

follow, point to proceed to, and the operating area of Liberty during the period of 9 to 30 June 1967. Paragraph 1C of this message is particularly pertinent. At 070001Z June 1967, operational control of Liberty again changed from CINCUSNAVEUR to COMSIXTHFLT in accordance with CINCUSNAVEUR dtg 061357Z June 1967. This change of operational control was made by message in which Liberty indicated to COMSIXTHFLT that Liberty was reporting to COMSIXTHFLT in accordance with the CINCUSNAVEUR message 061357Z. This message also included Liberty endurance and provisions, dry, frozen, and chill. It indicated that the ship had on board approximately 85% fuel and utilized approximately 1% fuel per day while on station. The message also indicated that Liberty self-defense capability was limited to four 50 caliber machine guns. The dtg of this message is 062036Z June 67. USS Liberty was operating under the operational control of COMSIXTHFLT at the time of the incident. No additional messages were in hand onboard Liberty concerning area of operation or other guidance for the performance of our mission than previously mentioned in the JCS message of 011545Z June 1967. COMSIXTHFLT message dtg 080917Z June 1967, which directed Liberty to proceed and operate within a 25 mile radius of 33.40 North, 32.30 East until further notice was not received until delivered by hand on 10 June 1967. Had this message been received anytime prior to the attack, Liberty would have attempted to open the range on the coast of the countries indicated in the message to at least be 100 miles specified. The existence of this message was not known by the Commanding Officer of the Liberty at the time of the incident and no action was taken to comply with it. During the four previous deployments of USS Liberty, the ship aroused unusual curiosity only during the first and second deployments. The configuration of the ship with unusual mast antennae arrangements and deckhouse structures caused, so I understand inasmuch as I was not on board as Commanding Officer at the time, some surveillance, primarily surface, from the Southwest African countries during its first two deployments. Lieutenant GOLDEN, who was aboard at the time, may be

DECLASSIFIED

able to provide the Board with additional details in this area. There are probably many reasons why the aircraft were unidentified. One reason would be that the distance, and the speed at which the aircraft flew, was such that it was extremely difficult to make out any distinguishing characteristics by personnel on board who do not normally observe any jet aircraft in the area of the ship's operation. The ship normally steams on independent duty along the West Coast of Africa. These countries do not have sophisticated air forces with the possible exception of Angola. Angola does have some jet aircraft but they have been noted to fly over the ship only on one occasion to the Commanding Officer's personal knowledge, while the ship was at anchor in Luanda Harbor. An occasional piper cub or helicopter working an oil rig along the coast and infrequently commercial jet aircraft is about the extent of air activity observed by personnel aboard LIBERTY. A recognition manual for Israeli, UAR, aircraft and surface ships was not on board prior to proceeding to the area. General ship characteristic and plane characteristic recognition manuals are on board and were used to hold occasional recognition training sessions. These sessions were primarily devoted to ship recognition. It was not known whether any U.S. aircraft were in the area, but no known U.S. aircraft were sighted by anyone onboard at any time prior to or after the incident. On further recollection of the event involving machine gun 53 firing, the effectiveness of the firing leads me to believe that a person, whom I believe to be QUINTERO, Boatswain Mate Seaman, to have been on station at machine gun 53 and took the torpedo boats under fire. It is possible that he evacuated his station as a result of the fire and flames from the motor whaleboat prior to Ensign Lucas' arriving to determine who was on the mount. For clarification purposes, the 50 caliber machine guns that are onboard USS Liberty are Browning machine guns, M2, heavy barrel, with a rate of fire of 450 to 500 rounds per minute. These machine guns are mounted on a pedestal and are aircooled weapons. Two men can effectively serve the gun. One as gunner, who uses

DECLASSIFIED
SECRET

an open sight; the other individual, the loader, who keeps ammunition up to the chamber. These machine guns are manually controlled. There is no director means of controlling the fire. The limiting stops for arc of fire of these weapons consist of piping, bent in a shape to prevent the gun barrel from being pointed at a direction which would harm the ship or any portion of its structure, and the outer edge of the gun tubs themselves which offer very limited splinter protection. The machine guns themselves do not have any splinter shields attached. These machine guns are not considered mounts in the normal Navy terminology of a mount. They should be considered more as pedestal mounted machine guns. The time gap in the Quartermasters notebook resulted from the fact that there were insufficient number of people in the bridge area to maintain an accurate record of events as they occurred and execute the orders of the Commanding Officer simultaneously. With communications to various stations limited various personnel, as they were noted on the bridge, were used as messengers. At one time during this time frame, the only individuals seen on the bridge were Quartermaster BROWN, who was on the helm, Ensign LUCAS, and Myself. Ensign LUCAS was busy relaying my instructions to the various battle stations. The smooth log will be a reconstruction of events as recalled by the Commanding Officer, who was present on the bridge throughout the entire incident and maintained his faculties at all times during the incident. At this time, I have related all of the events that are considered pertinent and should be brought to the attention of the Board of Inquiry. One additional fact, which should be noted by the board, is the fact that the chart used for plotting the ship's position and for laying out the operating area is identified as Portfolio A3259, Chart BC3924 Nov, Second Edition, September 30, 1963 (revised 5/4/64). This chart shows the approach to the operating area that the USS LIBERTY made, a diagonal transit from northwest to southeast. It lists point A, B, and C as the proposed southernmost limit of the operating area and the intended track of LIBERTY.

Q. Captain, you mentioned in your testimony that a helicopter hovered over Liberty and that an object was dropped which you recovered. I show you this card, and ask you if you recognize it?

A. Yes sir, I do recognize this card. It is a calling card.

Counsel for the Court: I'd like to offer this into evidence as exhibit number 8, and to serve as identification, if there is no objection, I would like you to read it now?

A. I read from the card I now hold in my hand. It is a calling card from "Commander Earnest Carl Castle, United States Navy, Naval Attache for Air, Embassy of the United States of America, Tel Aviv." This is on the face of the card. On the back of the card is written, "Have you casualties?" It's noted that this card is smeared with oil smudges on both sides.

Q. Thank you very much. You also mentioned in your testimony that you took a camera out of your bridge safe and were able to start to take some pictures. I show you developed pictures and ask you if you recognize them?

A. Yes, I recognize most of these pictures as having been taken by myself during the attack. Some had been taken by another individual unknown, but I do recognize the scenes depicted therein.

Q. Therefore, will you mark the back of the pictures for record purposes so that identification will be known? and I offer them in evidence as Exhibit 9.

A. Yes sir, I will mark them so that they, the scene or object depicted will be clearly indicated.

President: I'd like to, at this point ask the Captain -- did you not have wounded still lying about the deck at the time this helicopter was hovering over the ship?

A. Admiral, if you mean the helicopter which the attache was in, I'm not sure that the wounded were still lying around the deck, as such. By that time, most of our wounded had been taken to the casualty collection stations.

But there were people that were wounded. Whether they were evident to the Naval Attache from his position in the helicopter I do not know. There were injured on deck, however.

Counsel for the Court: In amplification of the Admiral's question, was there not a considerable amount of blood on the decks that would be obvious from a reasonable distance?

A. That is correct. There were numerous blood streams the full length from the 01 level on the forecastle to the main deck, at machine gun mount 51, where one body was still lying. I do recall that now. With his head nearly completely shot away. As I recall now, there was also another body in the vicinity of mount 51. The seriously injured were cared for before these obviously beyond help; were taken care of and removed from the place where they were hit.

Counsel for the Court: I'd also like to introduce in evidence at this point, separately from the chronological file of messages, DAO Tel Aviv 082100Z, as Exhibit 10.

Counsel for the Court: You have in your custody, USS Liberty charts that were used on the day of 8 June 1967?

A. Yes sir, I do.

Counsel for the Court: I request the recorder to mark such charts exhibits 11 and 12, and request photos be substituted in the record.

Counsel for the Court: Will you please read the information relative to this court?

A. From exhibit ¹¹~~12~~, this is a chart of the Mediterranean Sea from Antalya Korfezi to Alexandria including Cyprus. It is further identified by Chart No. BC3924 November, second edition, September 30, 1963, revised 5--4-64. This chart shows points A, B, and C. These three points limit the southern operating area in which Liberty intended to operate in carrying out the directives of the JCS message 011545Z.

Captain Lauff: Do I understand these to be the southernmost limit of your operating area?

A. These points represent a point greater, a distance from the beach, greater than that specified in the JCS message, but closely approximate those limits. The lines between point A, B, and C were the intended track of Liberty during the forenoon and afternoon watch of 8 June 1967. It was planned on arrival at point C to reverse course to the right and proceed again to point B, thence to point A, and continue a back and forth motion along these tracks during our entire stay in the operating area. It was planned to move point C to where longitude 33°W bisects the 100 fathom curve should it not be possible to obtain accurate fixes as the ship approached point C. The latitude and longitude of these points are as follows: Point A -- 31.27.2N 34.00E. This point is thirteen nautical miles from the nearest land. The coordinates of point B are: 31.22.3N 33.42E. This point is 14.6 nautical miles from nearest land. The coordinates of point C are: 31.31N 33.00E. This point is 18 nautical miles from nearest land. Closest point of approach to nearest land on a line between points A and B is 13 nautical miles. The closest point of approach to nearest land between points B and C is 14.1 nautical miles. Verbal instructions to the officers of the deck were that the ship was not to be to the south of a line connecting these points at anytime. Exhibit number 12 is a chart. The course between point A and B is 253 true. The course between point B and C is 283 true.

Counsel of the Court: Do any of the members of the Court desire to question the witness?

No response.

Witness: Exhibit number ¹²~~13~~ is a Mediterranean Sea chart of Egypt and coastline from Damietta to Alarish. This is further identified as chart No. 3975, seventh edition, March 1931, revised 2/3/64. This chart has on it the previously described points A, B, and C. It also has on it the danger

bearing established on the conspicuous Manaret at Alarish of 119 degrees true from the ship. The shoal areas of five fathoms or less are circled in red to easily call attention to their location.

Counsel for the Court: Captain, do you have with you in your custody, a CIC log and the radar bearing book for USS Liberty?

A. Yes sir, I do.

Counsel for the Court: Request the recorder mark the radar bearing book as exhibit number 13 and the CIC log as exhibit number 14. I now offer these exhibits into evidence.

Counsel for the Court: Do any members of this Court desire to question the witness concerning the charts, exhibits 11 and 12, or the radar bearing book and the CIC log, exhibits 13 and 14.

No response.

The witness was duly warned and withdrew.

Lieutenant Junior Grade Lloyd C. PAINTER, United States Naval Reserve, took the stand as a witness, was duly sworn, advised of his rights under Article 31, Uniform Code of Military Justice and examined as follows:

DIRECT EXAMINATION

Questions by Counsel for the Court:

Q. State your name, rank and organization?

A. Lloyd C. PAINTER, Lieutenant (jg), USNR.

Q. On 8 June 1967, at about 1400 hours, an incident occurred aboard USS LIBERTY in which the vessel was attacked. Would you please relate to this Court of Inquiry what you recall concerning that incident?

A. Yes sir. I was at this time, the officer of the deck. I had the 12 to 1600 watch that afternoon, and we had had a practice general quarters drill at 1300 and secured from that at approximately 1345, 1350. And during general quarters I left the bridge and went to my general quarters station, which is repair three, located on the mess decks. After this drill was over, I went back up to the bridge to relieve the watch, and when I came up to the bridge, I was

Q. What time was that?

A. Sir, I think it was 1350, thereabouts. I came back up to the bridge and relieved Mr. O'CONNOR who was the general quarters OOD, and assumed the watch. The first thing I was concerned with was getting a fix, and I remember distinctly checking the radar, and the nearest point of land on the radar at approximately 1355 was 17.5 miles. And I remember distinctly asking the Captain if I could come back to our base course, which I believe was set at about 14 and a half miles. We were about three miles outside of base course. About this time, it was around 1400, the Captain was on the starboard wing. He was watching some jet aircraft. The Captain was on the starboard wing, and he was looking up in the air at a couple of jet aircraft. He called me out there and said, "you'd better call the forward gun mounts." He saided me I think they're going to attack," or words to that effect. So, I ran into the bridge area and tried to call the port and starboard gun mounts forward. I couldn't get them; I called them about three times, and about the third

time I said, "bridge, gun mounts 51 and 52." They were hit. I can't testify exactly which one was hit first, port or starboard; they were both hit so fast. I believe the starboard one was hit first. At this time, I still had the phone in my hand, I was looking through the porthole at the gun mounts. I was looking through the porthole when I was trying to contact these two kids, and I saw them both; well, I didn't exactly see them as such. They were blown apart, but I saw the whole area go up in smoke and scattered metal. And, at about the same time the aircraft strafed the bridge area itself. The quartermaster, quartermaster third class POLLARD was standing right next to me, and he was hit, evidently with flying glass from the porthole. I don't know why I came out without a scratch. I was standing, as I said, right next to him. Finally, about this time they started strafing and we both hit the deck, as well as Mr. O'MALLEY, who was my JOOD at the time. As soon as the first strafing raid had been made, we sounded general quarters alarm. The Captain was on the bridge, He was in the pilot house at this time. I don't know whether he was hit then or not, I can't remember. It was so smokey. I took off for my general quarters station, which, as I said before, was repair three on the mess decks. On the way down I was running as fast as I could. By the time I got to the Chief's Lounge, the entrance through the lounge to the mess decks, I saw SPICER, our postal clerk, lying there cut in half with strafing and the hospital corpsman was applying mouth to mouth resuscitation. This I later found out failed. He died right there. Well, anyway, I got down to the mess decks and all my men were assembling there as fast as possible. They went to full battle dress, and so did I. I can't recall exactly how long we were waiting for the strafing raids to be over, but I believe it was approximately 20 minutes. At this time someone, I believe it was one of the quartermasters, came down and called me to the bridge. He said, "the Captain's hurt and the operations officer was dead, and the executive officer was mortally wounded." I ran up to the bridge. And when I got up there, the Captain was laying on the stretcher up there while trying to get underway. He thought for a while I think, I'm not sure, that he would pass out, and he wanted somebody up there to take over. He wanted somebody up there in case

he did. I'm not sure, but I think that is why he had called me up there. I don't know whether he called me up there, or the quartermaster just took it on his own to get me up there. I never found out. So, I was up there for a few minutes and it looked like the strafing raids were over, and some of the people were coming out and looking around and my repair chief had come out to assess some of the damage. When I saw him on the 01 level aft, I told him to take over Repair Three as I would be on the bridge. Well, by this time, the Captain had regained consciousness and told me that I would best be needed in Repair Three.

Q. Was that the Captain?

A. Yes sir.

So I left and went back to Repair Three, and, I don't know how long, time was slipping by so fast at this time, after that we had our first torpedo attack. It came over, well the LMC was out, it came over the sound powered phones, "Prepare for torpedo attack starboard side." So, we prepared for a torpedo attack starboard side, which we received in midships. I can't say exactly what time it was, maybe 1435.

Well, the ship at this time as soon as the torpedo hit midships, we began to develop a starboard list very quickly. So quickly that I felt as though we were probably going to lose it. At this time, the DC central passed the word to prepare to abandon ship. We then filed out to our life rafts which were no longer with us because they had been strafed and most of them were burned, so we knocked most of them over the side. At this time the torpedo boats, three of them, that had torpedoed us, were laying off, waiting for us to sink, I believe. Anyway, they didn't come near us at this time. However, we were able to maintain the ship and stabilize it. It didn't sink. So the Captain said that everyone could go back to general quarters stations. At this time I went back to Repair Three on the mess decks along with the rest of my repair party. All during this time in Repair Three, my men were fighting fires and knocking burning liferafts, etc. So we were kept fairly busy down in Repair Three the whole time. Also they were checking bulkheads and shoring where needed. After I went back there, after the torpedo attack, we waited for what seemed like many, many hours, but I

imagine it was only 20 or 30 minutes; and in that time we were checking out the torpedo hit midships and doing what was necessary to prevent further flooding. About 30 minutes later we had word from the Captain that torpedo boats were approaching us again and to prepare for another torpedo attack starboard side. And I know that if another torpedo had hit us, it would have sunk us, so I told the men to standby to abandon ship. We prepared to abandon ship in case we were hit the second time. At this time we were dead in the water with no steerage. However, we were able to regain our steerage by manual means and able to make approximately five to six knots. The pit log was out, we were just guessing by the number of turns that were being made. We tried to maintain a course, this time, I'm not really sure, it was either 300 or 320 to take us out of there. After we had gotten underway, an Israeli helicopter came out and asked us if we wanted aid; well, they didn't ask us, they just came along side and acted like they wanted to help, but we waved them off. We maintained this course as best we could throughout the night. I was up on the bridge most of the night with the Captain, up until the destroyer, DAVIS, I believe it was, came alongside the next morning. Repair three on the mess decks was designated a casualty station because the wardroom, which was the normal casualty station, was so badly strafed that we couldn't keep them up there. The mess deck was a bloody mess that night. People were dying. It was a ghastly sight. That's about all I have to say.

Counsel for the Court: Did you have occasion to see the national ensign flying?

A. Yes sir, I did. I saw the national ensign flying after the, it was at the time I believe when we were going to abandon ship. I ran out on the main deck to get the life rafts ready. I remember distinctly looking back up and seeing the Ensign flying. This was, I think, after the air raid, after the torpedo attack.

Q. Had you seen it earlier that morning?

A. I saw it earlier that morning when I came up, I don't know when it was.

I came up on and off that morning checking a patrol plane that had been flying over us. The quartermaster, DAVID QM2, had told me that the night that he was wounded that he had put the flag up at 0730 that morning.

Q. So you, in recollection, recall seeing the flag flying in the morning and after the torpedo attack?

A. Yes, before and after the torpedo attack.

Q. Do you know whether or not it was the same flag?

A. I couldn't tell you sir. The way I thought at one time, what the heck was it, I noticed there was something funny about it. I might have seen the flag twice, because once I saw one that had been shot up and it was ragged, and the next time I looked at it I didn't notice whether it was ragged or not. I couldn't say either way whether it was the same flag.

A. Earlier in your testimony you mentioned that the LIBERTY was 17.5 miles from nearest point of land. How did you arrive at this?

A. By radar navigation.

Q. Did you take a fathometer check?

A. Fathometer checked, yes sir. Either 33 or 31 fathoms under the keel at this time.

Counsel for the Court: Does any other member of this Court have questions of this witness?

President: No further questions.

The witness was duly warned and withdrew.

Ensign John D. SCOTT, U. S. Naval Reserve, took the stand as a witness, was duly sworn, advised of his rights under Article 313, Uniform Code of Military Justice and examined as follows:

DIRECT EXAMINATION

Questions by Counsel for the Court:

Q. State your full name, rank, and organization?

A. John D. SCOTT, Ensign, NSNR.

Q. Mr. SCOTT, you know that this Court of Inquiry is interested in the incident involving USS LIBERTY on 8 June 1967. Would you please tell the Court what you recall of that incident?

A. Yes sir. On the morning of the 8th, I had the 4 to 8 officer of the Deck watch on the bridge. It was a routine watch. The only thing out of the ordinary was we had one reconnaissance plane that flew by us and made a few circles off our port beam. He circled around about three or four times, then took off.

Q. About what time?

A. About 0515. I was not able to identify the aircraft. We looked at it with the binoculars. Due to the distance we could not see any markings or insignia of any sort on it.

President: That was local time, Mr. SCOTT?

A. Yes sir. The plane circled around several times then took off in a true direction towards Tel Aviv. About 30 minutes later I got a call from coordination, sir, and Chief CT SMITH was on the phone; wanted to know if I had an air contact that was fairly close in the last half hours. I told him I did and he wanted to know which direction it went after it left the vicinity of the ship. I told him, "Tel Aviv." He said, "Fine, that's all I want to know." I did manage to take four pictures of the aircraft with the camera on the bridge. I didn't know what type it was. It was a double fuselage, twin-engine type. It looked somewhat like an old P-38 or a small flying boxcar. That's about the only significant thing that happened on the 4 to 8.

Q. Do you recall the flag or the national ensign flying?

A. Yes sir, it was flying. I noticed at first light that the ensign was flying. I looked up to it to check the wind direction just in the event I had to blow tubes and I wanted to have a favorable wind direction. That's about all I recall about the flag being up on the day and night while we were over here. I don't recall seeing it down at all. That's about all I have to say about the 4 to 8.

Q. Continue on during the day?

A. I wasn't aware of any aircraft overhead. I did notice that at about the noon hour there was smoke on the horizon. Could see results of bombing on the horizon. I had gone out and taken a picture. I wasn't aware of aircraft. After we secured from general quarters, I came in to

the wardroom and I just left when I heard the first hit. With that, I took off running to DC central. I did not come topside again until about 0500 the following day.

Counsel for the Court: I have no further questions of this witness. Does any member of the Court?

President: Tell us a little bit about your damage control measures when the ship was hit from starboard?

A. Yes sir. When we were first hit, the first orders we got were, "two fires, one port side in the vicinity of the gas drums, one starboard side vicinity of the motor whaleboat." I ordered fire fighting parties out. Next we were ordered to pick up the wounded. We had a number of calls, repeated calls to pick up the wounded. I called back and said that every available stretcher was in use. They were using blankets and mattresses to haul the people back. After the fires were out, they burned for quite awhile before we got them under control. The next thing, we were told by the bridge to stand by for torpedo attack starboard side. The torpedo hit at approximately, somewhere between 1425 and 1445. As soon as the torpedo hit, I called main control. I don't keep a damage control log as such, my repair parties do. They log messages they receive in a book. Neither one of them, as soon as the attack started, kept a log. I kept message blanks coming into repair parties, but they were not timed. I had about ten or twelve message blanks prior to the torpedo hitting. I had the main damage, I had the large hole in the back berthing compartment, I had the hold in the diagnostic room, I had the two fires, the fires under control and one of them logged as out. But when the torpedo hit, the logroom in damage control central was in a shambles, the safe door blew open, logs went flying off the shelves, we were knocked on the deck, and shortly thereafter the order was passed down to set the destruction bill. And with that, we didn't bother to write down our messages anymore. Myself, my LJV talker, and my 2JZ talker commenced burning all confidential messages and pubs in DC central.

Q. That's fine. Tell me a little about your shoring?

A. It was necessary, after we investigated the diagnostic room, which is directly above the vicinity which the torpedo hit, I went in, it was next to DC central, I went in with the DC investigator from repair two. We saw the level of the water rising. I stuck my hand in the hole. It came out with black, black oil. With that I said, "It's still rising, we're going to have to shore it." We brought shoring in and mattresses from the engineering berthing compartment and commenced shoring. We found another rupture out in the passageway and it was bulged out, but we had that area pretty well under control.

Q. To establish the watertight boundary after the torpedo attack, was there any question about anyone being left alive in the spaces below?

A. No sir. When I saw the black oil coming up, I knew it had ruptured the fuel tanks. I went down to main control. I called them first and told them I had ruptured tanks up here, and told them not to take inspections from these tanks. Later on in the morning, I went down to main control and told them to take inspections from starboard tanks but not these two to correct the list. We went over to twelve degrees, and came back to ten. About 0500 in the morning we were down to about a 6 degrees list.

Q. Who was in charge of the forward repair parties at that time?

A. Ensign TAYLOR. He was the Repair Officer. He was hit before he ever got to the repair locker. He wandered off on his own. He came down the passageway, stuck his head in DC central. I could see he was hit very bad. He said, "Scottie, I've been hit." I said, "I can't help you, go to the mess decks. I'll call them and tell them you're coming." I don't have a plotter or messenger, and there were just three people in DC central, so none of us could leave. Next, there was Chief THOMPSON, and I got the word that he was hit, but not bad. A little later the bridge called wanting a signalman. Both my signalmen had been hit, and I called repair and asked them if they had any signalmen, anybody, even enlisted men. Chief THOMPSON volunteered and went to the bridge. Then DEMORI, shipfitter third, took over.

President: This was Chief THOMPSON who volunteered, who was already wounded?

A. Yes sir. And DEMORI was the on-scene leader.

Q. Is DEMORI still around?

A. Yes sir.

Q. Have you been to damage control school, Scottie?

A. Yes sir, I went ten weeks ago.

Q. Was it worth it?

A. Yes sir. I'd recommend it to anybody.

President: Scottie, I'm proud of you. Thank you very much, son.

The witness was duly warned and withdrew.

Lieutenant George H. GOLDEN, United States Navy, took the stand as a witness, was duly sworn, advised of his rights under Article 31, Uniform Code of Military Justice and examined as follows:

DIRECT EXAMINATION

Questions by Counsel for the Court:

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

A. George H. GOLDEN, Lieutenant, Engineering Officer, USS LIBERTY.

Q. Lieutenant GOLDEN, you know that this Court of Inquiry has been convened to look into the circumstances incident to the attack on USS LIBERTY. Will you please tell the Court what, if anything, you recall about that incident?

A. Yes sir. At approximately 1145, I completed eating lunch, and went to the 01 level forward to sunbathe along with the Captain and some of the other officers. I have a lounge chair, most of us do have; while laying on my back sunbathing, I noticed a plane flying over. I dozed off, and approximately 25 minutes or so later on, I woke up and saw a plane circling again coming from the port beam, crossing the ship. While watching it, I glanced up and noticed it just crossing over the stack area, and I noticed a small amount of smoke coming out of my stack, and also the flag was flying.

Counsel for the Court: Was it extended?

A. Yes sir, there was a slight breeze blowing.

Q. Where was the flag flying from, Lieutenant GOLDEN?

A. The foremast.

Q. And it was standing out where it could be seen?

A. Yes sir. Not completely the full length, but it was standing out. At approximately 1255, I left the O1 level forward, and then went forward because I knew that the Commanding Officer was going to have a surprise chemical attack for a drill between the crew. We went to general quarters at 1310. Immediately after we went to general quarters, the Commanding Officer addressed the crew concerning setting Zebra. He explained to them that anything could happen at any time. It took us four minutes to set Zebra, we should improve on that time. He explained that there was smoke coming from the beach area, and that there was possible fighting in that area. After completing general quarters, I came from the engineering and went to the port side of the ship, the motor whaleboat started smoking instantly, and walked into the wardroom to have a quick cup of coffee before going to my office. I sat down in the forward part of the wardroom, and I had no more had set down when the word was passed to stand clear of the motor whaleboat while testing. Immediately, there was a bang, and the first thought came to my head that the whaleboat had been dropped into the water. I jumped to the porthole, looked out, and there was black smoke coming up from the side of the ship. I immediately ran to the door to the wardroom to go outside. The second I hit the door, I heard the word passed, "General Quarters, all hands man your battle stations." And then the alarm went off. Before I had gotten clear of the door, the word was also passed over the PA system, which sounded like the Commanding Officer's voice, telling radio central to notify high command that we were under air attack. When I hit the deck plate in the engine room main control in front of the throttle board at 1405, I knew it was this time because the tachometers were ringing up at the same time flank speed. I had informed over the LMC the Captain it would take me a couple of minutes to bring the other boiler on the line, as we had just secured it to repair a gasket. The Commanding Officer told me to get it on as soon as possible and give him all the turns possible. Within a few minutes we were doing 86 rpms, until there

was a hit and I lost electrical power. We went dead in the water.

Counsel for the Court: Lieutenant GOLDEN, how many years have you been in the naval service actively?

A. Twenty-six years sir.

Q. This Court has heard many instances of loss of life, and the Court has viewed the inordinate amount damage to the vessel. Would you please tell the Court the nature of your personal possession loss incident to the damage to your stateroom?

A. There were two shells which could be 20mm, I'm not sure. There was one six inches in diameter, and another one approximately 7 or 8 inches in diameter, just aft of the center of my stateroom. Fragmentation from these two shells damaged the stateroom considerably. One came through the overhead of the stateroom. Bullets of unknown caliber came through the closet where my clothes hanged. The bullets went completely through one of them through the other, ripping all of my clothing apart. Bullets entered the bottom of the room, into the drawers where I keep my shoes, tearing those up. The fire fighting water from where the repair party was fighting the fire on the starboard side of frame 80 came through these holes, both from the 01 level and the 02 level, and ruined the tape recorder which I had setting on my desk.

Counsel for the Court: Value of the tape recorder?

A. \$219.00 sir.

President: Let the record show at this point that Lieutenant GOLDEN's testimony on his personal loss is introduced as being typical of the type of personal loss realized by the officers of the LIBERTY. The effectiveness of aircraft strafing and rocketry against the topside of the ship virtually eliminated the useability of any and everything inside the staterooms themselves.

Counsel for the Court: Mr. GOLDEN, as Engineering Officer, do you have in your custody, engineering logs?

A. Yes sir.

Q. Do you also have the gyro compass record in your custody?

A. Yes sir, I do. I have that one particular record with me at this time, sir.

Counsel for the Court: Request the recorder mark the engineering log as exhibit 16, the gyro compass record as exhibit 17, and request they be accepted into evidence as 16 and 17.

Counsel for the Court: Would you please read pertinent extracts from these logs?

A. Aye, sir. In the engineering smooth log on the 12 to 1600 watch on 8 June 1967. The log is signed by R. J. BROOKS, Machinist Mate Chief, at 1405, general quarters under attack. 1406, granted permission to fire room to light fires in number two boiler. At 1406, informed throttleman to maneuver at various speeds, to draw steam no less than 400 pounds. 1407, reported Condition Zebra set. 1408, secured number one and number two distilling units in order to have more steam or speed. 1435, lost electrical power due to hit believed to be torpedo. There was a vibration from this hit that knocked two people in the engine room off of ladders from the upper platform to the lower platform. It vibrated a light out of its socket. It knocked both generators off the line. Also lost communications to the bridge at this time. 1450, put number three generator to atmospheric ballast. 1453, generator on the line. During this period of time, there were both 20mms and two other smaller caliber bullets coming through the bulkhead from the starboard side from approximately frames 80 to 95. The last entry in the engineer's bell book was for 1405 when the bridge rang up for flank speed. There were no more entries in the engineer's bell book after 1405.

President: Tell me again, Lieutenant GOLDEN, how long your records or your memory indicates that you were without power after your circuit breakers tripped out and you lost the load?

A. From 15 to 20 minutes, I think sir.

Q. And your record shows that you lost the load at what time?

A. Lost electrical power at 1435 and regained electrical power at 1453.

President: Let the record show at this point, as a matter which is germane to all of the testimony wherein sequential and accurate times are

desirable but unavailable. That the early rocket attack against this ship shot and stopped, in some cases permanently and in others only temporarily, ships clocks through the ship. This fact has become increasingly evident throughout testimony received as well as in informal discussions with LIBERTY personnel.

The witness was duly warned and withdrew.

Ensign Malcolm Patrick O'MALLEY, United States Naval Reserve, took the stand as a witness, was duly sworn, advised of his rights under Article 31, Uniform Code of Military Justice and examined as follows:

DIRECT EXAMINATION

Questions by Counsel for the Court:

Q. State your name, rank and organization?

A. Malcolm Patrick O'MALLEY, Ensign, USS LIBERTY AGTR-5

Q. And your duty status?

A. Assistant Operations Officer and Ship's Secretary.

Q. How long have you been in the Navy?

A. Since January 13th, 1967.

Q. Approximately six months?

A. Yes sir.

Q. Mr. O'MALLEY, directing your attention to 8 June 1967, will you please tell this court what you recall of the attack.

A. Yes sir. I had the con on the 12 to 1600 watch. From 1220 to 1230 is when an Israeli twin-engine plane, well we didn't know it was Israeli just a twin-engine plane very similar to a flying boxcar, circled us once in a long elliptical circle and they drew near. We found out on questioning, after they went away, Mr. ENNIS said the plane had come out almost periodically every 20 to 40 minutes, and would make one pass in a high circle and head back to land. At 1310, I was relieved on the con by Mr. ENNIS, who was the JOOD for general quarters. Mr. O'CONNOR wasn't there so he stepped in the deck and relieved the con. When we went to general quarters, I went to my general quarters station in CIC. It was an extremely dull general quarters - we didn't do anything. We didn't have any contacts or anything significant to do. Some place between 1335 and 1350 I again assumed con from Mr. ENNIS. At about 1402, 03, or 04, something like that, I was looking at the radar screen and

trying to get a fix. I noticed three contacts coming off the shore and I said, "Lloyd, I think I have three contacts here." He said, "I think I'll talk to the gun mounts on the phone circuits." He tried to talk to them, and before I knew it, just as he was about to say "gun mounts 51 and 52" a jet opened up. It was just, "boom, boom, boom, boom, boom, boom, boom," and all of a sudden I found myself down on one knee. Someone yelled general quarters, I yelled general quarters, and I left the bridge, and as I went passed, I noticed that the general alarm was sounding. I went into CIC. To return to what had elapsed, well, by the time I took over the con it was 12 o'clock, and the time I was relieved it was approximately 1345.

Counsel for the Court: Who relieved you?

A. Lieutenant James Ennis.

When we got up there, we only had one thing to shoot, and that was a tower, a signal tower. I can remember how it stood on the beach. What happened, was Mr. Painter and I were trying desperately to get a fix, to get an accurate fix, what we were trying to do was get a fix and we couldn't do it.

Counsel for the Court: Do you recall the national ensign flying?

A. No sir, I don't because we were not allowed to go to the 04 level, and from here I couldn't see it. I did see the torpedo boats when I came up to the bridge.

Captain ATKINSON: Are you also the CIC officer?

A. Yes sir

Counsel for the Court: Mr. O'MALLEY, do you have in your possession the DRT log?

A. Yes sir, I do.

Q. Do you have the radar bearing book of USS LIBERTY also?

A. Yes, I do.

Request the recorder to mark the radar bearing book as exhibit number 18

and the DRT log, exhibit number 19. I now offer them into evidence, and request Mr. O'MALLEY to read pertinent extracts from 1400 hours, on the 8th of June.

A. The radar in CIC went out on the first attack.

Q. Try 1200 hours.

A. I have at 1145 a bearing on 173 at 13.9 miles.

Q. Any subsequent entries? DRT from 1300 on hours?

A. Nothing from 1300 hours.

Counsel for the Court: I have no further questions of this witness.

Does any member of the court desire to question the witness?

Captain ATKINSON: What was the last entry in the DRT log?

A. I believe it was 1300. 1300, yes.

President: What would be the reasons for no DRT entries after 1300?

A. I don't have any idea. Mr. Toth use to help me with the thing.

Q. What do you mean, he use to help you?

A. Well, he use to take charge of CIC.

Q. During general quarters?

A. No, not during general quarters. Actually, it was Mr. BENNETT's station. I was there in training. Mr. BENNETT wasn't there on that day.

Counsel for the Court: Mr. O'MALLEY, you indicated you were in the Navy for about six months?

A. Yes sir.

Q. Is this your first time at sea?

A. Yes sir, four months on the LIBERTY, sir.

Q. And your primary duty on USS LIBERTY is?

A. Ship's Secretary.

Q. Ship's Secretary?

A. Yes sir.

Q. Collateral Duty?

A. My collateral duty is Assistant Operations Officer with CIC.

Captain ATKINSON: Was the navigation plot maintained in combat?

A. No, we he maintained our navigational plot.

Q. Who's he?

A. COCNAVITCH did, but he was doing what he said was contour fixes and he was just checking if they agreed with the OOD on the bridge in the chartroom. You see, we had two charts. We had one in the chartroom and one in CIC. We did have fixes - like I had a 1220 fix spotted on the chart when the tower was bearing 148, 16.5 miles.

Q. In combat?

A. No, in the chart house.

Q. What happened to that chart?

A. There was an overlay.

President: Would you repeat that fix and time again, Mr. O'MALLEY?

A. At 1220 the tower beared 148 at 16.5 miles.

Q. Was it normally the ship's practice to use an overlay on a chart which they planned to use for a protracted period in a particular spot?

A. To my knowledge, no. This was the first time that I had seen it.

As a matter of fact, he was putting it on when I came up.

Q. Have you ever been in a ship when it had a patrol station in a spot for a protracted period before this?

A. No, not really. We had gone up and down the coast of Africa, but that was not a patrol.

Assistant Counsel for the Court: I may have missed what you said before. I'm not clear as to whether it's normal practice or not to maintain a navigational track in CIC?

A. The reason why we didn't have it up in CIC, the reason why we hadn't been doing it for a long period of time, was because we had just come in sight of land on the previous watch, and that is why.

The witness was duly warned and withdrew.

Counsel for the Court: The next witness will be LTJG Malcolm N. Watson, United States Naval Reserve.

Lieutenant Junior Grade Malcolm N. Watson, United States Naval Reserve, took the stand as a witness, was duly sworn, advised of his rights under Article 31, Uniform Code of Military Justice and examined as follows:

DIRECT EXAMINATION

Counsel for the Court: Will you please state your name, rank, and duty station.

A. Malcolm N. Watson, Lieutenant (jg), I'm MPA aboard the LIBERTY.

Q. Mr. Watson, did you know this Court has been convened in order to ascertain the circumstances attendant with the attack on USS LIBERTY on 8 June 1967? Would you please tell the Court what you recall of that incident?

A. Well, we had a practice GQ approximately 1310. My GQ station was the fire room down in the engine room. When we had secured from the practice GQ, I had come up. I was standing by the wardroom pantry when the attack came. I ran back down the officer's ladder and went down to my station in the fire room. And shortly I was called up to sick bay. I'm narcotics custodian, and I had to open the narcotics locker. I came up from the fire room, went through the mess decks, up to sick bay. I got the key from ^{the} first class corpsman, and a seaman KERNER went with me back down to the mess decks, forward along the passageway, into the engineering berthing compartment, down the hatch, into the narcotics locker. I opened the locker, removed morphine, gave half of it to KERNER and told him to go on back up and I took the other half and left the safe unlocked but closed. I locked the door behind me, I came back up. As I passed by DC Central, I stopped in there and told them I had opened xray fittings to get down to the narcotics locker and had reclosed it. At this time, DC Central is just forward of the diagnostic room,

under which the torpedo hit. And at this time the torpedo had not hit the ship cause I would have known it because of the way the passageway was torn up. I went back up into sick bay with the morphine that I had, and gave the key back to the first class corpsman and told him what I had done and that I had left the locker open. There was a seaman laying on the operating table, and they didn't have too many people helping in sick bay at the time, so I helped them move the seaman off the operating table, and I helped move third class gunners mate EASON onto the operating table. The Doctor told me where to get two bottles that he wanted. I thought we were done. And I helped him prepare things for operation, and by that time more people had just come into the sick bay to help out. So I said, "If you don't need me, I need to go back to my GQ station." And he said at the time, "go ahead". So I went back down to my GQ station and from then on in we had one machinery casualty right after the other. High water, low water in the boilers, I lost the lube oil, just all kinds of machinery casualties. From there on out, I really don't know the sequence of events of anything that had happened. But I know that when I happened to think to look at my watch, it was 7 o'clock in the evening.

Counsel for the Court: Excuse me, any time prior to the attack, did you notice the national colors flying?

A. Yes sir. At lunch that day, we were discussing the situation and Mr. Golden made the statement that someone had said something about the ensign flying so the people would know who we were. Mr. Golden made the statement something like, "Don't we have a bigger flag we can fly, maybe the holiday colors?" Then after lunch we went out on the 01 level forward and most of the officers were around there sunbathing immediately preceding 1300. At approximately 1245, an aircraft flew over approximately 5,000 to 8,000 feet, and his line of flight took it over the radar mast, and I was watching it and made a comment about it that it looked

like a C119 flying boxcar. And as it flew over the radar mast, the ensign was flying from the gaff. I noticed that it was flying, at this time there was a breeze.

Q. Extended?

A. Yes sir.

President: Was it flying from the mast aft or the mast directly over the bridge?

A. The mast directly over the bridge, sir.

The witness was duly warned and withdrew.

Lieutenant Richard F. Pfeiffer, MC, U.S. Navy, took the stand as a witness, was duly sworn, advised of his rights under Article 31, Uniform Code of Military Justice and examined as follows:

DIRECT EXAMINATION

Counsel for the Court: Will you please state your full name, rank, and duty status.

A. Richard Frank Pfeiffer, Lieutenant Medical Corps, duty station U.S. Naval Hospital, Portsmouth, New Hampshire.

Q. On 8 June 1967, where were you at this time?

A. I was attending to my duties as medical officer, USS LIBERTY.

Q. Will you please tell this Court the circumstances as you recall them incident to the attack on the USS LIBERTY?

A. Well, we had secured from the General Quarters drill. I was standing in the passageway outside the pantry, which is on the main deck.

Suddenly, we heard a sound as a jet plane flying low and the steward to whom I was talking and myself thought that something had happened to one of the steam lines. Immediately after that, we heard an explosion, and we sounded general quarters. My general quarters station is on the main deck aft, the main battle dressing station. I went across the main deck, and at that point I saw another plane passing over the ship and letting loose its supply of rockets on the ship. It was passing from the starboard bow to the port side and aft. I went into the main dressing station as quickly as possible and awaited the flow of casualties that would come in. We sent the third class corpsman to the forward battle dressing station

which was in the wardroom. In the main dressing station was the first class corpsman and myself. When I was in the main battle dressing station, we were relatively sealed off and we didn't hear very much of what was happening outside. At that point I would have thought it was a single or two planes that had strafed the ship once or twice. I didn't have an idea exactly how much had been done. And when they brought in the first aid patient who was a seaman with a collapsed lung, we thought he would be one of the few casualties that we got, and immediately took care of him, which involved an incision in his chest and packing of a pretty good sized chest cavity to remove the blood and air to make it possible for him to breathe again. We then found Mr. Watson, who had the combination to our narcotics safe in the medical storeroom. I sent the corpsman to get Mr. Watson to get me a supply of morphine and we started administering to the men. The time at this time was about a quarter to two, and it would be before the torpedo had struck. Someone told me that they wanted me on the bridge, and to get there I went through the mess decks which had a number of casualties there already, I passed the wardroom and found the forward battle dressing station was somewhat flooded by casualties, and went to the bridge where at that point, the Captain was the only person who was still functioning and the Captain had the helm. Again, the Captain had not been injured at that time. I took a look outside the bridge and saw two decks below the remains of our Navigator, Mr. Toth, The helmsman had died where he stood at the helm, and at that time there wasn't anything I could do for any of the men on the bridge except administer morphine to those who were injured and yet living and get men up with stretchers to evacuate them. It so happened the fire in the starboard side, the men had under control, and I returned to the wardroom where again we started caring for the casualties as best we could. We took care of the men in the wardroom and in the passageway on the main deck there were men wounded sitting shoulder to shoulder the full circumference of the passageway. On the port side in a stretcher was the executive officer who had compound

B4
senior research officer, Mr. Lewis, who had *B4*

and had been *B6*

and all the men that had been injured.

I found our third class corpsman, Shulman, with our mail clerk, Spicer, who had *Ble* and was having difficulty breathing. Shulman was performing, or had finished performing an emergency tracheotomy on him in an effort to help him breathe.

President: Shulman's a third class?

A. Yes sir.

And, one of the other men had his arm in a sling and was operating the foot-powered suction pump enabling him to activate the man's trachean lungs to get the secretions from there.

President: Doctor, is this the foot-powered trachean pump which supports the microphone into which you are speaking?

A. Yes sir.

Sir, in the chief's mess, we found another man, this was Payon, who was also having difficulty breathing. He had a wound of *Ble* and at that time we did not have the facilities on board to care for a second tracheotomy or to do an insertion of a tube into his chest, so the only thing I could do at that point was insert my finger in his chest wall and to allow as much blood to be drained out of that as possible. There was another man with a broken leg who we were just able to splint. As it turns out the last thing that we bought before we left Norfolk was a supply of air splints that were just coming in and being used as many as we had, and we could have used more. Then I returned to the main dressing station. At this time again I was going through the mess decks and there were more people there. I got to the main dressing station and found people on the floor, people in the beds, in the isolation room, and the clean room. One of the men in the bed was Blanchard, a man who had sustained a shrapnel injury in his back. The first class corpsman and I had examined him and we realized that we might have to operate on him. At that point we had also agreed though, unless it was an absolute matter of being certain he would die otherwise, we would not do anything to him. Then someone told me in a moment that the wardroom had been hit, and that the Captain

had been hit. We went by the wardroom and found fortunately that the hit had been away from where the people were being taken care of. A message while I was in the main battle dressingstation, they had announced to be prepared for a torpedo attack, and the torpedo hit and suddenly the ship started listing to starboard, rolled, becoming 9 degrees in a matter of a few seconds. At that time, Van Cleave and myself and as many people as we could get, we went down to the mess decks to try to evacuate anyone that we could from there in case the ship started going down. We were told that the destruction bill had been put into effect. The ship was stabilized after a couple of minutes and then I got the word to go to the wardroom and to the bridge. When I got to the bridge, the Captain had put a tourniquet on his *B6* He had lost a large amount of blood, but there was nothing I could do at this time. He was the only officer aboard at that time. The only other officer that I could find was Ensign O'Malley. I told him of the situation on the bridge, where the Captain had been injured and was the last officer I could find up there and suggested that he be prepared to go to the bridge if necessary. We then returned to the main dressing station, just in time to have a rocket land on the overhead near the clean room, and at this time the lights in the main dressing station went out. We decided at that time that we certainly couldn't care for the wounded in the situation that we were. We were told to brace ourselves for a second torpedo attack, and the only thing we could do was go inside and find a couple of the wounded on the floor to find places where they weren't wounded and lay across their bodies so in case the torpedo did hit they wouldn't be thrown around. I could hold on to one of the uprights, but they certainly couldn't. We decided at that time, that the only place where we could take care of the men was on the mess decks. The ship had stabilized We went to the engineroom to find out what had happened, if the engines had been damaged, or, if it would be a point of moving the men to the mess decks and then having the ship go down than having them die there. We found that as far as it went that the damage had been brought under control. We evacuated the men to the mess decks. We had just that morning finished reesterilizing supplies in the

forward battle dressing station. They were still in the autoclave. When we went to the autoclave, we got as many men who could walk as possible, took them to the main dressing station and gave them supplies, it was dark and we couldn't really see what we were handling them, and they took it to main deck and piled it on the table. At that time was the first time we could evaluate the condition of the wounded. There was no question of our ability to keep records or anything at that point. We just couldn't. The only way we could tell if someone had been given morphine, when we gave it to him, we stuck a needle through an article of clothing on him. We got some gauze and hung the bottles from the lights in the mess decks. At that time it became evident that many of the men were going to require further surgery, but we established in a major hospital surgery is something that is done by three doctors, two nurses, and a support team outside, and that here we would be able to have myself and one corpsman. We obviously weren't going to do any unless it was a life or death emergency. So we went on with it and tried to stabilize the people who were in shock, giving fluids. Then I organized a couple of teams of men. At that time we still had not found out what had happened. The men were confused, they couldn't understand where was the Sixth Fleet or where was the Air Force. Someone had told us that there was an Israeli helicopter outside, and it bolstered our morale a little bit, but we tried to find out the answers to the question, "is anybody going to help us?" "Or can we get messages out?" "Does anyone know we're hit, and how badly?" At this time, sir, we had organized teams to start from one end of the mess decks, we'd gotten surgical soap and water, supplies of sterile dressings, and started cleaning the wounds again as best we could. I went up to the bridge to see the Captain. The Captain had lost a tremendous amount of blood and was showing symptoms of early shock. The men who were showing symptoms of shock, the people that we couldn't get fluids to had just overrun the medical facilities for the while. We had been giving out water, salt pills, bicarbonate soda, just to replace the fluids with anything that we could.

Now we had intravenous fluids that we were able to give them, but the Captain was showing the early symptoms. He said that he was feeling weak every time that he got up and was perspiring and was beginning to show one of the earlier signs of shock which is excessive anxiety. It's hard to think of how anxiety at that point could be described as excessive, but he had been talking about medical things that he had ascribed as a tremendous urgency to, and I just had interpreted this as a sign of shock. I told Mr. Lucas, the First Lieutenant, who was at the bridge about this and told him to be on the watch for this, dress the Captain's *ble* remove the tournaquet, and went back below. There's not really much more to tell of this, except how we should give the individual men, at that time someone had gotten a supply of brandy down to the men below and we were dispensing this to the men who were dazed or who were confused or anything, or excited. At one thirty it became obvious that Blanchard was not going to survive the night without an operation.

President: One thirty in the morning?

A. One thirty in the morning.

We went to the mess decks again, got some empty blood transfusion packs, collected two pints of blood from men who were his blood type, and took him to the wardroom to operate on him. Unfortunately, his wounds were such that any attempts were hopeless. We determined this and closed the incision. We rendered final anesthetic which the first class and I administered, but he died during the operation. Again, after that, it was just a question of finding, doing certain mechanical things for the men, getting them all cleaned, getting new dressings on, treating their pain if this was required, and awaiting the arrival of help.

Counsel for the Court: Of the many injured, was Blanchard the only one who died after an operation?

A. Blanchard was the only one that died. The Executive Officer died soon after having been brought to the mess decks but we had seen him on the main deck, and the next time I saw him on the mess decks was to

pronounce him dead.

Q. How many other operations of a major nature did you perform?

A. Only this operation and the insertion of the tube in the man's chest.

Q. How long were you on your feet before you were able to rest?

A. 28 hours.

Q. Do you have a list of the personnel who died as a result of the attack?

A. Yes sir, I do.

Counsel for the Court: Request the reporter mark this exhibit number 20.

I now offer exhibit number 20 into evidence. Will you please read this for the record?

A. The following is a list of the dead personnel. The bodies of these persons have been recovered.

LCDR. ARMSTRONG, Philip M.
SN BLANCHARD, Gary R.
QM3 BROWN, Francis (n)
CT3 HIGGINS, Alan (n)
SN HOAR, Carl
CT2 MENDLE, Anthony
ICFN SKOLAK, David
PC2 SPICHER, John C.
CMG3 THOMPSON, Alexander
CT3 THORNTON, Thomas R.
LT TOTH, Stephen S.
CT1 WALTON, Frederick J.

Q. Did you bring a list of personnel who were declared missing in action during the attack?

A. Yes sir, I did.

Counsel for the Court: Request the reporter mark the missing in action list as exhibit number 21. I now offer exhibit number 21 into evidence. Will you please read this for the record?

A. Personnel missing

CT3 William B. ALLENBAUGH
CT2 Ronnie J. CAMPBELL
CT2 Jerry L. CONVERSE
CT2 Robert B. EISENBERG
CT1 Curtis A. GRAVES
CTSN Lawrence P. HAYDEN
CT1 Warren E. HERSEY
CT2 Richard W. KEENE
CTSN James L. LENAU
CTSA David W. MARLBOROUGH
CTC Raymond E. LINN

CT3 Duane R. MARGRAF
LT James C. PIERCE
CT1 John Caleb SMITH
CTC Melvin D. SMITH
CT3 Phillippe C. TIEDTKE
CT3 Carl C. NYGREN
CPL Edward E. REHMEYER
SGT J.L. RAPER
CT3 Jerry L. GOSS
CT1 James M. LUPTON

Civilian Allen M. Blue

Counsel for the Court: Did you bring a list of the injured with you that you treated during the attack?-

A. Yes sir, I have.

Counsel for the Court: Request the reporter mark the injured list as exhibit number 22. I now offer exhibit number 22 into evidence and will you please read it?

A. Wounded Transferred

B6

Rate	Ser No.	Diagnosis
SN	796 66 15	Compound Fracture Skull
SN	913 50 66	Compound Fracture Skull
SN	997 55 71	Wound Left Eye, Left Forearm
SM2	609 22 48	Mult. Puncture wounds, Pneumonitis
CMEN	998 13 79	HEMOPNEUMOTHORAX
CM3	969 84 98	Pneumothorax
EM3	773 35 21	Perforated Bowel, Hemothorax
CTL	594 81 55	Cpd.Fx. L. Tibia and Fibula Pneumothorax
LT	671765	Penetrating wounds, back & Kidney
RM3	775 76 78	Hemopneumothorax, Post Laparotomy
SN	999 88 63	Penetrating wound back-to colon
YN3		Multiple Puncture Wounds
EFN	914 73 89	Fracture L. Tibia Remained aboard
SSGT		Flash burns face
LT		Cpd Fracture L. Femur
LCDR		Flash burns, face & eyes
EP3		Compound Fx. Radius & Ulna
CTL		Multiple Punctures, Cervical Sprain
EKS		Multiple Puncture wounds
ICI		Fracture --Forearm
SH	(Deck apt)	Multiple bullet & Shrapnel wounds
SN	"	Multiple Shrapnel wounds
SN	"	Multiple Shrapnel wounds
SN	"	Multiple Shrapnel Wounds
SN	"	Shrapnel-chest, amputated toe
SN	"	Shrapnel Neck, Fractured Mandible
SN	"	Shrapnel hand, leg
SM2	"	Shrapnel wounds, leg&Back
SN		Shrapnel, Guteal area
SM3N		Shrapnel, L. Ankle
CM3		Shrapnel, R.Flank
CM3N		Multiple Shrapnel wounds
TH		Shrapnel, Knee

Name

Rate

Ser No.

Diagnosis

B6

SN			Shrapnel, Guterol & R. Thigh
CT1			Fracture, L. Ankle
CT3			
CT3N			Multiple Shrapnel wounds
CT3			
CT1			Multiple Shrapnel wounds
CT1			Multiple Shrapnel wounds
CT2			Multiple Shrapnel wounds
CT3N			Shrapnel wounds Skull
CT3N			Multiple wounds shrapnel
CT3			Multiple shrapnel wounds
CT2			
CT2			
CT3N			Shrapnel, abdomen
CT3N			
CT3N			
CT1			
CT2			
EM3	710515/1105		Foreign bodies R.Temple, hand, L. arm
CTR	494467/1100		Puncture wounds-multiple-with F.B.
LF	625125/1610		Mult Puncture wounds-flash burns face
LE(10)			Puncture wound hand-lacerations mult contusion
CTC	471 37 37		Foreign body left wrist
EM1	298 39 72		Lacerations R. hand
EM3	355 98 33		Contusions and Abrasions--back
EM			Foreign body, 2nd digit R
LEUC	692274/1105		Lac. R. hand. Hematoma R. Flank
CTC	518 69 45		Lac. R. hand, contusion back
SM3	546 83 16		Abrasions L. calf
SH	756 43 22		Puncture wound R. shoulder
EM3	870 41 42		Mult. contusions, arms, L. Knee
EM2	549 85 64		Mult. contusions, F.B. R. hand
EM	699 53 81		Contusions L. shoulder
EM3	776 08 93		Contusions L. hand
EM3			Back strain, contusions shoulders
SH	918 44 65		Mult. lacerations hand&arms
CS3	904 30 77		Lac. L. hand
EM	779 52 59		Lacerations and contusions L. hand, burns L. arm
EMEM	998 07 12		Abrasion & contusion R. leg & calf
			Fracture Tibia
CS3	B10 42 33		Contusion L. lower leg
SA	998 70 04		Cerebral concussion
EM	B10 22 23		Abrasion R. calf
EM	290 54 06		Lac R. arm
EM	354 81 55		Contusions chest, arms, legs
EM	251 81 36		F.B. L 5 (digit (hand))
EM	917 52 08		Mult. contusions ext's
CS3	796 37 08		Mult. lac hands
EM	B10 43 15		Lac. arms (mult)
CT3N	B61 44 71		Lac, cont hands, knees, chipped R. low. can

FN	916 29 05	Contusions Legs (bil)
CTSN	B20 04 91	Burns R. Foot, Soft tissue inj.
		R. Knee
FN	796 18 83	Contusions, Knee, bil
SK2	370 92 58	Abrasions and Strain-Lower Back
MM3	998 19 47	Burns Arms
SK3	776 42 83	Contusions, R. Calf & Thigh
RD3	794 71 33	Abrasions, Lac., contusions R. Forearm
		Abrasions, Cont, R. Lat Thorax
CS2	428 92 84	Abrasions Lets, Bil & Gluteal
CT1	539 00 34	Abrasions L. Thigh
CT2	796 85 28	Low Back Strain, Lac Fingers
CT3	775 06 25	Mult. Contusions lgs, bil
CT3	795 25 54	Punct. Wd. R. Knee, Burns R. Leg
CT2	774 27 59	Thaumatic Hemarthrosis R. Knee
CTSN	777 19 71	Lac. Finger, Puncture L. Calf, Thigh, Arm
CT2	914 81 10	F.B. Thigh, Contusions R. Arm
CT1	535 78 10	Puncture R. Thigh, Contusions Buttocks
CT2	599 79 51	Lac R. Hand
CT3	918 25 70	Lac. L. Leg
CTSN	797 04 78	Lac. R. Shoulder, L. Calf
CT2	776 28 26	Lac. R. Parietal, L. Calf
CT2	778 80 00	

B6

Counsel for the Court: I have no further questions of this witness. Do any members of the court have questions of this witness?

President: Approximately how many patients during this period did you have, Doctor?

A. At nearest number, 200.

Q. 200? How many men are on the ship, Doctor?

A. I think approximately 300.

Q. Then we had two thirds casualties, one way or another?

A. Yes sir.

Captain ATKINSON: Are you a surgeon?

A. Yes, I am.

President: From this very harrowing experience that you went through, do you have any thoughts or ideas that the Navy might find useful?

A. Yes sir, I have.

Q. What are they?

A. First, when we were on the mess decks, as I said, we had placed our equipment into a single pile, and in somewhat a disorganized fashion.

When we would start a single intravenous transfusion on a person, what we would need was a bottle of intravenous solution, a supply of gauze to hang the bottle from one of the light fixtures overhead, a second set of tubing for this bottle, a needle through the man's shirt, some alcohol sponges to clean the area. This is a bottle containing a sweeter, a sterile dextrose, or sale and water which is administered intravenously. And, I think, many of these things are disposable, when they find themselves with the wrappers for them in their hands and no where to put them. One also finds with needles in hand there are some of the metal things that have been the seals that have been taken off the bottles. What I thought might be useful would be a vest sort of garment they could put on with large pockets in front with a supply of gauze, tape, needles, alcohol sponges, morphine syrettes, and a pocket in the back into which waste might be placed to enable one to more efficiently go through a large area and take care of more than one person on one trip. A second thing might be, as I put it out before, when we give an injection of morphine, about three hours later if the man was complaining of pain again, we would not know - we'd know if he had been given morphine, but we wouldn't know if he had been given it ten minutes before, and that his pain was still pain that he had because the morphine had not had a chance to be absorbed in his blood stream, or that it had been given three hours before and that his pain might just be a recurrent sort of thing, or that he had been given none and that his pain might be an early symptom of shock and at time the morphine might take away his body's protective mechanism. What I thought might be useful there would be a strip of copper with a oxidizing agent to it that could be taken off and pasted on the patient, that the mixture of copper and catalyst might be such that the copper would oxidize and thus change color from red to green in a specific amount of time, and that by then looking at the patient you would be able to tell; first, had he had morphine; second, how

long ago had he had it. A red strip would tell you give him no more, but a green strip would be the green light to tell you to go ahead and give him some. And that something of the same sort of an oxidizing copper strip might be available for use with intravenous solutions. As we did when a patient received intravenous solution, we just left the bottle hanging over him so that at a glance you could tell that the person had received one liter, three liters. If the person had received sugar, solution, salt, plasma, or blood. But, again we'd probably do well to have the period in which they had been administered those.

President: Did you have enough medical supplies?

A. Yes sir, we did.

Another thing I forgot to mention was also during the night we broke into our supply of penicillin and the first class corpsman showed one of the seaman how to dilute this with sterile water and this man prepared a supply of diluted penicillin, and again we started all the men on antibiotics, so that by the time the other doctors from the Davis, and the Surgeons from the carrier came aboard, we could tell them that all the morphine had been taken care of. Everyone who was in shock had been taken care of. All the people had been started on antibiotics as a preventative measure for addiction.

Counsel for the Court: What was the primary cause of death?

A. Primary cause of death on some men was penetrating wounds of chest and lungs which made it impossible for them to breathe. Would to the heart, contracting injury with damage to brain. On The Executive Officer, I don't really know because of the way he died. Blanchard, the man on whom we operated, had massive injuries to his liver and to his right kidney, and he just died of blood loss and shock.

Q. Did you see many burns?

A. We had a moderate number of burn injuries. None of which were major burns.

Q. Was there any substance similar to napalm causation?

A. Some persons may have been. I never inquired of anyone because again we had burns of hands, a few flash burns of face. But I didn't treated anyone that I would think of as having a napalm burn.

President: We have no further questions, Doctor. We have nothing but the highest admiration for the success which you enjoyed. It's my understanding that none of those you treated and evacuated has subsequently died. Is that correct?

A. That is true, sir.

President: This speaks volumes for your professional competence and the efficacy of your preliminary casualty treatment. Let me ask you one question here that just occurred to me. What did you do and who did you use to do it to get the dead out of the way so that they wouldn't clutter up your sick bay?

A. Well, anytime we needed one volunteer we'd get ten. That, if anything had to be done, people to be put on the stretchers, there were hands everywhere. When we asked for two pints of blood for transfusion, we had people on the adjoining tables who were saying, "if you need some, I have this type."

President: These were people already wounded?

A. These were people already wounded.

Q. What would you say about the morale ^{situation} ~~subtribution~~ on the ship during that trying period of the action and person of the Commanding Officer?

A. The Commanding Officer at that time was like a rock upon which the rest of the men supported themselves. To know that he was on the bridge grievously wounded, yet having the con and the helm and through the night calling every change of course, was the thing that told the men, "we're going to live." When I went to the bridge and I saw this, I should say that I knew that I could only insult this man by suggesting that he be taken below for treatment of his wounds. I didn't even suggest it.

Q. Although it was needed, medically?

A. Yes sir.

President: Well, Doctor, I am very proud to be wearing the same uniform that you are. Thank you very much for your most informative, professionally competent, illuminating, and very valuable statement. I'm very grateful to you.

Doctor: Thank you sir.

The witness was duly warned and withdrew.

Chief Communications Technician Harold J. Thompson, U.S. Navy, took the stand as a witness, was duly sworn, advised of his rights under Article 31, Uniform Code of Military Justice and examined as follows:

DIRECT EXAMINATION

Questions by counsel for the court:

Q. Please state your full name and rate.

A. Harold Jessie Thompson, Chief Communications Technician, U.S. Navy, USS LIBERTY AGTR-5.

Q. Do you know this Court of Inquiry has been convened to ascertain facts incident to the attack on USS LIBERTY?

A. Yes sir.

Q. Would you please tell this Court the event you recall of this attack?

A. We had just secured from general quarters drill and I had gone on main deck with petty officer HAROLD to discuss training and some of the attitudes toward training, when I heard a rocket come past and hit. At this time, I wasn't sure it was a rocket. I thought it was a shore battery, and I was either knocked down or I ducked quick. Then I got up and started running across the deck to repair two locker which is inside the forecastle. I was knocked down again, but made it inside to start breaking out the damage control equipment, getting stretcher bearers on deck, and taking stock of the situation. The attack appeared to last, I would say about 20 minutes to half an hour. Time is difficult to recall. Then I was alone and word was passed over sound powered phones to DC Central to standby for a torpedo attack. This was passed two or

three times, and I believe it was on the first time it was passed that we got hit. It seemed to take quite awhile for the torpedo to hit. The explosion wasn't too loud where we were. The deck lifted about a foot I'd say, and then we settled right away to a starboard list to about ten degrees. Although at the time it seemed a little greater. Then we were strafed at about the same time. I couldn't say whether it was before or after by the patrol boats. At first I thought it was the ammunition box over the repair locker where the ammunition had gotten hot and was exploding, then we determined that it was a strafing attack. The sound would coupled with my sighting of the torpedo boats later would indicate 50 caliber and 40 mm. There were several holes in the forecastle and the area around the repair locker. Nobody was hit inside. Later on the bridge asked for signalmen from various places on the ship. Nobody seemed to be available, so I said I couldn't read flags but I could read light. They said they didn't need me at this time and that they wanted me to stay in the repair locker. Word was passed again to standby for torpedo attack starboard side and again the word went out for signalmen. Once again I told them I could not read flags, but if I could be of service. I was asked to report to the bridge, which I did. When I got up there, signalman David was attempting to rig a hand light. I assisted him. We went to the starboard wing of the bridge and one torpedo boat was making a run straight at us off the starboard beam while the other two stood off. At the Captain's directions, David sent, "US Naval Ship" "US Naval Ship." When they were about 500 yards off, the torpedo boat turned astern and came up on the stern on the starboard side and flashed, "do you need help?"

Q. Was this before the torpedo hit?

A. This was after the torpedo hit us, and we were surprised by the attack. The Captain was giving us word. He said, "no, thank you." We sent this back to the boat, and our steering was somewhat erratic and they came up on the port side then. David went across, I followed him, and saw on the last part of that message, David said, "Do you want us to

standby?" I passed this word to the Captain. He said, "no, thank you." We sent this to the patrol boat. They came up along port side, I say roughly 100 yards off, flashed "good luck" and dropped astern along with the other two which had come up to the stern, to a mile or a mile and a half back, just about out of sight. Then they made one high speed run directly astern and somewhere between a quarter and a half mile back made a U-turn and disappeared. That was the last we saw of them. Shortly afterwards, an Israeli helicopter came, hovered off the bridge and tried to hand signal us, and dropped a note on the forecastle which was brought to the bridge. It was a card from the Naval Attache, U.S. Naval Attache in Tel Aviv, asking if we had casualties and could he come aboard. The Captain signaled to him, "Yes, we did have casualties, and no, he did not want him to come onboard." One time I forgot to mention is after the torpedo attack, before I went to the bridge, there was a pass made by an Israeli helicopter. One of the men in the repair locker stepped outside the forecastle and said it was a helicopter with a blue star on a white shield, I believe the colors are, and we determined it to be Israeli by this, I stayed on the bridge with the Captain and signalman David, who finally went below for medical assistance. We then posted a lookout and maintained a watch throughout the night. I was on the bridge off and on and on the mess decks.

Counsel for the Court: I have no further questions of this witness.

Does any member have questions of this witness?

President: Have you been to damage control school, Chief?

A. Yes sir. I went the last in-port period.

Q. How long?

A. I went to one week basic, and one week advanced.

Q. Have all of the research personnel gone to damage control school?

A. No sir. We sent a number, I can't give any figures, but people who we assigned to repair parties as their CQ station, we sent them to either fire fighting or damage control school. We have to have a damage control petty officer in research, and we have one in each watch section, sometimes

two, and these people we always send to DC school and the others when we can, to fill out the ship's quotas for fire fighting school.

Q. What was the condition of the Captain during the period you were on the bridge?

A. When I arrived on the bridge, the Captain was lying on the deck by his chair on the port wing of the bridge with his *Ble* applying a tourniquet. It seemed to me a *Ble* He was perfectly rational, in command. He asked for the Executive Officer to report to the bridge and was told the XO was wounded, and he said, or indicated that he got the message. The Captain stayed on the bridge all night and propped himself in his chair. He'd get up periodically to insure circulation.

President: Thank you very much, Chief, I certainly appreciate your kindness.

Chief Thompson: Thank you very much, sir.

The witness was duly warned and withdrew.

Carl Francis LAMKIN, CTC, USN, took the stand as a witness, was duly sworn, warned of Article 31, under the Uniform Code of Military Justice and testified as follows:

DIRECT EXAMINATION

Questions by counsel for the court:

Q. States your name, rank, organization and place of duty?

A. Carl Francis LAMKIN, CTC, USN

Q. You are aware Chief that this Court of Inquiry has been convened to ascertain the facts concerning the attack on the USS LIBERTY on 8 June 1967. Would you please relate what took place on that day?

A. Yes, sir, I was secured from GQ drill shortly before the attack and at the time of the attack I was in the disbursing office, I noticed the initial shock and immediately headed for my GQ station which is repair three. As I was going to my GQ station the word was passed that we were being attacked by aircraft. Upon arriving to my GQ station I immediately started dispensing the gear, settling the men down.

Q. Your GQ station is where?

A. Repair Three. After there we got together. We had the men lay low on the deck, you could hear the strafing. At this time the word was passed that they had a fire in shaft alley and I took approximately four men and went down to shaft alley. The fire in shaft alley was under control in a matter of minutes. When I came back up they were calling for stretcher bearers and the men were dispensed for that. At this time they said they had a fire on the bridge in the motor whale boat and they were calling for assistance. I took repair three alpha plus some other men that were there and headed for the motor whale boat. As I was up on deck, portside by the U boat I was knocked down by some sort of explosion. I got up and went up and the men were already fighting the fire in the whale boat. It was pretty well destroyed at the time. As I was standing there we were strafed again and one of the men to my left fell. I don't remember his identity, he was picked up and drug inside. I turned to run forward when I came across the body of Mr. Toth who was pretty well messed up. I remember getting kind of sick at my stomach for a second or so. At this time I remember they had the fire pretty well under control. I went back down to my GQ which is repair three. I don't remember any of the time lapse during that time but I do remember them announcing to prepare for a torpedo attack starboard side. I told the men to brace themselves, to lay down on the deck if at all possible. The torpedo hit, it seemed like it was quite a while before the torpedo actually hit and the time we were told to prepare ourselves. The torpedo hit, there

was an explosion, immediate smoke and immediate list. Again we sent parties forward to investigate the resulting damage, so on and so forth, and any assistance that was needed. At this time I went back up, I was going to radio central I asked the men there if any kind of message had gotten out and they said it had. I asked them if they had means of communication there and they said they hadn't a voice transmitter they could key there in the blind. They weren't keying it at the time. I told them to keep keying it in the blind as often as possible. They immediately did so. From this time on I just spent most of my time from repair three and the radio transmitter room. There was quite a time lapse, I don't remember exactly how long. The thing I do remember is I started out the door and I could hear the motor torpedo boats or at least one of them to our port side. I looked out, but all I could see was the top of it. I immediately came back in and told the men to hit the deck. There was no firing or anything like this which surprised me, because at the time I figured they were just coming in to finish us off. Again, I say I don't remember the time lapse, but I was in there quite awhile when I heard aircraft. They first announced that an aircraft was coming in our area. I told all men to stay inside and keep low.

Q. How did your men react to this?

A. The men reacted fantastic as far as I'm concerned in the repair party. We had men that had never had experience before. There was one occasion where a man panicked on me, he started crying and screaming. I gave him a hit, and he came out of it. I remember seeing one boy throwing up. He had evidently seen one of the bodies that they had brought down. Other than that the response was excellent. There seemed to be naturally the fear that you would expect, but no panic.

Counsel for the Court: Very good, are there any questions from members of the Court?

President: What can you tell me with a little more detail, chief, about this keying the transmitter? Who was in there in charge?

A. I can't remember his name sir, our second class radioman. I'm sorry, I can't think of his name. I remember the man explicitly, he was in there, there was a couple of radiomen in there, there was also an ET in there, working with the different transmitters. They told me they had them transmitting and a message had gotten out. The ET was doing everything possible checking the various transmitters. They only had one that was capable of transmitting voice at that time. I did tell them to keep keying it regardless. Each time he was keying it he noted that he was keying in the blind.

Q. But no receivers?

A. Yes sir, no receivers. He did keep trying it continuously.

Q. What was he transmitting?

A. The exact words, I can't remember but he was transmitting, I don't remember the call, he was transmitting that we were under attack, we had been attacked by aircraft, we had sustained a torpedo hit, and the list I believe of the ship. Counsel for the Court: Did you hear any reports of the possible jamming of the transmitter?

A. Yes, sir I did. I heard this later from Radioman Chief SMITH. He said that definitely that he had notice that the jamming was so loud that, the jamming was so loud that he thought at first that it was our transmitters which were malfunctioning but he noted, regardless of frequency, this loud jamming noise. At that time we weren't aware of what they were transmitting at radio central. This is one reason I stressed the fact that the men keep transmitting. Mr. Feingersen: Do you know Chief what circuit they were trying to transmit on, which net they were on?

A. No sir I don't, all I know is that it was voice transmission and I really couldn't say. I did ask them if they had receiving capability and they said no they were transmitting in the blind.

President: What repair party has the responsibility of buttoning up up there in the research spaces?

A. The research spaces up forward, I believe that is repair two sir, But at this time there were men dispensed all over. I had repair three men up there, also repair three alpha, which is an assist party. They were dispensed. We were also fighting this fire.

President: What outfit was up there after the torpedo hit? Would that have been repair two?

A. We dispensed repair three then, immediately, I was trying to think because right after we sustained the hit, I believe it was petty officer Neece, which is one of damage control petty officers. I have two damage control petty officers, petty officer Neece and Smith, and to my recollection it was Neece who grabbed the men and went up there.

President: Thank you very very much. We certainly appreciate your kindness.

The next witness will be Chief Wayne Smith.

Chief Wayne Smith, United States Navy, took the stand as a witness, was duly sworn, advised of his rights under Article 31, Uniform Code of Military Justice and examined as follows:

DIRECT EXAMINATION

Counsel for the Court: State your name, rate, and present duty station.

A. Wayne L. Smith, RMC, duty station aboard the USS LIBERTY.

Q. Chief Smith, as you know, this Court of Inquiry is investigating the circumstances of the attack on the USS LIBERTY on 8 June 1967. Will you please tell this Court the facts that you recall on that date?

A. Yes sir. On that date at approximately 1400 local time, we had heard a loud blast. I was in radio central at the time with my second class who was on watch at the time. We immediately set Zulu and closed the porthole covers, and as soon as we had gotten them closed, the second blast sounded and the word was passed on the LMC to pass over hicom that we were being attacked, to any station. I immediately picked up the hicom transmitter which was on UIC 32, auxillary radio. We started to transmit with it. No station heard us, and five minutes or so later the transmitter was reported to have blown out. I immediately switched to a work two transmitter in the transmitter room, and we couldn't get out on that either, so, in between attacks by this time, I had went down to transmitter room and I found or discovered that somebody had accidentally knocked the frequency dial one KC off. I corrected this and ran back to the radio shack and we got hold of stations schematics on which we passed the attack message. We did authenticate, and he authenticated correctly because he got a roger for it, my second class. Immediately after that, after we passed the word on the bridge that the message had got out, we had a power failure. After the power failure, I discovered that my control lines, remote lines were disconnected or in some way inoperable, so we passed control on the transmitter direct, but we still maintained a receiver on hicom. From that time on we passed all our traffic from the transmitter room and at 1227 they took control.

010001

Counsel for the Court: Did you have occasion to see the national colors flying?

A. Yes sir. At the time I ran out of the radio central space to the transmitter room.

Q. What time was this?

A. I would say about 1225, this was about two minutes either way. And this was Zulu time because I'm basing it on the log here. I had occasion to look at it because I was under the impression we were being attacked by VAR, and I wanted to see, and by the time that report came down to us from the bridge that they were Isralites, I wanted to check myself personally to see if our flag was flying because I couldn't understand it. For some reason I saw the flag flying at that time. If this was the original flag or not, I do not know sir.

Counsel for the Court: I ask you if you have with you today in your custody the radio log for the 8th of June 1967 for the USS LIBERTY?

A. Yes sir, I do. I have the original log from 1227Z on, and I have the smooth log covering the total time at 1158Z. At this time, from 1158Z to 1227Z, it is a reconstruction and we did not keep a log in radio central.

Counsel for the Court: Request the recorder mark the original radio log exhibit number 23, and the smooth log exhibit number 24. I now request that they be admitted into evidence and request you read the pertinent times to the Court.

A. In our log 0430Z was the last entry, on hicom log. At 1158Z is when we started to call any station, this is ROCK STAR. We passed a Zulu precedence to this message. At 1200Z ROCK STAR was called by schematic saying "you are garbled". "Say again". We repeated three times to them that we were under attack. At 1204Z we had to switch transmitters. We called at 1208Z schematic and repeated three times that we were under attack. Immediately after 1208Z, still in the same minute, they rogered for the message. At 1209Z we repeated again we are under attack and this time we added "we need immediate assistance". At this time schematic asked ROCK STAR for authentication, at which time we gave them the correct

authentication. At 1214Z they rogered that. About 1217Z we called schematic again saying "be advised that we have been hit by torpedo, listing about 9 degrees, request immediate assistance". At 1220Z this message was received and rogered for. At 1224Z three unidentified aircraft approached the ship. We told this to schematic. At 1227Z they rogered for that message and that's when we had our power failure. We immediately shifted to the transmitter room.

Assistant Counsel for the Court: Which hicom?

A. E4.4.

Q. You're sure chief - the CINCUSNAVEUR hicom net - E4.4?

A. Yes sir. E4.4.

At 1233Z we had placed the emergency destruction bill in effect and I took it upon myself, not having any communications with the bridge, to hold emergency destruction. I only started emergency destruction on phase 1 and phase 2, which does not include unclassified matter. It only included RPS material that I had on hand. Well, we started to burn, and then the word came down from the bridge, finally, that there was never any order given to do this, so I had them halt and replaced all the ashes and the foreign material in the weighted bags.

Q. Did you throw anything over the side?

A. No sir. Nothing was thrown over the side. I have everything that we had up there. From 1233Z until 1323Z no signals were sent or received via hicom. All the traffic that we wanted to get out was out by the time the attack was over. At 1355 power was restored, passed down from radio central that the phone was inoperable and we shifted the control to transmitter room complete. By this I mean we had the receiver earlier. We gave them the receiver too.

Q. Did you note any jamming on the hicom circuit?

A. Yes sir. We did have jamming in my estimation. I was unable to determine this exactly, but every time it seems when an attack was made on us, or a strafing run, it was preceded by, anywhere from 25 to 30 seconds, carrier on our hicom circuit, and I had ascertained to check

this by calling the transmitter room and they said that they had not keyed the transmitter. This prevailed during the attack and quite a bit after the attack, intermittently.

Assistant Counsel for the Court: Chief, can you tell me ordinarily what circuits are you normally up on?

A. We're normally up on hicom, and we carry 500KCS receive only for distress and our 243.0 and 121.5 distress. On this occasion we had 339.4 set up, which, I'm not sure what frequency it is but it's a COMSIXTHFLT frequency.

Q. This is in addition to the hicom?

A. This is in addition to the hicom, yes. And we did have 277.8 fleet common up at the time.

Q. How do you normally handle your ship-shore traffic that's classified?

A. All traffic went out from down below except those they couldn't get on regular skeds. In which case they would off-line and we would send them out CW and this was no schedule, this was just on a case basis.

Q. The ship's general communication spaces doesn't have on-line capability?

A. No sir, they pass all traffic from down below on these circuits.

Q. What do you mean by down below?

A. I mean crypto one and crypto two. They had the equipment.

Q. I assume you copy fleet broadcasts in your spaces?

A. No sir, we do not. They copy fleet broadcasts down below.

Q. Do you know when the ship shifted from KR to JR?

A. This I have no knowledge of at all.

Q. You said that at the time 1204, I understood you said that prior to that time you had transmitted an attack report to schematic?

A. Yes sir.

Q. Did they acknowledge?

A. I am not able to say right now.

Q. And you said that you did not authenticate under initial transmission?

DECLASSIFIED

A. No sir, we did not.

Q. Authentication took place at time 1214?

A. That's when they rogered for it, yes sir. We authenticated at 1209.

Q. Were you challenged?

A. Yes sir, we were challenged by schematic.

Q. And at 1214 they rogered for your authentication?

A. Yes sir. The first rogered transmission was at time 1208 and the first rogered authenticated transmission was at time 1214 on the CINCUSNAVEUR hicom net between LIBERTY and schematic -- CTU 60.2.9.

Counsel for the Court: As Counsel for the Court, I hereby submit exhibit number 25, which is a statement by Captain R. L. Arthur, Sixth Fleet Maintenance Officer. I now offer it into evidence and will read it.

" 1. A preliminary estimate of the time required to make permanent shell repairs and repairs to necessary associated interior strength members is two to three weeks.

2. A firm estimate will require a detailed survey, not expected to commence until 15 June."

THIRD DAY

Let the record show that the Court reconvened at 0820 on 15 June 1967, and the first witness having already been sworn and duly warned will be Eugene Aiken Platzek. Commander would you be kind enough to state your name, rank, and duty station.

A. Eugene Aiken Platzek, Commander, United States Navy, 433313. Counsel for the Court: Commander this Court is convened to look into the prior circumstances and aftermath matters related to the incident involving the USS LIBERTY on 8 June 1967. It is the Court's understanding that you arrived at the scene in Malta in a technical capacity. If that is correct, will you tell the Court the capacity in which you are currently on board?

A. I'm currently on board as the representative of the Director of the Naval Security Group, OP946, and I am part of the Task Force 100, designated as 100.4, under Captain Carl M. Smith.

President: Commander, the first question this morning, we will handle separately and introduce this part of your evidence into the medical portion of the report. In order to provide a record that is not disjointed, we will introduce you a second time, formally, and place that testimony in the material side if this is agreeable with you?

A. This is agreeable.

Q. The first and only question, then, relative to the medical side has to do with your personal continuing participation in the recovery of those in compartments which were flooded by the torpedo explosion and the question goes like this -- You were in the space the whole time assisting in the recovery of the remains. This was from my personal observation. From these remains recovered by you what in your judgment was the possibility of any of those remains having been alive after the initial torpedo explosion?

A. There was no possibility of any being alive after the initial torpedo explosion.