

THE ATLANTIC COMMAND
AND
UNITED STATES ATLANTIC FLEET
HEADQUARTERS OF THE COMMANDER IN CHIEF

FF1-2/A17-6

U. S. Naval Base
Norfolk 11, Virginia,

(1866)

29 APR 1952

From: Commander in Chief U. S. Atlantic Fleet
To: Rear Admiral U. S. Navy

Subj: Court of inquiry to inquire into all of the circumstances surrounding the collision between the U.S.S. WASP (CV-18) and the U.S.S. HOBSON (DMS-26) which occurred at or near Latitude 42-21 North Longitude 44-15 West on or about 27 April 1952

1. A court of inquiry consisting of yourself as President and of Rear Admiral U. S. Navy, and Rear Admiral U. S. Navy as additional members, is hereby ordered to convene at the U. S. Naval Base, New York, New York, at 1000 on Wednesday, 7 May 1952, or as soon thereafter as practicable, for the purpose of inquiring into all the circumstances surrounding the collision which occurred between the U.S.S. WASP (CV-18) and the U.S.S. HOBSON (DMS-26) at or near Latitude 42-21 North Longitude 44-15 West on or about 27 April 1952. Lieutenant Commander , III, U. S. Naval Reserve, is hereby detailed as counsel for the court.
2. The court shall make a thorough investigation into all the circumstances connected with and surrounding the collision and the subsequent loss of the U.S.S. HOBSON. The court shall report its findings of fact, opinions and recommendations as to the cause of the collision, damages resulting therefrom, deaths of and injuries to naval personnel and their line of duty and misconduct status and responsibility for the collision and subsequent loss of the U.S.S. HOBSON, including recommended disciplinary action.
3. It is directed that the court notify Captain U. S. Navy of the time and place of meeting of the court and that he will be a party to the inquiry and accorded his rights as such pursuant to the provisions of the Naval Supplement to the Manual for Courts-Martial. As to the duty of the court to designate additional individuals as parties to the inquiry during the proceedings when appropriate, attention is particularly invited to Section 0307c, Naval Supplement to the Manual for Courts-Martial.
4. The proceedings of the court will be held in accordance with Chapters II, III, and V of the Naval Supplement to the Manual for Courts-Martial.
5. The Commander in Chief of the U. S. Atlantic Fleet will furnish the necessary reporters and other clerical assistance for the purpose of assisting the counsel for the court in recording the proceedings of this court of inquiry.

Admiral, U. S. Navy,
Commander in Chief, U.S. Atlantic Fleet

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ALL 136

equipment and personnel of the WASP, there was no delay in detecting the HOBSON's final left turn, and the emergency action then taken by Captain was sound and all that could be asked of a conning officer under the circumstances.

In light of the above discussion, the convening authority considers the deficiencies discussed, along with certain others evidenced in the record, to be administrative and organizational in nature. Accordingly, a copy of the record of proceedings and action of the convening authority is being forwarded for appropriate action to Commander Air Force, U. S. Atlantic Fleet, the type commander under whose administrative control the WASP was operating at the time of the collision.

To summarize this action, a tabulation is included below which is subject to the foregoing remarks. The convening authority:

- a. Concurs in the finding of facts.
- b. Concurs in paragraphs 1, 2, 3, 5, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 13, 15, 17, 19, 20, 22, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34 and 35 of the majority opinion.
- c. As indicated in the foregoing discussion, does not fully concur in paragraphs 4, 14 and 23 of the majority opinion.
- d. Does not concur fully in paragraphs 6, 12 and 16 of the majority opinion, nor the corresponding expressions of the minority opinion, paragraphs 2, 3 and 5. The convening authority's opinions regarding these paragraphs are set forth in the foregoing discussion.
- e. Does not concur in paragraphs 18 and 21 of the majority opinion. Generally and except as discussed above, the convening authority concurs in the corresponding minority opinions as to these.
- f. Fully concurs in recommendation 1 of the majority report.
- g. Does not concur in recommendations 2 and 3 of the majority report.
- h. Does not concur with recommendation 4 of the majority report solely because it was intended by the majority to be based upon acceptance of its previous three recommendations. As indicated above, the convening authority does not concur in recommendations 2 and 3.
- i. Concurs in recommendation 5 of the majority report, subject to the foregoing discussion and recommendations.

Subject to the foregoing remarks, the proceedings, finding of facts, opinions and recommendations of the Court of Inquiry in this case are approved.

Admiral, U. S. Navy,
Commander in Chief U. S. Atlantic Fleet

Copy to:
COMAIRLANT
COMINLANT

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

786119-41
6

682

ALL B6

"From: U.S.S. WASP CV-18 301450Z
To: SECNAV.
Info: CNO/CINCLANTFLT/COMINLANT/COMINRON-6/BUPERS/COMINDIV-62.

LT *B-6* CMA JR CMA *B-6*; USNR CMA SENIOR SURVIVOR SENDS
X ART 0778 NAVY REGS REFERS X HOBSON DMS 26 ASSIGNED NIGHT PLANE
GUARD POSITION 2 X LIGHTING MEASURE GREEN IN EFFECT X AT 262221
PETER FORMATION EXECUTED TURN MOVEMENT INTO WIND X HOBSON MANEU-
VERED TO CHANGE FROM NIGHT LAUNCH TO NIGHT RECOVERY STATION X AT
APPROXIMATELY 262225 PETER WASP AND HOBSON COLLIDED APPROXIMATE
POSITION 42 DASH 21 NORTH 44 DASH 15 WEST X WASP HIT HOBSON STAR-
BOARD SIDE AMIDSHIPS COLLISION ANGLE 90 DEGREES X HOBSON CUT IN
TWO SANK IN APPROXIMATELY 4 MINUTES X EXTENSIVE SEARCH CONTINUED
UNTIL 270744 PETER X NEAREST ESTIMATE 239 OFFICERS AND MEN ON
BOARD X 61 SURVIVORS X 178 LOST X"

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

A true copy. Attest:

B-6

Lieutenant Commander, U.S. Naval Reserve
Counsel for the Court.

CONFIDENTIAL
SECURITY INFORMATION

"D"

MAR 3 1953

Pers-B4b-MAC/jo
274572/1108
24 February 1953

SECOND ENDORSEMENT on LT
of 12 February 1953

, USNR letter

From: Chief of Naval Personnel
To: Office of the Judge Advocate General of the Navy

Subj: HOBSON - WASP collision on 26 April 1952; Acts of Heroism concerning

1. The Navy Department Board of Decorations and Medals reviewed the basic letter and recommended that it be made a part of the Court of Inquiry that investigated the collision of the USS HOBSON and USS WASP on 26 April 1952.

By direction

Invest.

CHIEF DIVISION III
JAG



DECLASSIFIED

Classification (cancelled) (Changed to
) by authority of OPNAVSI/10/1e
on 14 Aug 70 (Date)
JAG Sec Cont (Rank)
OFFICE OF THE JUDGE ADVOCATE GENERAL OF THE NAVY

UNCLASSIFIED

Cont file
Docks # 6069-5
To be FF
8/13/53
wg4

ALLCC

U. S. S. MERCURY (AKS-20)
Care of Fleet Post Office
New York, New York



AKS20/P15/bl
Serial: 56

12 February 1953

FIRST ENDORSEMENT on LT .

, USNR ltr of 12 Feb 53

From: Commanding Officer
To: Chief of Naval Personnel

Subj: HOBSON - WASP collision on 26 April 1952; Acts of Heroism concerning

1. Forwarded.

4/24/53
Noted
JGC
Rec. Bd. D. & M.

REC'D
FEB 17 1953
PERS. ~~SEC~~

ALL B6

632

12 February 1953

From: Lt. _____, USNR
Senior Surviving Officer, U.S.S. HOBSON (DMS-26)
To: Chief of Naval Personnel
Via: Commanding Officer, U.S.S. MERCURY (AKS-20)

Subj: HOBSON - WASP collision on 26 April 1952; Acts of Heroism concerning

1. Two (2) queries were sent to all survivors of the above collision in an effort to determine if there were any acts of heroism during the collision and rescue period which followed.
2. To date, I have received answers to approximately sixty (60) percent of these queries. All answers were in the negative, all stating they had no personal knowledge that any heroic deeds occurred.
3. It is hard for me to believe that no acts of heroism occurred. However, in view of the fact that I have no basis for recommending any award for any person, either living or deceased, I request that the Board of Awards have this information entered in the records of the Court of Inquiry which was convened to investigate this collision.
4. It is further requested that this matter be considered closed, unless new and substantial evidence is presented, which would denote that an award or decoration was warranted.

ALL B6

633

12 February 1953

From: Lt. ^{B-6} , LTCS, USNR
Senior Surviving Officer, U.S.S. HOBSON (DMS-26)
To: Chief of Naval Personnel
Via: Commanding Officer, U.S.S. MERCURY (AKS-20)

Subj: HOBSON - WASP collision on 26 April 1952; Acts of Heroism concerning

1. Two (2) queries were sent to all survivors of the above collision in an effort to determine if there were any acts of heroism during the collision and rescue period which followed.
2. To date, I have received answers to approximately sixty (60) percent of these queries. All answers were in the negative, all stating they had no personal knowledge that any heroic deeds occurred.
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4. It is further requested that this matter be considered closed, unless new and substantial evidence is presented, which would denote that an award or decoration was warranted.

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MAY 1952

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RM 052126Z

May

FM CINCLANTFLT

TO COMTHREE

NFO JAG

UNCLASSIFIED

R [REDACTED] D / FOR RADM [REDACTED] X PRES DENT OF COURT
OF INQUIRY CONVENED TO INQUIRE INTO COLLISION USS WASP CV18
AND USS HOBSON DMS26 X IN ACCORDANCE WITH REQUEST OF FATHER
OF LCDR [REDACTED] COMMANDING OFFICER HOBSON JAG WILL PROVIDE
LEGAL OFFICER TO REPRESENT DECEASED SON X CINCLANT APPROVES
AND AUTHORIZES THIS COUNSEL TO CROSS EXAMINE WITNESSES AS
NECESSARY IN THE INTERESTS OF LCDR [REDACTED]

DIST: JAG CCG

BT

DE LVR: [REDACTED] 111 [REDACTED] 2 [REDACTED] REWRITE BT...

SECURITY INFORMATION
DECLASSIFIED

Per 5
extra copy

ALL 36

640

NAVAL MESSAGE

NAVY DEPARTMENT

I sent

DRAFTER	EXTENSION NUMBER	ADDRESSEES	PRECEDENCE
FROM: CINCLANTFLT		FOR ACTION USS WASP	<input type="checkbox"/> FLASH
RELEASED BY:			<input type="checkbox"/> EMERGENCY
DATE: 29 APRIL 1952			<input type="checkbox"/> OPERATIONAL IMMEDIATE
TOR CODE ROOM: 00467/29		INFORMATION JAG COMINLANT COM EASTSEA FRON COM IRLANT COM 3 COMINDIV 62	<input type="checkbox"/> PRIORITY
DECODED BY:			<input type="checkbox"/> ROUTINE RRRR
TYPED BY:			<input type="checkbox"/> DEFERRED
ROUTED BY:			<input type="checkbox"/> FLASH
			<input type="checkbox"/> EMERGENCY
		<input type="checkbox"/> OPERATIONAL IMMEDIATE	
		<input type="checkbox"/> PRIORITY	
		<input type="checkbox"/> ROUTINE	
		<input type="checkbox"/> DEFERRED NMNM	

Unless otherwise indicated, this message will be transmitted with Night Message Precedence

282208Z

(Date/time group) (ZUL)

8296

NCC/NRCC NO.

On outgoing messages please leave about 1 inch clear space before beginning text

CINCLANTFLT ORDERING COURT OF INQUIRY TO CONVENE IN NEW YORK AREA. WASP CO AND OOD AT TIME OF CASUALTY TO BE NAMED INTERESTED PARTIES. ADVISE NAME OF OOD INVOLVED. IF SPECIFIC COUNSEL DESIRED BY EITHER OFFICER ADVISE NAME, RANK AND DUTY STATION. OTHERWISE CONVENING AUTHORITY WILL MAKE LEGAL COUNSEL AVAILABLE UPON YOUR ARRIVAL CONUS.

JAG.....COG

SECURITY INFORMATION

Acc 636

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

OPNAV FORM 2110-4 (REV. 10-51)

Paraphrase NOT Required 282208Z

Consult Cryptocenter before declassifying

641

NAVAL MESSAGE

NAVY DEPARTMENT

I

DRAFTER	EXTENSION NUMBER	ADDRESSES	PRECEDENCE
FROM <u>USS WASP</u>		FOR ACTION SECNAV	<input type="checkbox"/> FLASH
RELEASED BY _____			<input type="checkbox"/> EMERGENCY
DATE <u>30 APRIL 52</u>		INFORMATION COMINLANT CINCLANTFLT COMINRON 6 C N O COMINDIV 62 BUPERS	<input type="checkbox"/> OPERATIONAL IMMEDIATE
TOR CODE ROOM <u>302106Z</u>			<input type="checkbox"/> PRIORITY
DECODED BY _____			<input type="checkbox"/> ROUTINE RRRRR
TYPED BY _____			<input type="checkbox"/> DEFERRED
ROUTED BY _____			<input type="checkbox"/> FLASH
			<input type="checkbox"/> EMERGENCY
			<input type="checkbox"/> OPERATIONAL IMMEDIATE
			<input type="checkbox"/> PRIORITY
			<input type="checkbox"/> ROUTINE RRRRR
			<input type="checkbox"/> DEFERRED

Unless otherwise indicated, this message will be transmitted with Night Message Precedence

301450Z

9294

(Date/time group) (GCT)

NCC/MNCC NO.

On outgoing messages please leave about 1 inch clear space before beginning text

LT _____ USNR, SENIOR SURVIVOR SENDS.

ART 0778 NAVY REGS REFERS. HOBSON DMS 26 ASSIGNED NIGHT PLANE GUARD POSITION 2. LIGHTING MEASURE GREEN IN EFFECT. AT 262221P FORMATION

EXECUTED TURN MOVEMENT INTO WIND. HOBSON MANEUVERED TO CHANGE FROM NIGHT LAUNCH TO NIGHT RECOVERY STATION. AT APPROXIMATELY 262225P

WASP AND HOBSON COLLIDED APPROXIMATE POSITION 42-21 NORTH 44-15 WEST. WASP HIT HOBSON STARBOARD SIDE AMIDSHIPS COLLISION ANGLE 90 DEGREES.

HOBSON CUT IN TWO SANK IN APPROXIMATELY 4 MINUTES. EXTENSIVE SEARCH CONTINUED UNTIL 270744P. NEAREST ESTIMATE 239 OFFICERS AND MEN ON BOARD

61 SURVIVORS. 178 LOST.

03(33).....ACT

SECNAV...BUPERS...43...04...04C...20 FILE...002...BUSHIPS...DCNO FILE...

07...08...JAG...CNO/OOD

Be 5

DECLASSIFIED

SECURITY INFORMATION

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

OPNAV FORM 2110-9 (REV. 10-65)

301450Z

Paraphrase NOT Required

Consult Cryptocenter before declassifying

ALL BL

THE ATLANTIC COMMAND
AND
UNITED STATES ATLANTIC FLEET
HEADQUARTERS OF THE COMMANDER IN CHIEF

FF1-2/A17-4

U. S. Naval Base
Norfolk 11, Virginia

(1907)

2 MAY 1952

From: Commander in Chief U. S. Atlantic Fleet
To: Rear Admiral U. S. Navy

Subj: Advisor to Counsel for Court of Inquiry, designation of

Ref: (a) Sec. 0304.d., Naval Supplement to the Manual for Courts-Martial,
U. S., 1951

1. Commander _____, U. S. Navy, is hereby appointed as
Advisor to the Counsel for the Court of Inquiry, convened by my order of
29 April 1952, of which you are president, in accordance with the provisions
of reference (a).

Admiral, U. S. Navy,
Commander in Chief, U.S. Atlantic Fleet

INDEXED

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~~CONFIDENTIAL~~
UNCLASSIFIED

Op-212/jc
Ser 0568P21

87 DEC 1952

SECURITY INFORMATION

THIRD ENDORSEMENT on subject court of inquiry

From: Chief of Naval Operations
To: Judge Advocate General

Subj: Court of inquiry; collision of USS WASP and USS HOBSON;
ord. by CINCLANT on 29 April 1952

Encl: (1) Pertinent extracts from the Findings of Court of Inquiry,
collision of USS WASP and USS HOBSON

1. Returned for appropriate action. Enclosure (1) was used as press
release on subject collision.

2. As recommended by the court and by the convening authority, the
Allied Naval Signal Book has been changed to provide a special signal
for use by carriers while operating aircraft.

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By direction



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CONFIDENTIAL
~~CONFIDENTIAL~~
UNCLASSIFIED
SECURITY INFORMATION

Rg 6449241

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PERTINENT EXTRACTS FROM THE FINDINGS OF A NAVAL COURT OF INQUIRY
AS APPROVED BY THE COMMANDER IN CHIEF ATLANTIC FLEET TO INQUIRE
INTO THE CIRCUMSTANCES SURROUNDING THE COLLISION BETWEEN THE
U.S.S. WASP AND THE U.S.S. HOBSON ON 26 APRIL 1952

(NOTE: All times referred to are local time kept by the ships and are expressed in four digits based on 24 hours in a day. The first two digits indicate hours from midnight, the second two, minutes of the hour. Thus the time 2221 would be 10:21 PM, and the time 0015 would be 12:15 AM. All courses and bearings are true courses or bearings using 360°T in the compass. North is 000°T, East 090°T, South 180°T and West 270°T. The course of 102°T referred to would be, for a person facing East, 12° to his right; similarly, the course of 260°T would be, for a person facing West, 10° to his left.)

On the night of 26 April 1952 the U.S.S. WASP (CV-18) was operating as a Carrier Unit with two destroyer-minesweepers acting as plane guards, the U.S.S. RODMAN (DMS-21) and the U.S.S. HOBSON (DMS-26). The Commanding Officer of the WASP, Captain Burnham C. McCaffree, was the Officer in Tactical Command. The WASP launched a group of aircraft about 2000 and directed it to conduct a simulated attack on the remainder of the naval task group enroute to the Mediterranean, approximately 50 miles to the South. The night was clear but dark, there was no moon, the sea was slight and the wind was 7-10 knots from 240°T. The ships were in Latitude 42° 21' North, Longitude 44° 15' West, in 2700 fathoms of water (about 3 miles). The three ships in the unit were in darkened condition except for red aircraft warning lights on top of the masts which were clearly visible to all the ships.

After the night launch the task unit was turned to course 102°T. The HOBSON was then bearing 245°T, distance 3000 yards from the WASP, and the RODMAN was bearing 090°T, distance 1000 yards from the WASP. Speed was 25 knots.

The Commanding Officer of the WASP had a message sent at 2210 informing the plane guards that the probable recovery course for the returning aircraft would be 265°T and that the recovery speed would be 27 knots. Both plane guards received this message. For the WASP and RODMAN the change to the recovery course and speed would be simply a change of course and speed; however, the HOBSON, in addition to the change in course and speed, would have to adjust her present position of 245°T, distance 3000 yards from the WASP to a position 175°T-185°T, distance 1000 yards from the WASP. Such a change in position is standard practice for naval ships operating with a carrier task unit. The Commanding Officer of the HOBSON, Lieutenant Commander William J. Tierney, discussed the evolution with his Officer of the Deck and indicated his intention to arrive on his new plane guard station by changing to course 130°T and, when the WASP bore about 010°T, to make a left turn to the recovery course. The Officer of the Deck, who had previously proposed a right turn and slowing down to 15 knots to fall into position, objected to this plan on the basis that a

For info
This used for Congress and a press
release

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left turn to the recovery course was dangerous. Lieutenant Commander Tierney stated that since the maneuver had to be expedited, that he would conn (personally direct course and speed changes) the HOBSON into its new position.

At about 2221 a signal to change course to 260°T and to change speed to 27 knots was properly made and executed. Both plane guards received the signal. The five degree variation between the probable recovery course and the course actually ordered would not appreciably change the planned maneuvers of the HOBSON. The position of the WASP and HOBSON at the time this signal was executed is shown on the attached chart.

The WASP made a normal turn to the right from 102°T to 260°T , successive positions being as indicated on the attached chart. The RODMAN had merely to maintain her approximate true bearing and distance from the WASP so turned simultaneously with the carrier. On the execution of the signal, the Commanding Officer of the HOBSON took the conn as prearranged with the officer of the deck and proceeded to change course and simultaneously to adjust his position. The HOBSON first turned right to 130°T and increased speed to 27 knots. After about two minutes, or at 2223 as noted on the chart and well before the WASP bore 010°T , the HOBSON came left to an average course of about 090°T which she held until the distance to the WASP had closed to about 1240 yards. The next move of the HOBSON at 2224, directed by her Commanding Officer, was an inexplicable turn to the left using standard rudder. The Commanding Officer apparently soon realized that he was crossing the bow of the WASP and was in an extremely dangerous position, so he attempted to extricate his ship by increasing his rudder to full left, followed by hard left and emergency flank speed ahead.

The Commanding Officer of the WASP ordered an adjustment of the recovery course to 250°T , about the same time that the Commanding Officer of the HOBSON ordered his final left turn. The heading of the WASP was then 258°T , having almost reached the prescribed course of 260°T . The Commanding Officer of the WASP personally transmitted the adjustment signal; however, as none of the bridge personnel of the RODMAN nor any of the survivors of the HOBSON heard the signal, the court was of the opinion that the Commanding Officer of the HOBSON also did not receive the signal. Since the HOBSON had already commenced her turn to the left, the signal, even if it had been received by the Commanding Officer, would not, at this time, have affected his manner of executing the evolution.

Almost immediately after the order was given to the WASP's helmsman to make the 10° adjustment of course to the left, the Commanding Officer and Officer of the Deck of the WASP noted the final left turn of the HOBSON. Captain I . . . assumed the conn with a quick and correct order to the engines to "back emergency full speed".

The combination of the HOBSON's efforts to increase both speed and rate of turn and the WASP's efforts to back emergency was not sufficient to avoid the collision and about 10 seconds after 2225 the WASP, which

had swung to heading about 260°T and then returned to heading 258°T, struck the starboard side of the HOBSON almost amidship at approximately a 90° angle and penetrated at least two-thirds through. The HOBSON broke in two, the forward section remaining afloat for about four minutes and the stern section sinking immediately. At the moment of impact the WASP was still making about 22 knots through the water although the engine speed had been slowed from 27 knots to about 7 knots. The emergency backing of the WASP's engines, combined with the resistance offered by the hull of the HOBSON, brought the WASP dead in the water while the HOBSON's forward section was still close to the starboard bow of the WASP.

Search and rescue operations were commenced immediately by the WASP. The ship was lighted; searchlights were turned on; life rafts, life jackets, and other flotation gear were dropped in the water; eight boats were lowered into the water; recovery lines were put over from the flight deck to the water; and the deck edge elevator was lowered. The RODMAN closed the scene expeditiously, lowering her only boat. Three destroyers from the task group to the South joined the rescue operations at 0015 on April 27 and the WASP temporarily ceased rescue operations long enough to recover her planes which by this time were very low on fuel. Thorough search and rescue operations were continued until 0730, April 27, when it was considered that no further possibility existed of finding additional survivors. Of the 237 officers and men aboard the HOBSON at the time of the collision, 176 lost their lives as a result of the collision and 61 survived the disaster. Following the collision, Lieutenant Commander Tierney was seen going into the water from the port side of the bridge and after three or four seconds was not seen again. There were no deaths or injuries to any personnel aboard the WASP.

The HOBSON was a total loss including all log books and records (a fact which, coupled with the death of the Commanding Officer, made the investigation more difficult), publications, equipment and other material aboard. The WASP received considerable damage to the bow section which now has been repaired.

After carefully weighing the testimony presented, the opinion of the Court, which has been approved by the Commander in Chief, U. S. Atlantic Fleet, is that the sole cause of the collision was the unexplained left turn made by the HOBSON about 2224. In making this left turn the Commanding Officer committed a grave error in judgment. As the Commanding Officer was not among the survivors his reasons for turning left will never be known. However, three possible explanations for his action are as follows:

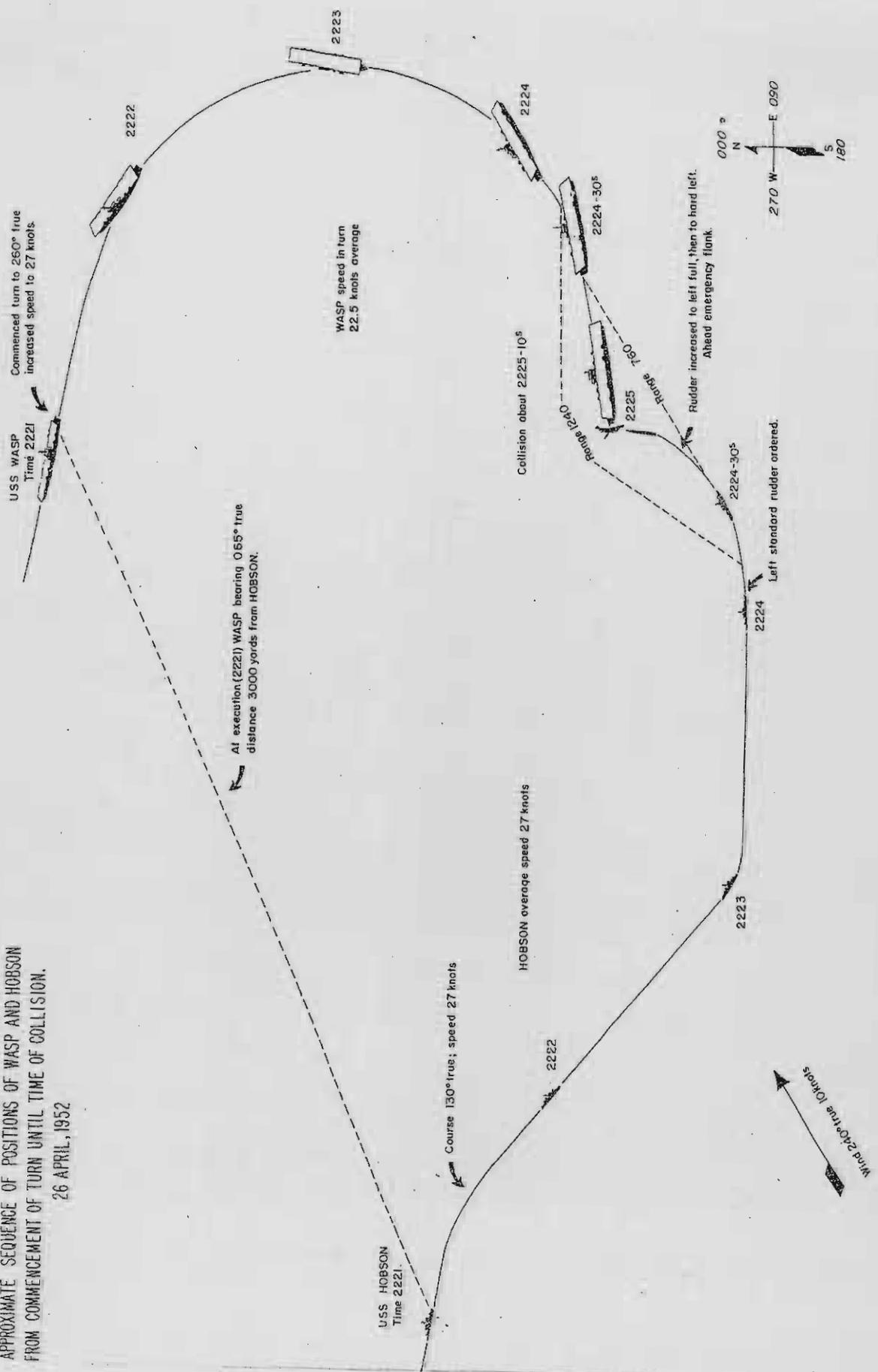
1. He became completely confused and having lost the tactical picture, mistakenly continued to believe that he could turn left into position and so ordered "left rudder".
2. He decided against his planned final left turn after he started the evolution but told no one of his decision and inadvertently ordered "left rudder" when he meant "right rudder" which, in fact, would have placed him near his intended position.

3. He made an error in judging his position relative to the WASP which, as noted was darkened except for the red aircraft warning lights and, thinking that he was on the WASP's starboard bow, when in fact he was on the port bow, turned left to avoid crossing ahead.

No other person is considered responsible for the collision. The Commanding Officer of the WASP handled his ship properly and when he sighted the HOBSON making her final left turn took quick and proper action. His seamanship after the collision in carrying out search and rescue operations, in recovery of planes with comparatively low wind conditions across the flight deck and in bringing his damaged ship safely into port was of the highest order.

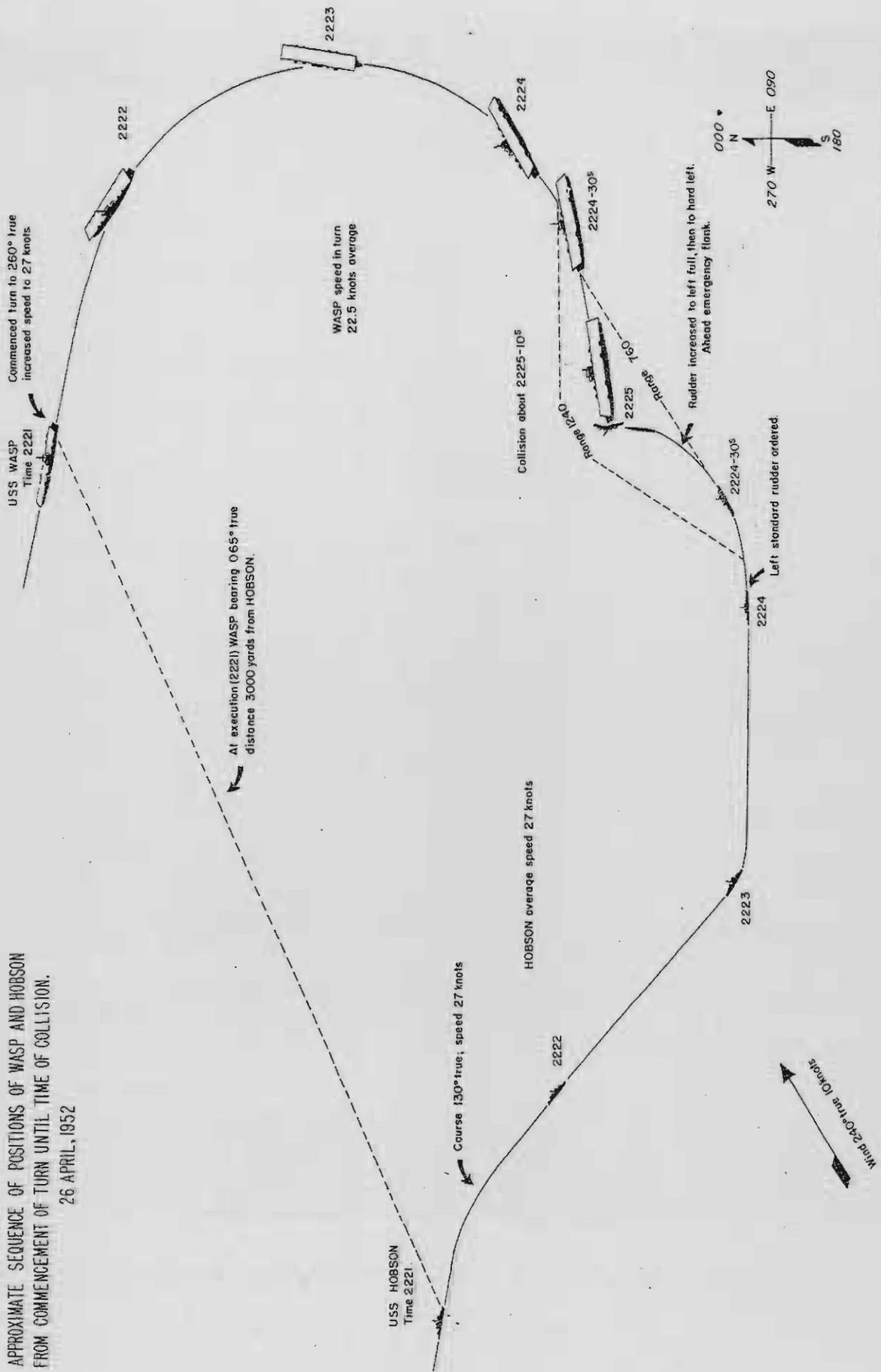
The condition of material readiness of the WASP and HOBSON was good. No material, mechanical or electronic failures in either ship contributed to or caused the collision.

APPROXIMATE SEQUENCE OF POSITIONS OF WASP AND HOBSON
FROM COMMENCEMENT OF TURN UNTIL TIME OF COLLISION.
26 APRIL, 1952



693

APPROXIMATE SEQUENCE OF POSITIONS OF WASP AND HOBSON
FROM COMMENCEMENT OF TURN UNTIL TIME OF COLLISION.
26 APRIL, 1952



805



DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY
OFFICE OF THE JUDGE ADVOCATE GENERAL
WASHINGTON 25, D. C.

IN REPLY REFER TO
JAG:I:5:GHC
Dct. # 6069-5

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~
Security Information

DEC 19 1952

FOURTH ENDORSEMENT on subject record

From: Judge Advocate General

To: Chief of Naval Personnel

Via: (1) Chief, Bureau of Medicine and Surgery
(2) Chief, Bureau of Aeronautics
(3) Chief, Bureau of Ships

Subj: Court of Inquiry-Collision of USS WASP and USS
HOBSON, resulting in deaths and injuries to U.S.
naval personnel; conv by CINCLANT on 29 April
1952

1. Forwarded for information and return.

2. Attention is invited to the Judge Advocate General's
second endorsement on subject record which contains the
holding of the Judge Advocate General relative to the
misconduct and line of duty status of the naval personnel
killed or injured as a result of subject incident.

Contents Noted
Casualty Branch Pers G-221
By: *DMN* Date: *2/12/53*

By direction

This endorsement is automatically
declassified when removed from the
basis record

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~
Security Information

1-6
ALL 136

694

BUMED: 3331: JSM: als
ALLEN, William Erby

Serial No. 06001
15 January 1953

UNCLASSIFIED
CONFIDENTIAL
SECURITY INFORMATION

FIFTH ENDORSEMENT

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

Subj: Court of Inquiry - Collision of USS WASP and USS HOBSON,
resulting in deaths and injuries to U.S. naval personnel;
conv by CINCLANT on 29 April 1952

1. Forwarded, contents noted.

By direction

UNCLASSIFIED
CONFIDENTIAL
UNCLASSIFIED
SECURITY INFORMATION

SEARCHED

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CONFIDENTIAL UNCLASSIFIED
Security Information

Aer-TD-14
A17

4

(Unclassified when detached from basic correspondence)
SIXTH ENDORSEMENT on subject record

01248

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

JAN 1953

Subj: Court of Inquiry - Collision of USS WASP and USS HOBSON,
resulting in deaths and injuries to U. S. naval personnel;
conv. by CINCLANT on 29 April 1952

1. Forwarded, contents noted.

BC

By direction

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SEVENTH ENDORSEMENT on subject record

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

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Subj: Court of Inquiry - Collision of USS WASP AND USS HOBSON,
resulting in deaths and injuries to U. S. Naval Per-
sonnel; conv. by CINCLANT on 29 Apr 1952

1. Forwarded, contents noted.

By Direction

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BUREAU OF NAVAL PERSONNEL

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EIGHTH ENDORSEMENT on subject Court of Inquiry

From: Chief of Naval Personnel
To : Judge Advocate General

Subj: Ct. of Inq. - Collision of USS WASP and USS HOBSON,
resulting in deaths and injuries to U. S. Naval
Personnel; conv. by CINCLANT on 29 April 1952

1. Returned, contents noted.

BC

Assistant Chief of Naval Personnel

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[Signature]

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Classification (cancelled) (changed to
) by authority of OPNAV SS10.1e
14 Aug 70 [Signature] (Rank)
OFFICE OF THE JUDGE ADVOCATE GENERAL OF THE NAVY

P. 6179-2

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~~UNCLASSIFIED~~
~~SECURITY INFORMATION~~

JLC:mr
23 April 1962

MEMORANDUM

From: Captain
To: The Under Secretary of the Navy
Subj: Review of discussions with Mr. [redacted] of the case of the WASP-HOBSON collision on 26 April 1952, and final recommendation concerning

1. In accordance with the request of the Under Secretary of the Navy to sit down with Mr. [redacted] and listen to his ideas concerning the circumstances of the WASP-HOBSON collision, I held three days of discussion with Mr. [redacted] in February listening to and discussing his reasoning and thoughts concerning the collision, on which subject he has been studying and working for the past ten years. Included in the discussion were discrepancies in witnesses' testimony, theories concerning other factors contributory to the collision, and perusal of many maneuvering board diagrams worked up by Mr. [redacted] to substantiate his reasoning. In these discussions I endeavored to explain many points of Navy procedure and customs with which he was unfamiliar in order to correct some misconceptions and mistakes in reasoning on Mr. [redacted] part.
2. As a result of these discussions, I made two recommendations: (1) That Mr. [redacted] be allowed the opportunity to read and study the complete record of the Court of Inquiry on the WASP-HOBSON case, including testimony taken in closed court together with the Findings, Opinions, Recommendations, and Forwarding Endorsements, in order to dispel any misconception on his part as to what was discussed in Closed Court Session; and, (2) That Mr. [redacted] be invited as a Secretary of the Navy guest for a cruise on an aircraft carrier similar to the WASP so that he might observe carrier operations, ship handling, etc., to enable him to have a better understanding of what the WASP and HOBSON were doing on the night of the collision.
3. Both of the above recommendations were approved and have been carried out. During the last week in March Mr. [redacted] spent three full days reading the Court of Inquiry record in my office. He made copious notes which I cleared from a classification/security viewpoint. I have appended a type-written copy of his notes to the Inquiry file for future information. Mr. [redacted] was most appreciative of the opportunity to see the full record, and any misconceptions he might have held before as to what occurred during closed court session have now been dispelled.
4. On 15 April I accompanied Mr. [redacted] for a five-day cruise in the USS LAKE CHAMPLAIN (CVS39) as a guest of the Secretary of the Navy. His arrival on board via COD aircraft, with the attendant arrested landing, was

For Lt. Cdr. Leyle

gll

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~~RESTRICTED~~ FOR RADM X PRESIDENT OF COURT OF INQUIRY
 CONVENED TO INQUIRE INTO COLLISION USS WASP CV18 AND USS HOBSON
 DMS26 X IN ACCORDANCE WITH REQUEST OF FATHER OF LCDR TIERNEY
 COMMANDING OFFICER HOBSON JAG WILL PROVIDE LEGAL OFFICER TO
 REPRESENT DECEASED SON X CINCLANT APPROVES AND AUTHORIZES THIS
 COUNSEL TO CROSS EXAMINE WITNESSES AS NECESSARY IN THE INTERESTS OF
 LCDR TIERNEY

665

CFN CV18 DMS26

05/2219Z MAY BEKZC

~~RESTRICTED SECURITY INFORMATION~~

Cdr.

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DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY
OFFICE OF THE JUDGE ADVOCATE GENERAL
WASHINGTON 25, D. C.

IN REPLY REFER TO

JAG:I:5:GHC:gc
DCT # 6069-5

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21 JUL 1952

SECOND ENDORSEMENT on subject record

From: Judge Advocate General
To: Chief of Naval Operations

Subj: Ct of Inq-Collision of U.S.S. WASP and U.S.S. HOBSON; ord
by CINCLANT on 29 April 1952

1. Forwarded for information and return.
2. The subject record is forwarded to the Chief of Naval Operations without prior reference to the Chief, Bureau of Medicine and Surgery, Chief, Bureau of Aeronautics, Chief, Bureau of Ships and Chief of Naval Personnel.
3. The Judge Advocate General holds that the deaths of the following named naval personnel which occurred on 26 April 1952, were suffered in the line of duty and not as the result of their own misconduct:

<u>NAME</u>	<u>SERVICE NO./SERIAL NO.</u>	<u>RATE / RANK</u>
William Erby Allen		SA
Michael (n) Amico		FA
Lawrence Allen Antley		SA
George (n) Arayaes		SN
David Henry Baker		SA
Harold K. Baker		FN
Sam Robert Baker		SN
Andrew J. Balzer		MM3
Arthur Joseph Bass		SN
Efracio Luciano Becker		FN
Gary Richard Behnke		SN
"J" "C" Bells		TN
William Jearld Berry		YNT
Willie Ray Blackburn		SN
Louis Ellis Bloomfield		SN
Alvin Carl Bond		FA
Leroy (n) Boney		SD2
Julian Richmond Booker, Jr.		FT2
Wallace J. Braunschweig		ET3
John Joseph Brennan		RMSA
Buell Calvin Breuer		FCS2

This endorsement is automatically declassified when removed from the basic record

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By *[Signature]*

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DCT # 6069-5

<u>NAME</u>	<u>SERVICE NO./SERIAL NO.</u>	<u>RATE /RANK</u>
James Henry Brobst, Jr.	--- 3	CS3
Joseph T. Brooks, Jr.		MMC
Robert Allen Brooks		PA
Clayton Eddie Bryant		SA
Ernest Boyd Buckner		FN
Oscar Lee Burchett		ET2
Dwight Lincoln Burr		MM
William Thomas Callahan		BTC
Harold Raymond Carlson		SA
Patrick Eugene Carr		SN
Casimir Martin Chrobak		SN
John Joseph Clements, Jr.		SN
John Monroe Cofer		BMC
Paul L. Cole		FN
John Peter Comins		ENSIGN
Richard Davis Cornell	---	SN
William Henry Costello		SN
Samuel Darwin Craver		Q1
Richard Leies Cropsey		ET3
Porter Lovelace Crotts, Jr.		GM3
Merrill Marshal Culham		ETSN
Donald Lawrence Cutler	---	BMSN
Basil Davis		SN
Jerry Purdin Davis		SN
James Donald Degaglia		SN
Norman James Deuel		SA
Frank Anthony Dingman		FN
Herman James Duke		PA
Joseph (n) Dunst		FN
Samuel Paul Earnst		BT2
Harry Young Eisenbrey		SA
Robert Otto Eisenach		SKSN
Roland Trenton Ellis	---	SA
Cluey (n) Einfinger		PA
Edward Miles Erwin		MMFN
James Richard Fey		SA
James Alois Flannery		EM3
Boyd F. Floyd		SH2
James Douglas Gleason	---	FN
Theodore Gould, III		ENSIGN
Adron Francis Grammer, Jr.		SR
Roy Silas Griffin, Jr.		DRSN
Charles William Hannigan		SA

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SECURITY INFORMATION

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DCT # 6069-5

NAME

SERVICE NO./SERIAL NO.

RATE/RANK

Dow Franklin Hardy		FN
Harley John Haugen		SN
Clifford Edgar Havens		FN
William Otis Henry		BMC
Hugo Clearonce Herman		FA
Ned William Hess		FA
William James Hogan		FA
Gary Nester Hoitola		FN
Hubert Denning Hopkins		BMC
Trenton Albert Hummel		GMI
Homer F. Jones		SN
Otis W. Jones		SN
Frank W. Klimauskas		SN
Loring B. Kline		MML
John M. Kotzman		FA
Joseph R. Kovack		MML
Robert D. Kreger		LTJG
Kazan P. Kruichak		SA
Charles F. Kuney		BT3
Raymond C. Kunz		FN
Harold L. Kupper		SA
Frank Lacio		SA
George DuPlaine Lambert		SN
Jack E. Lamison		BT3
William R. Laverty		FN
Byrn B. Lea		ENSIGN
Morris Lebert		MM3
Obie A. Lee		CS1
Joseph A. Leonard		SA
Karl E. Lewis		FA
Lawrence C. Lindsay		SN
Edward Liska		MM2
Clarence H. Lowe		SA
William S. Mansfield		MMC
Alfred W. Martin		FA
Cecil R. Mauzy		HN3
Charles Wayne McAnulty		SN
James Thomas McBride		SN
Zack Hagan McCord		LTJG
Robert Dwain Millington		QM3
William Preston McCrory		SN
James Harold McFarlane		SN
Stanley McManus		BTL

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<u>NAME</u>	<u>SERVICE NO./SERIAL NO.</u>	<u>RATE/RANK</u>
Francis J. Merdzinski		SA
Carl C. Milton		GMC
Robert A. Moceika		BT3
Harold David Morgan		EM3
James Richard Moss, Jr.		SK3
Kenneth LeRoy Mullin		FA
James Nave, Jr.		SA
Thomas Michael Noonan		FN
Casimer A. Norlock, Jr.		CSSN
Richard Lee Norman		SA
Robert Guy Oliveira		SA
Edward John O'Neill		SA
Robert Jarred Ortlip		FN
Proctor Philip Paine		EM3
Grady (n) Patterson		SDC
Irvin Leroy Phillips		SN
Roland Henry Pothier		SN
Robert Jackson Potts		FA
Joseph Noel Praul		FA
Boleslaw Racinowski		SN
Edmund Lee Read		CSSN
Eddie Jay Reeves		SN
Reginold Rhodes		MM3
Donald Franklin Roth		FA
Richard Allen Royce		SN
Thomas Charles Sawyer		SA
Arthur Hopkins Seel		SA
George Edward Swan, Jr.		MM3
Richard Dale Sherrill		FN
Jack Wendell Shore		SK3
Richard Perry Sites		YN3
John Braxton Slater		BTL
Charles David Smith, Jr.		QM2
David Howeth Smith		LTJG
Robert William Sterling		SA
Montie Rea Southworth		BM3
James Grayson Story, Jr.		RD3
Paul North Sweeny		FN
Homer Dean Tanner		FA
Joseph Albert Torrasi		HMC
William Joseph Tierney		LCDR
David Arthur Turner		MM3

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<u>NAME</u>	<u>SERVICE NO./SERIAL NO.</u>	<u>RATE/RANK</u>
James Lewis Turner		FA
William Michael Ushock		EN
Robert Eugene Vincent	--	FA
Richard Marcell Vogtman	--	SA
Elmer Houston Wagner	--	FA
Horst Hugo Wagner		EM3
Nelson E. Wessel	--	SA
Benjamin (n) White		FA
Ervin Scott White		FA
Robert Paul White	--	SN
Chester Julian Wilks, Jr.		MM3
Joseph M. Walton		MM3
William Joseph Warhol		SN
Walter Erich Wassertheurer		MML
Malvin Smith Wallace		FA
James Lester Webb	--	BML
Warren Albert Washington		CS3
Robert Creighton Williams		SN
Bobby Charles Willis		SA
Richard Elvin Willis	--	SN
Robert Edward Willis		GM3
Joe David Willms	--	SA
Francis Kenneth Wolfe, Jr.	--	LT
James Lee Woods	--	TN
Jodie Junior Wright		TA
James Thomas Yates		GM3
Frank Chester Zwingman, Jr.		FA

4. The Judge Advocate General holds that the injuries of the following named naval personnel which occurred on 26 April 1952, were suffered in the line of duty and not as the result of their own misconduct:

<u>NAME</u>	<u>SERVICE NO./SERIAL NO.</u>	<u>RATE/RANK</u>
		EPFN
		FA
		SA
		ENSIGN
		EMC
		RD2
		YN2
		DC3
		CS3

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SECURITY INFORMATION

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DCT # 6069-5

NAME

SERVICE NO./SERIAL NO.

RATE/RANK

SN
RDSN
MML
SA
BT1
Q M3
SA
QMSA
SA
BM2
SA
SN
SA
MEFN
RMSN
RDSN
QM3
SO3
SA
PT2
RMSN
IC3
RM3
FA
EFTN
RMSN
RMSA
CSC
FA
FN
RD2
MML

5. The proceedings in the attached case are legal.

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THE ATLANTIC COMMAND
AND
UNITED STATES ATLANTIC FLEET
HEADQUARTERS OF THE COMMANDER IN CHIEF

FF1-2/A17-4

U. S. Naval Base,
Norfolk 11, Virginia,

01425/14

9 JUL 1952

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SECURITY INFORMATION

In the review of the record of proceedings of the Court of Inquiry convened to inquire into all of the circumstances surrounding the collision between the USS WASP (CV 18) and the USS HOBSON (DMS 16) which occurred on or about 27 April 1952, the convening authority recognizes that the court was confronted with the difficult task of reconstructing the facts of this disaster, which resulted in a heavy loss of life as well as the complete loss of a ship of the Navy, without the assistance of any of the records of the HOBSON. This situation was further aggravated by the lack of the testimony of her commanding officer who was one of those who did not survive the tragedy. These limitations made mandatory a most searching inquiry. It is considered that the Court discharged its obligation thoroughly and with dispatch.

The following is a concise narrative of the facts and circumstances established by the record as to the manner in which the collision occurred:

On the night of 26 April 1952 the USS WASP (CV 18) was operating independently as a Carrier Unit (Task Unit 88.1.1) with two surface plane guards, the RODMAN (DMS 21) and the HOBSON (DMS 26). The Commanding Officer of the WASP was Officer in Tactical Command. The WASP had launched a group of aircraft at about 2000P which was directed to attack the remainder of the Task Group, then operating some 50 miles to the south. The weather was clear, the night was dark, the moon had set at 2149 local time, the sea was slight, and the wind was 7 - 10 knots from about 240°T. The ships were steaming darkened with the exception of red truck lights in all ships and, during flight operations, certain flight deck lights in the carrier.

After the night launch in which the RODMAN and the HOBSON had been assigned plane guard stations 1 and 2 respectively, the task unit was turned to course 102°T. Plane guards remained in their launch positions relative to the true wind, the RODMAN 090°T, 1200 yds. from the WASP, and the HOBSON 245°T, 3000 yds. from the WASP. Both plane guards were substantially on these stations. Speed was 25 knots. At 2210 an intention signal was sent alerting the unit to a recovery course of 265°T and a speed of 27 knots. Both plane guards acknowledged receipt of this signal. At about 2221 a turn and speed signal was executed to turn right to course 260°T and to change speed to 27 knots. Again, both plane guards acknowledged receipt of the signal incident to which the HOBSON was

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directed to assume recovery station, and thus to take a new station bearing 170°T - 180°T, distance 1000 yds. from the WASP. The WASP, whose Commanding Officer was on the bridge but did not have the conn, made a normal turn using standard rudder (10°) from 102°T to about 261°T. This rudder gave her a tactical diameter of about 1500 yds. The RODMAN had merely to maintain her approximate true bearing and distance and so turned simultaneously. In going to her new station, the HOBSON first turned right to 130°T and took speed 27. After what the court calls "a short period of time", actually about two minutes, the HOBSON came left to an average course of about 090°T which she held until the distance to the WASP had closed to about 1240 yds. At this point all logic of the HOBSON maneuver disappeared - her next move, directed by the Commanding Officer, was an inexplicable turn to the left using standard rudder. Almost immediately, ranges began to close at an alarming rate and a condition of extremis prevailed. The Commanding Officer of the HOBSON, apparently realizing this condition, attempted to extricate his ship using hard left rudder and emergency flank speed. The combination was not enough and was too late, and about 2225 the WASP struck the starboard side of the HOBSON almost amidships at approximately a 90° angle. The HOBSON rolled over to port and sank completely within 4 minutes. An estimated 1 minute and 10 seconds elapsed between the ordering of the final left turn by the HOBSON and the collision. Almost simultaneously with that order, the Commanding Officer of the WASP had attempted to transmit an information type signal that the WASP's course was 250°T (Mike Corpen-250). At the time of this attempted transmission the WASP's course was not 250°T but was in the process of being so adjusted, and at the time of collision she was on 258°T, or 2° off the signalled course for recovery. It was almost immediately after the order was given to the WASP's helmsman to make this 10° adjustment that the CO and OOD of the WASP discerned the final left turn by the HOBSON, and the Commanding Officer assumed the conn by his order to the engines to "back emergency full".

The Court's report was not unanimously concurred in by the members and a minority report was submitted; therefore, this endorsement by the convening authority is intended as action on both reports and will refer throughout to the majority and/or the minority.

It is apparent that there was only slight variance between the majority and minority as to the facts found proven, and this, only in the application of those facts to their ultimate opinions and recommendations.

Before proceeding to a general consideration of the opinions and recommendations, it appears appropriate to discuss the matter of the Rules of the Road as they apply to this collision. Paragraphs 6 and 12 of the majority opinion and 2 and 3 of the minority opinion deal with this subject. In essence, the majority holds that the ships in this evolution were governed, as they approached positions where a risk of collision might become a possibility, only by Art. 27 (General Prudential Rule); whereas the minority concludes that a transitory crossing situation was created by the final turn of the HOBSON and thus that Art. 19 (Crossing Rule) must be considered.

The convening authority is of the opinion that, in view of the singular nature and accepted practices of naval tactical maneuvers, no "risk of collision", in the sense that it is referred to in the Rules of the Road, existed between the WASP and the HOBSON from the execution of the signal "turn 260 speed 27" until the HOBSON put her rudder left for her

final turn. In consequence of this lack of risk of collision, the two ships were not operating under any specifically applicable Rule of the Road during that period of the maneuver. At the instant that the HOBSON put her rudder over for her final left turn, a condition of extremis was created and any action taken thereafter was of an emergency nature and was taken under Art. 27 (General Prudential Rule). Thus it is considered that the majority opinion is valid on this point with the exception of the time at which Art. 27 became applicable. Further, it is believed that any discussion by the minority in regard to a "crossing" situation in this instance approaches the academic because of the immediate extremis situation developed by the HOBSON's final turn and the apparent normalcy of the maneuver up to that point.

In paragraph 16 of the majority opinion and paragraph 5 of the minority opinion, the complexity of the maneuver involved is discussed with contra views expressed. It is obvious that an evolution under the conditions described in this opinion is "more difficult" than one conducted in daylight or using lesser speeds, or at night with running lights. However, it is considered that the maneuver as planned by the Officer in Tactical Command was not necessarily dangerous and was capable of simple and safe execution by all ships involved. Although this could not be construed a "routine" evolution for Lieutenant Commander TIERNEY, as inferred by paragraph 5 of the minority opinion, his previous experience afforded ample background to permit him to understand the problem and to execute the maneuver without incident.

The minority, in paragraph 6, expresses the opinion that paragraph 17 of the majority opinion is not necessary. However, Lieutenant was before the Court of Inquiry as an interested party and, therefore, a conclusion as to his dereliction of duty or lack thereof is considered mandatory.

The conclusions of the majority in regard to the alleged negligence of Captain Commanding Officer of the WASP, are contained in paragraph 18 of its opinion. The convening authority has applied simple criteria to each of the alleged contributory negligent acts, as appropriate, to determine its validity: "Was there any action or lack of action on the part of the WASP which, varying from the ordinary and approved practices of U. S. Naval vessels, contributed either directly or indirectly to the making of the collision situation?", or "If the alleged negligent act had not been committed, would the course of events have been altered in any way?". The convening authority is of the opinion that the evidence drawn from the record does not substantiate a charge of negligence in the case of Captain

The foregoing statement is based upon the following conclusions:

Paragraph 18(a)(1)&(2) - The maneuver did not involve risk of collision to the extent of classifying its selection as negligence.

Paragraph 18(a)(3) - Prior stationing of plane guards and prescription of running lights and/or reduced speed would have created more simple tactical circumstances for this maneuver; however, the circumstances under which it was ordered were quite normal, and it was capable of simple and safe solution.

Paragraph 18(a)(4) - It is not possible to discern how more regard to all risks of collision (General Prudential Rule) could have had any effect on the course of events.

Paragraph 18(b)(1) - The assumption by the Commanding Officer of the WASP that the HOBSON had initially turned right, and that the maneuver was proceeding normally until the HOBSON's final left turn, was a reasonable one. The signal made by the WASP called for a right turn and the HOBSON acknowledged receipt of this. Further, this assumption was substantiated by the fact that the HOBSON did turn right, and, as observed from the WASP, the HOBSON's bearing changed to the left.

Paragraph 18(b)(2) - Fuller appreciation of the situation would not have altered the results because there was no real threat from the HOBSON prior to her final left turn.

Paragraph 18(b)(3) - A delay in ordering the 10° course adjustment could have had no noticeable effect because of the small amount, 2°, actually changed from the originally ordered course.

Paragraph 18(b)(4) - The alleged violation of Art. 27 has been discussed under 18(a)(4) above. Additionally, in the light of the actions of the HOBSON, more exact bearings, in this case, would have given the WASP no more information upon which to take avoiding action than was obtained by observation. Not keeping course is actually an academic allegation in view of the small course change. Also, this latter opinion on the part of the majority is not consistent with paragraph 6 of its opinion in that it indicates a violation by the WASP of the obligation of a privileged vessel in a crossing situation. In paragraph 6, the majority expressed the opinion that rules for a crossing situation did not apply.

In paragraph 8 of its opinion, the minority refers to paragraph 19 of the majority opinion, and again claims existence of a crossing situation after the final left turn of the HOBSON. It is not considered that a crossing situation within the scope of Art. 19 of the Rules of the Road did, in fact, exist at that time; and, therefore, the majority opinion is valid.

In paragraph 21, the majority opinion sets forth the alleged negligent acts of Lieutenant [redacted] the Officer of the Deck of the WASP at the time of the collision. The opinion of the convening authority is that the preceding remarks of this endorsement apply equally to the case of Lieutenant [redacted]. His watch standing was not perfect, but it is certain that any more complete information he might have obtained could not have altered circumstances. It is therefore considered that contributory negligence did not exist in the case of Lieutenant [redacted].

In the consideration of paragraphs 4, 14 and 23 of the majority opinion reference is made to paragraphs 1, 4 and 10 of the minority opinion. For these portions of the majority opinion to be valid, it would be necessary to determine: (1) that negligent acts or derelictions of duty were committed by Captain [redacted] and Lieutenant [redacted] and (2) that those negligent acts or derelictions were in some manner contributory to the collision or had some causal connection therewith. The convening authority is of the opinion that no act of commission or omission on the part of Captain [redacted] or Lieutenant [redacted] had any contributory or causal connection with the disaster and that neither officer should be held responsible in any degree for the collision. It follows, that the final left turn of the HOBSON was the sole cause of

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collision, and therefore, that Lieutenant Commander TIERNEY was solely responsible. The opinion of the minority in this regard is considered correct.

With regard to majority recommendation 5.a(1) and the comment thereon in minority recommendation 3, the convening authority considers both have accurately described one of the essential elements of command. Accordingly, it is deemed inappropriate to incorporate such a basic corollary in a tactical publication.

With regard to majority recommendation 5.a(3), it is considered that, when practicable, plane guards should be informed in advance of the proposed schedule for aircraft launches and recoveries. This procedure, coupled with standard destroyer doctrine, will obviate to a great degree any requirement for messages of the nature recommended in this paragraph. The recommendation should be so qualified.

As to majority recommendation 5.a(5), the convening authority concurs in this recommendation except that the special signal should be in addition to the MIKE CORPEN signal.

Further, the convening authority considers that the majority recommendation 5.a(6), should be made a part of the definition of the proposed signal.

The convening authority does not consider that wider publication of the contents of majority recommendation 5.a(8) is necessary. This recommendation refers to material the nature of which is so basic as to make it an obvious requirement in the knowledge of all officers with tactical authority.

With regard to majority recommendation 5.a(10)(a), the convening authority concurs that the wording of CSP 734A did require revision; however, that publication has been superseded by ACP 175 as of 1 July 1952.

During the hearings held by the Court of Inquiry, certain deficiencies in the organization and conduct of the watch of the WASP became evident. All of these individually and of themselves had no causal connection with the collision. Accumulatively, however, and though still divorced from any causal connection, these deficiencies cannot be ignored. It is considered that there was a lack of full appreciation on the parts of the Commanding Officer and several officers of the WASP of some of the basic responsibilities of ships' watch organizations during naval maneuvers. Although they were watching the lights of the HOBSON, no ranges were requested, or were deemed necessary for their complete tactical understanding. Lookouts, concentrating their attention on planes in the air, failed to observe and report significant changes of surface ship positions. Other sources of information available to the bridge were not used. In this regard, the convening authority takes exception to the statement of the minority, in paragraph 9(a)(2), that, "There was no particular reason to know the exact course or range of the HOBSON so long as it did not threaten the WASP." This view in emphasizing the unimportance of "exact" data in this case loses sight of the necessity to determine the elements that might constitute a threatening situation. However, despite this failure to exploit to the fullest the capabilities of all

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