Q. Did you experience any abnormal problems in getting this aircraft over the hump?
- A. It went over the second time. Sometimes we have to push them three or four times.
- Q. As the aircraft started out onto the elevator, was it moving rapidly?
- A. It was moving slow.

Q. Were any of your men having any problems at this time?

A. No, I just yelled to the pilot to keep it slow.

Q. When you yelled to the pilot to keep it slow, did you look up at him?

A. No sir - I don't recall.

Q. Did you see any signs, up to this point, of the application of the brakes - whatsoever?

A. No sir.

Q. If the brakes are applied on the aircraft during a movement like this, would you know it?

A. Yes sir - because they must stop. If you apply the brakes you stop.

Q. If men are pushing the A4 and pilot applies the brakes will the aircraft stop in spite of their pushing on the aircraft? If the whole crew is pushing the aircraft and the pilot decides for some reason he wants to stop and applies the brakes, will that stop the aircraft?

A. Sure.

Q. It doesn't matter what the men are doing, if the pilot applies the brakes it will stop?

A. Right.

Q. What was the condition of the deck on the elevator at the time of this movement? Was the deck wet or dry?

A. I can't remember, commander. I think we had been in pretty rough weather earlier that day.

Q. Any time during this movement did you observe the pilot applying the brakes?

A. I still can't recall.

Q. As the aircraft got to the yellow line and you blew your whistle, did you observe the chockmen?

A. After the whistle was blown they chocked it.

Q. Were both chockmen in the right places?

A. Yes sir. As the plane kept going back the tow bar swung around and knocked one man almost over the edge of the elevator.

Q. Did you see the chockmen put the chocks in?

A. Yes sir.

Q. Did you see it throw one of the chocks out?

A. Yes sir. It threw the port chock out.

Q. Did he try a second time to put it in?

A. I don't know, commander. It happened so fast.

Q. At anytime on the elevator did you look up and see the pilot?

A. No sir.

Q. Do you normally do this?

A. I am usually looking at the position of the aircraft - wing, tail and all.

Q. When moving an aircraft like this, where do you stand?

A. I stand out where I can see the pilot, wings, and the nose of the aircraft.

Q. And, in this particular movement, you were to the left side of the aircraft?

A. Yes sir.

Q. Was there any skylarking in your crew during this movement?

A. No sir. We never skylark while moving an aircraft - too heavy.

Questions by senior board member, Captain *S/b*:

Q. How long have you been a director?

A. I have been aboard here 25 months and made plane director four months after I came aboard.

Q. You have been a plane director for approximately a year and a half?

A. Approximately 21 months.

Q. Did your whistle operate properly?

A. Yes sir.

Q. Have you controlled the movement of A4 aircraft onto number 2 elevator before?

A. Yes sir.

Q. What were the deck conditions at the time of this particular movement? Do you remember if there was any roll or pitch?

A. I wouldn't say a roll - a slight angle to the port side.

Q. What do you mean by angle?

A. A list.

Q. Do you think this was dangerous at the time of the move?

A. No sir. We have moved aircraft onto the elevator when the ship was in a turn.

Q. This was not the case this time?

A. No sir.

Q. How many men do you have in your plane handling crew for this type of movement besides the three safety directors, 2 chock men, a tow bar man? Were there four safety directors besides yourself?

A. There were five of us - four others and myself. I had one on the tail, two on the port wing and one on the starboard wing.

Q. But you had two chock men and 3 tie down men. How many men do you remember you had in addition to those already mentioned?

A. To move the aircraft?

Q. Yes.

A. I can't recall - phone talker - about 13 men. The rest were from another hangar deck.

Questions by board member, Commander *B-6*

Q. When you get ready to move a plane, what's the minimum number of men you will attempt to move it with?

A. I have moved them with chock men, tow bar men, and some blue shirts.

Q. How many plane pushers do you have to have?

A. Well, actually, if we can move it, we move it. It doesn't matter how many plane pushers we have as long as we have the chock men, and three tie down men and tow bar man.

Questions by counsel for the board:

Q. Did you blow your whistle more than one time?

A. After it moved past the spot I blew my whistle and it kept moving. I started blowing my whistle and everybody started blowing their whistle, safety men and all.

Q. Could you estimate how many times you blew your whistle?

A. No sir, I can't.

Q. Do you think it was more than twice?

A. Yes sir. It was more than twice.

Questions by senior board member, Captain *B-6*:

Q. After the aircraft went over the edge of the elevator, did you look at the pilot at anytime?

A. No sir, I didn't see him.

Q. Did you look up at him?

Q. Yes sir, I did - but I did not see him.

Neither counsel for the board nor the board desired to examine this witness further.

The senior member informed the witness that he was privileged to make any further statement that he thinks should be a matter of record in connection with the accident under investigation.

The witness stated he had nothing further to say.

The witness was duly cautioned concerning his testimony and withdrew from the room.

The board adjourned at 1021, 13 December 1965.

-THIRD DAY-

On board
USS TICONDEROGA (CVA-14)

B1
Wednesday, 15 December 1965

The board reconvened at 1000.

Lieutenant *Bb*, U.S. Navy, was called as a witness for the board, was duly sworn, informed of the subject matter of the investigation and examined as follows:

DIRECT EXAMINATION

Questions by counsel for the board:

Q. State your name, rank, organization and present duty station?

A. *Bb*, Lieutenant, USS TICONDEROGA, V-3 Division Officer.

Q. Will you explain briefly what unusual instance occurred on board USS TICONDEROGA on 5 December 1965 - from your understanding?

A. From my understanding - I did not witness the accident - but discussing it with people who did witness it, the aircraft was required to be moved from the hangar deck to the flight deck. The normal procedures were followed while we were at flight quarters. Word was passed from flight deck control to the phone talker to number 2 elevator operator to move the aircraft, 472, up to the flight deck. The aircraft was moved from its spot in the hangar bay onto number 2 elevator over the hump. The director gave the slow down signal visually - and verbally, when this was not acknowledged or any evidence of any slow down. The checks were thrown in on both sides and kicked out on both sides by the wheel action moving aft. The starboard check caught momentarily long enough for the aircraft to pivot. The aircraft went off and into the water on its back.

Q. Did you observe the position of the A4E prior to the movement in question?

A. No sir. I did not notice the spot it was in on that particular morning.

Q. Who was assigned the responsibility of the aircraft in question?

A. The supervisor is *Bb* ABH2.

Q. Can you describe for the board his qualifications?

A. He is a graduate of ABH School and been onboard this ship almost four years and has gone from airman to second class in that time. He is a highly qualified individual in my opinion.

Q. What was the composition of the crew that was assigned to move the aircraft?

A. The plane director himself, four safety directors, check men, and the actual number of airplane pushers, I can't recall, sir - and the elevator operator, sir.

Q. Were any personnel of the crew now to their jobs?

A. One of the supervisors has two months experience. Two other safety men have over six months experience. The other safety man had over three years experience on this ship and the remaining safety man came here from another command. He has been an aircraft director and safety man in excess of six months.

Q. Would you make a statement on the qualifications on the whole crew?

A. This crew is the normal crew we use in hangar bay 2. As far as supervising goes they are highly qualified. The plane pushers and blue shirts have had as much training as we can give them.

Q. Will you describe for the board the deck conditions on the elevator on the afternoon of 5 December?

A. There was nothing unusual. The ship was not pitching and there was a very slow roll. The conditions were very good for the movement of aircraft.

Q. Here is a picture of number 2 elevator on board USS TICONDEROGA, will you comment on the missing safety screen and the railing? (Exhibit 2D)

A. All that is missing is the after half of the safety screen and the after stanchion. The stanchion can be taken up or down depending on whether we are launching or recovering aircraft.

Questions by senior board member, Captain *B-6*

Q. When you say safety screen you mean the personnel safety net?

A. Yes sir.

Q. And what was the term you used on the guard rail?

A. Stanchion.

Q. What is the purpose of the guard rail?

A. The guard rail is used to stop a very slow moving aircraft. It apparently is not strong enough to stop any large force.

Q. How is it held in this position?

A. Its pulled forward and dropped into its slots.

Questions by counsel for the board.

Q. How many men are required to position it?

A. One man can position it.

Q. It is not a heavy railing?

A. No sir.

Q. Did you observe the rail?

A. Only by observing the break in the rail and the marks on the deck. The aircraft kicked the check out and I was discussing with other people the movement of the aircraft.

Q. Could you surmise in this situation whether it was the movement of the aircraft moving aft that caused the break in the rail?

A. I would say - in my opinion - it was the weight of the aircraft moving aft.

Questions by board member, Commander *B-6*

Q. Is the personnel net designed to hold an aircraft?

A. No sir. To the best of my knowledge, this net is designed to catch people.

Q. Are you satisfied with the design of the guard rail along the deck edge elevator?

A. That depends on the purpose. It has been a sacrifice here. I think we would need something that would actually stop a plane. I think this was a compromise.

Question by counsel for the board:

Q. Is the guard rail on number three elevator more substantial than that on number two?

A. I don't know.

Questions by senior board member, Captain B. B.

Q. What was the approximate weight of the aircraft at the time of the movement?

A. I could only estimate within a thousand pounds. I would estimate 20,000 pounds.

Q. Witnesses have stated that there is some difficulty in pushing aircraft onto number two elevator, at the hangar level, in coming over the hump. Will you describe for the board what this hump is?

A. It is a wooden ramp which leads up from the hangar deck surface. It is approximately four feet in length and six to eight inches in height - that leads from the hangar deck level to the elevator. When the elevator comes down there is an incline. It is a problem getting over this incline at times.

Q. Do you know why this hump exists?

A. No sir, I do not.

Q. The reason I asked this question is to determine if the hump is designed to slow down the movement of the aircraft onto the elevator.

A. This could very well be - also because it is constructed to give a different surface with the metal on either side.

Q. Do your handling crews ordinarily try to get a running start in moving aircraft onto number 2 elevator in order to get it up over the hump onto the elevator?

A. This is done at times. In an attempt - if a plane comes off - sometimes we have to swing it back and forth in order to clear it. This is also the reason I stress to the directors when they clear the top of the hump to start slowing it down.

Q. In your examination of the elevator subsequent to the accident could you note any indication that the brakes had been applied?

A. No sir, I could not.

Q. What was the condition of the elevator at that time, in so far as the surface was concerned?

A. It wasn't wet.

Q. Had non-skid been applied?

A. Yes sir.

Q. In other words normal braking conditions were present?

A. So far as the elevator was concerned, yes sir.

Questions by board members, Commander *B-6*

Q. Were there any indications that the aircraft got out of control and went over the side?

A. No sir.

Q. How long have you been assigned as hangar deck officer?

A. I reported aboard June the second of this year.

Q. Do you make these movements very frequently?

A. Yes sir. I can't say how many I have witnessed but I'll say over 100 - just to give a figure - but it has been many times that.

Q. Is this a routine operation?

A. Yes sir, very, very routine.

Q. Do you consider this very hazardous?

A. This depends on the conditions at the time of the movement - depending on the pitch or roll - but at this time I would say no, sir.

Question by senior board member, Captain *B-6*

Q. In an evolution such as this, is the application of the chocks enough to stop the aircraft?

A. I have never experienced this where an A4 had no brakes.

Question by board member, Commander *B-6*:

Q. In the movement of aircraft what is the main means of stopping the aircraft?

A. The brakes are the primary means of stopping the aircraft. The chocks are used for an emergency. I don't think I would move a plane on the elevator if I had only chocks.

Neither counsel for the board nor the board desired to examine this witness further.

The senior member informed the witness that he was privileged to make any further statement that he thought should be a matter of record in connection with the accident under investigation.

The witness stated he had nothing further to say.

The witness was duly cautioned concerning his testimony and withdrew from the room.

Commander *B-6*, U.S. Navy, was called as a witness for the board, was duly sworn, informed of the subject matter of the investigation and examined as follows:

DIRECT EXAMINATION

Questions by counsel for the board:

Q. State your name, rank, organization and present duty station.

A. B-6, Commander, USN, USS TICONDEROGA, Executive Officer.

Q. What was your job onboard TICONDEROGA on 5 December 1965?

A. I was the Navigator.

Q. At approximately 1453 did you receive word of an accident occurring onboard USS TICONDEROGA?

A. Yes sir. I received word that an A4 aircraft was lost over the side.

Q. Did you note the position at the time?

A. Yes sir, I did.

Q. Will you give us that position?

A. At approximately 1453 when the aircraft was lost on 5 December 1965, the ship's position was 27° 35.2 N, 131° 19.3 E.

Q. Can you explain for the board how this position was determined?

A. These figures are based on the celestial running fix that had been taken at 1207 determined by morning sunlines. A sunline had also been taken at 1413 that afternoon, which tended to verify our DR position.

Q. Did you also note the depth of the water in which the TICONDEROGA was running?

A. Yes sir. The ship's fathometer recorded it as 2700 fathoms. This is located in the chart room, and the observation was made by myself.

Questions by senior board member, Captain B-6

Q. Did your reading from the fathometer concur with the depth indicated on the chart for that position?

A. Yes sir. The fathometer reading concurred.

Q. Was the depth of the water in that area equal or near equal?

A. Yes sir. To the best of my knowledge there are no shelves indicated on the chart and there had been none on the fathometer recording.

Questions by board member, Commander B-6

Q. What were the deck conditions at the time of the accident - to the best of your knowledge?

A. To the best of my knowledge, the ship was not turning. But we were in a sea condition where there were some swells.

Q. Then the ship was rolling?

A. But I wouldn't say in excess. I did not notice or record the degree to which the ship was rolling at the time.

Q. Do you have any device on the ship which records the rolls as a matter of record or is it visual observation on the inclinometer?

A. To the best of my knowledge, this is the only instrument available to me - the inclinometer.

Q. Are you aware of any search or rescue efforts that were directed.

A. At the time the aircraft went over the side I was in the chart room and proceeded directly to the bridge. The Officer of the Deck had proceeded to turn the ship to the left and, to the best of my knowledge, he had given the order to back engines two-thirds. When I arrived on the bridge the ship had commenced its swing. At this point I took the primary tactical - I did not take the con - and gave the transmission to the Screen Commander advising him that we had possibly lost a pilot over the port side while moving an A4 aircraft and to dispatch a destroyer to proceed to help the TICONDEROGA search the area. As I recall, the Screen Commander came back with a reply to repeat the information and I gave it to him again.

Q. Did the TICONDEROGA return to the scene of the mishap?

A. Yes sir. After I arrived on the bridge the Captain had already taken the con. It was then maneuvered around the spot where the flares were in the water.

Q. Did you see any debris in the water at that time?

A. I saw what appeared to be drop tanks from the aircraft that were floating in the water. I also observed some cardboard boxes but they were not related to the incident. There was some trash in the area.

Q. Did the destroyer succeed in recovery of any of the debris of the aircraft?

A. Yes sir. I noted the destroyer's actions. She lowered a boat in the water and proceeded to one of the floating objects and I saw them haul it into the boat. I might add also that the TICONDEROGA's boat was also put into the water and made an extensive search of the area but with no success.

Q. Do you know what objects were recovered from the scene of the accident?

A. Yes sir. There was what appeared to be one section of an A4 drop tank.

Q. Was a hard hat recovered?

A. I don't know, sir. I was not shown this.

Q. Did the TICONDEROGA launch a helo in the search?

A. Yes sir. A helicopter was brought up and started in preparation for launching immediately and it was in the air very shortly. In the area at one time we had two motor whale boats, a helo, and two destroyers plus the TICONDEROGA - all in the immediate area of the accident.

Q. How long did this search continue?

A. I prefer to check the deck log to answer your question. But I would say it was over an hour.

Q. After the departure of the TICONDEROGA, was the search continued by the screen ships?

A. Yes sir. Prior to our leaving the Captain asked me to give a message to the Screen Commander to leave two destroyers in the area to continue the search until sundown. The TICONDEROGA would proceed on course at 10 knots and for the destroyers to continue the search until sundown and then proceed to join the TICONDEROGA.

Q. Were these orders carried out?

A. Yes sir, they were. The message was acknowledged by the Screen Commander and two destroyers were left behind. I didn't recall the two destroyers. They returned about 1900.

Question by senior board member, Captain *W. B.*

Q. Do you recall the time of sunset?

A. As I recall, sunset was around 1715 local time.

Q. Then there were over two hours left to continue the search?

A. Yes sir, there was.

Neither counsel for the board nor the board desired to examine this witness further.

The senior member informed the witness that he was privileged to make any further statement that he thinks should be a matter of record in connection with the accident under investigation.

The witness made the following statement:

Witness: I considered the actions taken by the TICONDEROGA and accompanying destroyers were prompt - that if he had gotten out he would have been spotted, and would have been picked up.

The witness was duly cautioned concerning his testimony and withdrew from the room.

The board adjourned at 1110, 15 December 1965.

-FOURTH DAY-

On board
USS TICONDEROGA (CVA-14)

B1
Thursday, 16 December 1965

The board reconvened at 1015.

Lieutenant Commander *B. L.* U. S. Navy, was called as a witness for the board, was duly sworn, informed of the subject matter of the investigation and examined as follows:

DIRECT EXAMINATION

Questions by counsel for the board:

Q. State your name, rank, organization and present duty station.

A. *B. L.*, LCDR, USN, USS TICONDEROGA (CVA-14), Meteorology Officer.

Q. Were you the Meteorology Officer on board USS TICONDEROGA (CVA-14) on 5 December 1965?

A. I was.

Q. Were you informed on 5 December of an accident?

A. Yes, I was.

Q. Did you observe the weather conditions at the time of the accident?

A. I did.

Q. Will you give for the board the existing weather conditions in the area in which the TICONDEROGA was operating on 5 December 1965?

A. Yes sir: Sky conditions 7/10 Cirrus 1/10 Altocirrus Estimated
2500 broken, 10,000 broken.
Visibility 10 miles.
Altimeter setting 30.06 inches.
Sea level pressure 29.969 inches 1018.0 millibars.
Dry bulb temperature 70.2 degrees Fahrenheit.
Wet bulb temperature 57.7 degrees Fahrenheit.
Dew point 62.4 degrees Fahrenheit.
Relative humidity 65 percent.
Apparent wind direction 340 degrees.
Apparent wind speed 25 knots.
True wind direction 355 degrees.
True wind speed 10 knots.
Sea state Sea 350 degrees, 2 seconds, 1 foot.
Swell 010 degrees, 5 seconds, 3 feet.
Sea water temperature 79.0 degrees Fahrenheit.

Q. Did you observe the deck conditions at the time of the accident?

A. Yes sir.

Q. Will you describe the deck conditions for the board?

A. Yes sir. There was very little motion.

Q. In your opinion, would you say there was any water on the deck?

A. I don't think so - although I did not check the deck personally.

Q. Could you relate for the board the size of the swells?

A. Yes I could. It was a 2 to 5 second swell and the size of the swell is very likely irrelevant. It takes about 9 to 14 seconds to make a pitch or to make us roll which is out of that range.

Questions by board member, Commander B-b.

Q. How long have you been Meteorology Officer?

A. Since July 1964.

Q. To the best of your recollection, was there any precipitation on that afternoon?

A. I would have to double check, but none that I can remember -- off hand. That morning the sea was coming over the bow.

Neither counsel for the board nor the board desired to examine this witness further.

The senior member informed the witness that he was privileged to make any further statement that he thinks should be a matter of record in connection with the accident under investigation.

The witness stated he had nothing further to say.

The witness was duly cautioned concerning his testimony and withdrew from the room.

Lieutenant Commander B-b U. S. Navy, was called as a witness for the board, was duly sworn, informed of the subject matter of the investigation and examined as follows:

DIRECT EXAMINATION

Questions by counsel for the board.

Q. State your name, rank, organization and present duty station.

A. B-b, LCDR, USN, Assistant CIC Officer, USS TICONDEROGA (CVA-14).

Q. Were you Assistant CIC Officer on board USS TICONDEROGA (CVA-14) on 5 December 1965?

A. I was.

Q. Were you there at the time of an aircraft accident?

A. Yes sir.

Q. Will you explain to the board the events as you were able to follow them from the time the accident happened to the time you were able to conclude your work with respect to the accident?

A. Yes sir. While on course 029 degrees, speed 20 knots, at time 051450I man overboard, port side, was reported. Rudder was put over left 7 degrees then increased to left 30 degrees, all engines back one-third. At 1451 maneuvering combination was set, smoke lights were thrown over the side. Six short blasts were sounded, the Oscar flag was hoisted. The aft lookout reported aircraft over the side as type A4. The Screen Commander was notified and ordered to dispatch a destroyer to aid in the search. TICONDEROGA position was 27-35.2N/131-19.3E. TURNER JOY was immediately directed to proceed to recover the man. GRIDLEY was directed to reverse course and proceed back down track, searching for the man. At 1452

TICONDEROGA OOD placed engines ahead two thirds, then all engines ahead full. At this time we were in normal procedure for man overboard. At 1453 three minutes afterward, the Captain took the con, port engine back two thirds, starboard engine ahead full. Helo UH-2A BUHO 152192 was launched. The helo spotted only a broken 300 gallon drop tank and a pilots helmet. The helo then searched 5 to 6 miles back along the ship's track with no results. The helo conducted an expanding square search with no further results. At 1454 TICONDEROGA's port engine was ordered back full. At 1455 all engines ordered ahead standard, rudder amidships. The ship at this time was steadied on course 200, all engines back full, then left 30 degrees rudder, then rudder amidships. At 1458 all engines ordered stopped and at 1459 all engines back full. At 1500 all engines ordered stopped and the life boat was lowered over the side of TICONDEROGA with ship's position 055 degrees 660 yards from the man's last known position. At 1501 GRIDLEY was directed to proceed further down the track - 4 miles - and to continue the search. During this time TURNER JOY was searching and recovering the items spotted by the helo, which were 2 pieces of an external fuel tank and a pilot's helmet. At 1512 a report confirmed that the pilot was in the A-4 which went over the side of the elevator. This information came from the hangar deck area to CIC. At 1515 TICONDEROGA starboard engine was ordered ahead two-thirds, port engine back one-third. TICONDEROGA continued maneuvering in search. At 1528 all engines stopped. At 1541 the TURNER JOY boat was put into the water. At 1543 TICONDEROGA hoisted her life boat aboard. At 1558 on TICONDEROGA all engines ordered ahead one-third, left 20 degrees rudder. At 1601 TURNER JOY and GRIDLEY were directed by the TICONDEROGA to continue the search until sundown. TICONDEROGA with PRESTON and FECHTELER departed the scene about 1601. At 1607 TURNER JOY commenced a spiral search at at datum. GRIDLEY commenced a spiral search at 2000 yards. Speed of both ships was 10 knots. At 1655 TURNER JOY and GRIDLEY formed a search line abreast at 2000 yards and commenced search down track on course 229 speed 10 knots. At 1715, the approximate time of sunset, TURNER JOY and GRIDLEY reversed course to 049 degrees to pass through datum at 1730. At 1735 the search was terminated due to darkness, with negative results and both destroyers rejoined the TICONDEROGA.

Question by board member, Commander B. b

Q. Will you tell the board again what your job is?

A. Assistant CIC Officer.

Neither counsel for the board nor the board desired to examine this witness further.

The senior member informed the witness that he was privileged to make any further statement that he thinks should be a matter of record in connection with the accident under investigation.

The witness stated he had nothing further to say.

The witness was duly cautioned concerning his testimony and withdrew from the room.

Commander B. b counsel for the board, was duly sworn and made the following sworn statement:

Counsel: In order to gather exact information on measurements of the approach ramp to the number 2 elevator and the outboard railing, counsel with the aid of an assistant and a raler obtained the following data: The configuration of the approach to number 2 elevator from the hangar deck will be reported first. The inboard portion is composed of a metal ramp which is 2 1/2 feet in width. This ramp rises from the hangar deck level gradually to a height of 2 inches. At this point we have a bridge

continuing onto the elevator composed of solid 2 inch wooden planking set firmly on the metal deck. The apparent reason for the incline is to provide a surface which permits a recess to provide a channel or track for the metal guideposts which hold the roller curtains in position when they are closed. There is also a six inch trough in the wooden planking to provide a recess for the safety stanchions and line which prohibit vehicles from going outboard when the elevator is raised from the hangar deck level. There are metal strips which are about 5½ to 6 feet long which fit between the stanchions and provide a level surface in the approach onto the elevator. The stanchions and line recess into the edge of the hangar deck. From the ramp or approach onto the deck edge elevator surface there is no decline. It is level with the bridge which is 2 inches above the hangar deck. The ramp leading onto the elevator is painted. On the wooden planking are diagonal alternating yellow and red stripes as a warning for the aircraft and vehicles approaching the elevator. It is important to note there is only a two inch rise from the hangar deck level to the elevator deck in its down position.

With the respect to the guard rail on the outboard edge of the elevator the following dimensions were obtained. With the guard rail in the up position there is a 6½ inch high railing on the elevator on the outboard edge. This is composed of 4 inch angle iron which, when pulled up, sets at a 90 degree angle to the elevator deck. The angle iron which is 4 inches on the sides is made of steel which is between 5/16 and 3/8 inches in thickness. This angle iron is raised into position by lifting and dropping into a slot. The guard rail can be observed in both positions on the photograph that we have. (Exhibit 2D)

The braces which support the guard rail are welded for a distance of 1½ inches on both sides to the metal edge of the elevator. The metal used for the braces as well as the hanging straps is ½ inch steel. The manner of hanging the guard rail on the braces is not seen clearly in the picture. Simply speaking, there are a pair of straps separated by one inch spaced at intervals of 2 feet 4½ inches which mesh with the braces. A ½ inch steel bolt is positioned through the slots in each pair of hanging straps and a hole in the intervening brace. This bolt is secured permanently in position with a nut which has been drilled and fitted with a large cotter pin. The slot in the hanging strap is 2½ inches long and the lower inboard corner of the straps are rounded. Thus to raise one of the 15 foot sections of the guard rail, it simply is rotated to the vertical and allowed to drop about two inches bringing the inboard edge of the hanging straps close against the metal edge of the elevator, the weight resting on the steel bolts at the top of the slot. Conversely, to lower it, one raises the section two inches and rotates it 90 degrees outboard bringing the bottom edge of the hanging straps into contact with the metal edge of the elevator, the weight pushing the bolt against the bottom of the slot in the hanging strap.

This photograph (Exhibit 2D) shows the outboard edge of the number 2 elevator clearly at the position the A4 was lost over the side. The forward half of the safety net and the two forward sections of the guard rail remain and were not damaged as a result of the accident. The after section of the guard rail was bent as a result of the accident and was straightened and reinstalled with new bolts prior to the picture being taken. A metal bar is applied in the position of the number three section of guard rail which was lost over the side along with the after section of the safety net. Of particular note is the fact that four of the braces remain indicating the bolts sheared at these connecting points. The three missing braces are in contiguous positions and probably were in the location where the port auxiliary fuel cell made contact and pivoted on the edge of the deck. In any case, the weld failed in each instance of the missing braces.

A comparison was made between the guard railing on number 2 and number 3. The design is similar but the guard rail on number 3 elevator is welded directly to the side and is not movable. The angle iron of the guard rail is $\frac{1}{2}$ inch thick. Whereas the guard rail on number 2 elevator is $6\frac{1}{2}$ inches in height, the one on number 3 elevator is 6 inches even. On number 3 elevator the horizontal part of the angle iron is the guard rail is just 2 inches whereas it is 4 inches on number 2 elevator. The braces on number 2 elevator are each 2 feet, $4\frac{1}{2}$ inches apart and on the guard rail on number 3 elevator they are installed at 3 foot intervals. In my opinion, being permanently fixed and of heavier material, the guard rail on number 3 elevator would stop a moving aircraft if it were not going so fast that it would ride over the guard rail.

Approximately 2 minutes after the accident on 5 December I walked to the flight deck to observe the number 2 elevator. The condition of the deck was as in the picture (Exhibit 2) except the temporary rail has since been wired into position. I looked carefully to determine if there were any skid marks on the deck to see if the brakes on the aircraft had locked as it was proceeding off the edge of the elevator. There were no skid marks. This concludes my statement relative to the elevator and the guard rail. If there are no questions I shall proceed to the subject of the items recovered during the search.

Questions by board member, Commander *Bb*

Q. In reference to your last statement about the condition of the deck edge elevator at the time of your inspection, what was the apparent deck condition of the deck edge elevator?

A. The elevator was dry. There was no liquid on the elevator either from sea spray or gasoline.

Q. The non-skid that was applied to the checks, was it in good repair?

A. At the time I observed the elevator, I asked the plane director to show me the checks used by the checkmen. They appeared to be the normal type checks, made of aluminum, the sides of which are adjustable and to which non-skid had been applied. They were in satisfactory condition.

Commander *Bb*, counsel for the board continued his statement:

Counsel: I would like to make a statement in regard to the items recovered following the accident. The following items were returned to the USS TICONDEROGA from the destroyer whose motor whale boat picked them up. There were two portions of an auxiliary fuel tank and a pilots helmet. The two parts of the fuel tank proved to be the forward and after sections of the port auxiliary fuel tank of the aircraft lost over the side. The missing middle section of this tank is about $2\frac{1}{2}$ feet in length. The bottom of the forward section was crushed almost flat. Proof of identity was established by the speed arrow painted on the sections which is the unique squadron marking that VA-56 uses. Returned also was a helmet with VA-56 squadron marking which apparently had been soaked in salt water. There was no name or other personal marking to identify the helmet as belonging to LTJG WEBSTER.

Questions by senior board member, Captain *Bb*

Q. In regards to the guard rail, is any action required on the part of the personnel installing the rail to lock it in place?

A. The only lock which is operable in the guard rail is that resulting from it binding against the edge of the elevator when it is in position. It must be raised and lowered according to the particular flight cycle taking place. In the raised position, used except for recovery of aircraft, the inboard edges of the straps bind against the edge of the

Q. There is no requirement of personnel to put the bolts, nuts or cotter pins in the guard rail. Is that correct?

A. In the initial installation the bolts were inserted, the nut was placed into position and a cotter pin installed. The hanging bolt is a permanent installation which slides in the slot in the hanging straps when the guard rail is moved into position.

Q. In other words, this is part of the original installation and there is no action required on the part of the flight deck or hangar deck personnel in rigging this guard rail in connection with the bolts or other locking devices. Is that correct?

A. That is correct, sir. There is no lock other than guard rail falling into position.

Q. Was there any indication that the bolts were sheared?

A. The four bolts sheared which had been installed in the four braces which were not affected by the aircraft going off the side of the elevator.

Neither member of the board desired to examine counsel any further.

The senior member cautioned counsel not to discuss his testimony.

The board closed at 1100, 16 December 1965.

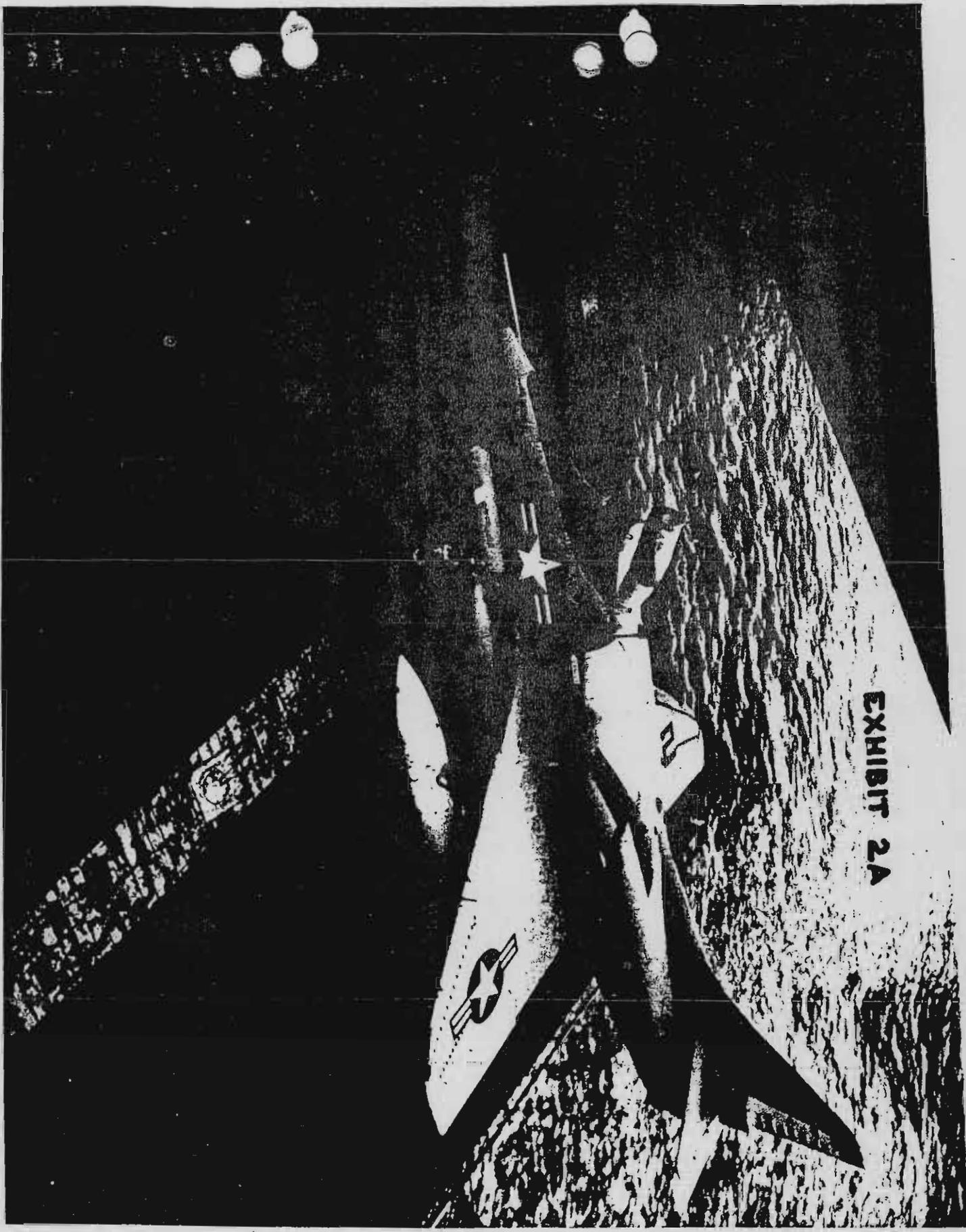


EXHIBIT 2A

EXHIBIT 2B

