

The court opened at 1347 hours, 13 April 1963.

All persons connected with the court who were present when the court recessed were again present in court.

Bl relieved *Bl* as reported at this point.

Bl Lieutenant (junior grade), U. S. Navy, was called as a witness for the court, was duly sworn, was warned of his rights under Article Uniform Code of Military Justice, was informed of the subject matter of the inquiry and examined as follows:

DIRECT EXAMINATION

Questions by counsel for the court:

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

A. *Bl*, lieutenant (junior grade), Navigator and First Lieutenant on the USS SKYLARK, the ASR-20.

Q. Lieutenant (junior grade), United States Navy.

A. United States Navy.

Q. Directing your attention to the morning of 10 April 1963, you were then stationed on the SKYLARK?

A. Yes, sir.

Q. And on that morning the SKYLARK was proceeding in company with another ship?

A. Yes, sir.

Q. Please state the circumstances?

A. We were proceeding from an area where the USS THRESHER completed her shallow dives to an area where she was going to make her test dive, deep test, and on arrival on station we established communication and she proceeded.

Q. By 0800 on the morning of the 10th, where was your initial position?

A. We were located at the initial test position at 41.47 North and 65.01 West.

Q. And where was THRESHER with relation to you?

A. The last communication we had, a range test that she had with us, bearing 147 at 3400 yards.

Q. And your base course and speed, Lieutenant?

A. Base course and speed at that time was I believe, 270.

Q. This was around 0800 in the morning, local time?

A. At 0801 our base course was 270.

Q. And speed?

A. At two and a half knots. We were using RPM's to maintain steerageway

Q. Now was this the course and speed of SKYLARK only, or of THRESHER also?

A. This was only SKYLARK's course and speed.

Q. And what do you know of THRESHER's course and speed at about that time?

A. We were given no indication as to her actual speed. We can only theorize as to what it might be.

Q. And her course?

A. Her course was in a southerly direction.

Q. Where were you in SKYLARK at that time?

A. I was in the pilot house at the chart desk.

Q. And at 0800 who was operating the UQC, the underwater telephone equipment?

A. Boatswain's Mate Third Class *By* sir.

Q. And who was recording the transmissions and the messages received on the UQC?

A. Radioman third class *By*.

Q. Now had there been good communications between SKYLARK and THRESHER by way of the UQC prior to this time?

A. Yes, sir.

Q. Was THRESHER on the surface at 0800?

A. No, sir, she was at periscope depth.

Q. You could see her?

A. Yes, we held her on radar for several -- well, for a considerable period of time before she submerged.

Q. She remained at periscope depth, then, until her dive?

A. Yes, sir.

Q. Until she commenced performance of her deep dive?

A. Yes, sir.

Q. Do you have the official UQC log of the SKYLARK in your possession?

A. Yes, sir, I have it in front of me.

Q. Produce it. Is this it?

A. Yes, sir.

COUNSEL: I offer the log to the court for the purpose of introducing it in evidence.

REPORTER: This will be Exhibit 16.

The log (Exhibit 16) was submitted to the court and was offered in evidence by counsel for the court for the purpose of introducing it into evidence.

There being no objection, it was received in evidence.

Q. Does this log, Exhibit 16, contain entries for the 9th and 10th of April of this year?

A. Yes, sir.

Q. Now, before referring to the log, you have told us of your position at that time -- of the ship's position at that time. Do you have the official navigational chart and track of SKYLARK?

A. No, sir, I don't. It's being prepared and submitted from the ship at a later date.

Q. Directing your attention, then, to the morning of 10 April, at about eight o'clock, was there a clock located on the bridge of the ship?

A. Yes, sir, it was to the left and above the chart desk.

Q. Can you tell us whether that clock had been reset recently to the correct time -- recently with relation to that morning I mean?

A. Yes, sir, it had been. This is a daily morning routine performed by the Quartermaster. He goes into the radio shack with a comparing watch that has a proven rate and gets a time fix, comes up and compares it, resets the clock, and shortly afterwards he will give the motor room and engineering spaces the time-data so that they can reset their clocks in accordance with what he has in hand.

Q. Do you recall what the error was at the time of reset of the clock on the morning of 10 April?

A. No, sir.

Q. Was it a good clock; did you have trouble with it?

A. Never have had any trouble with it.

Q. You're satisfied, then, as to its accuracy on the morning in question?

A. Yes, sir.

Q. Now, if you will refer to Exhibit 16 and to the entries for the 10th of April, starting at roughly about a quarter of eight or eight o'clock, what ever the first entry in that scope is there -- I note that the log contains a "Time of Entries"; how were times logged for the entries in that log?

A. In most cases they are logged as to the nearest minute. In some cases there are multiple entries made on the minute or within a few seconds after the minute.

Q. Now referring to the log at the time of about 0745, quarter of eight in the morning on the 10th of April, what was the last carefully fixed position of THRESHER which is recorded there?

A. In relation to SKYLARK, at 0745 the THRESHER held us bearing 147 at 3400 yards.

Q. Do you know her course and speed at that time?

A. No, sir, we had no indication as to her course at that particular time. We did get the course information from her after this time.

Q. It was generally southerly, you have already testified; is that correct?

A. Yes, sir.

Q. Then at 0800 does the log reflect that she notified you of her course?

A. Yes, at 0800 she informed us that her course was 180.

Q. What was the purpose of your being in company with her at about this time in the morning?

A. We were standing by her while she was conducting her test dive.

Q. Now I direct your attention to an entry for 0747 on that day. Did you receive a message from her over the underwater telephone which was logged?

A. Yes, sir.

Q. What was the message?

A. At 0747 she informed us she was starting her deep dive.

Q. Starting her deep dive?

A. Yes, sir.

Q. And at the time of receipt of this message she was at periscope depth?
A. Yes, sir.

Q. How often did you communicate with her while she was doing her deep dive? Or let me put the question another way if that's difficult. Did you request GERTRUDE checks?

A. Yes, sir, we requested GERTRUDE checks every fifteen minutes.

Q. Now that GERTRUDE is spelled like the girl's name GERTRUDE?

A. Yes, sir.

Q. What does it mean?

A. It's an underwater telephone.

Q. And a GERTRUDE check means that she was to communicate with you every fifteen minutes; is that right?

A. This is correct.

Q. Or more frequently.

A. Yes, sir.

Q. Now what was the next communication between THRESHER and SKYLARK which followed that?

A. After the GERTRUDE check?

Q. After she notified you at 0747 that she was commencing her deep dive?

A. The next communication we had from THRESHER was at 0749, when she informed us that it was O. K. to maneuver as long as we remained in present position.

Q. And the communication after that?

A. This communication was passed at 0750. The communication was we requested a GERTRUDE check every fifteen minutes.

Q. And following that, a 0752 entry?

A. Yes, sir, she informed us that she was at 400 feet checking for leaks.

Q. What time?

A. 0752, sir.

PRESIDENT: Counsel, you should caution the witness that if one of your questions requires an answer that would be classified, he should so inform us rather than answer it giving classified information. We are getting into depths now.

Q. I have already given you that warning, have I not?

A. Yes, sir.

Q. And you have it firmly in mind?

A. Yes, sir.

Q. You were experiencing no trouble with communications between her and you?

A. No, sir.

Q. Now the next entry is at 0754, is it not?

A. Yes, sir. The THRESHER informed us at this time that any future reference to her depth would be her test depth.

Q. And the next transmission, please?

A. The next transmission THRESHER informed us that her course was 180.

Q. And the time for that?

A. At 0800.

Q. Now you made a reply to her on the UQC, did you not?

A. Yes, sir, we gave them a ROGER, which means we acknowledged her transmission.

Q. And then at 0801?

A. This was the time that we had given them the ROGER. We also told them at the same time that our course was 270.

Q. Now courses which are logged in degrees are logged in degrees True, are they not?

A. Yes, sir.

Q. What was the relative position of the two vessels to each other then if you know? Were you to the north and west of them?

A. We assumed that this was our relative position, that we were to the north and they were to the south.

Q. And you would have them then on--

A. Probably on the starboard quarter.

Q. Now what was the next message received from them?

A. The next message received was at 0809. THRESHER informed us that she was proceeding to one-half test depth.

Q. To one-half...?

A. Proceeding-- oh, I'm sorry, proceeding one-half test depth.

Q. Now I believe that---

PRESIDENT: The court at this time reminds both the counsel and the witness that we must avoid disclosing classified information.

COUNSEL: May I request the court be cleared, sir.

PRESIDENT: Clear the court.

The witness was warned not to discuss his testimony with anyone during the time the court was closed.

The court closed at 1405 hours, 13 April 1963.

The court opened at 1413 hours, 13 April 1963.

All persons connected with the court who were present when the court closed were again present in court.

The witness was reminded that the oath he had previously taken was still binding.

Questions by counsel for the court:

UNCLASSIFIED

Q. The reason we called for a clearing of the court was your reply to the last question, reading from the book, did not seem comprehensible to the court. If you will look at the 0809 entry and read it just as it is written there, I believe you will correct the impression made by a misreading.

A. 0809 - THRESHER informed us "Am proceeding one-half set distance."

Questions by the president:

Q. Set distance?

A. Yes, sir.

Q. Not one-half test depth?

A. No, sir.

Q. Look carefully, now, what we want is what's in the log, not an approximation of it?

A. Yes, sir. Well this is exactly what's in the log, "one-half set distance."

PRESIDENT: All right, that's a different story.

Questions by counsel for the court:

Q. Now the 0835 entry can be read exactly as it is in the log. Please read it to us?

A. 0835 - THRESHER informed us, "Proceeding to test depth minus three hundred feet."

Q. And at 0853?

A. 0853? THRESHER informed us, "Proceeding to test depth."

Q. Now you communicated with THRESHER at 0902?

A. Yes, sir.

Q. What was that communication and his response to it?

A. At 0902 we communicated with the THRESHER and we informed her that our course was 090.

Q. And his response?

A. And he asked us to repeat the course, or, "Say again," were his exact words.

Q. But communications between you were still --

A. Were still good.

Q. Then there is an 0912 entry, is there?

A. Yes, sir.

Q. Please read that?

A. She asked us for a GERTRUDE check at this time.

Q. And you gave it?

A. We came back with a KILO, which means, "Go ahead and transmit," and she came back with a KILO to us.

Q. KILO, K-I-L-O?

A. Yes.

Q. Did you have a bathythermograph reading to establish the gradient of the water?

A. No, sir, we have no bathythermograph aboard.

UNCLASSIFIED

Q. Had THRESHER told you what the thermal conditions were?
A. No, sir.

Q. Well can you describe what the weather conditions were between then and the time your narrative commenced, at 0745?

A. Well the wind was from the northwest about 300 degrees at approximately fifteen knots. The sea state, a little over one. And the sky was over I believe that sums it up.

Q. Now at 0912 when THRESHER asked SKYLARK for a GERTRUDE check and SKYLARK transmitted it, did THRESHER "ROGER" for a receipt of that?

A. At the 0912?

Q. Yes

A. No, sir.

Questions by the President:

Q. I thought that you gave a KILO and that THRESHER responded?

A. She responded with a KILO, yes, sir.

PRESIDENT: Please be accurate in what you tell us. Don't say one thing if you mean another.

WITNESS: Yes, sir. I thought he was looking for a specific "ROGER" for the message.

PRESIDENT: Please be more concise in your questions, counsel.

Questions by the counsel for the court:

Q. Well she acknowledged receipt of your transmission?

A. Yes, sir.

Q. And the time of her acknowledgment of the receipt was what?

A. 0912 plus about ten seconds.

Q. Now we are coming to a very critical point timewise.

A. Yes, sir.

Q. First, what happened after you received acknowledgement of your transmission?

A. We received a transmission from THRESHER stating: "Have positive up angle. Attempting to blow up."

Q. There is no time entry for that particular entry, is there?

A. No, sir.

Q. But you heard those words yourself, did you?

A. Yes, sir.

Q. And your best estimate of how soon after 0912, when the word KILO was heard, was how long?

A. Well due to the ensuing communications between 0912 and this communication, I would have to estimate it approximately one minute.

Questions by the President:

UNCLASSIFIED

Q. So your best estimate of the time when the THRESHER advised that she had positive up angle was 9:13?

A. Yes, sir.

Q. That's your best estimate, but it's only an estimate?

A. Yes, sir.

PRESIDENT: Proceed, Counsel.

Questions by counsel for the court:

Q. The phrase, "attempting to blow up." Will you explain what that means in normal naval parlance?

A. Well it means that the submarine would close its vents and through the air manifold system would blow air into the tanks which would clear them of water and normally bring them to the surface.

Q. Following your hearing of that message, did you hear any other sound over the UQC equipment?

A. Yes, sir. We could hear what sounded like definite air being blown, or air under pressure.

Q. You said, "We could hear;" who could hear that at that time?

A. There was the commanding officer, myself, and the two enlisted men.

Q. And what happened at that point?

A. At 0914 we told the THRESHER, "No contacts in area," and otherwise that it was clear for her to surface.

Q. What happened next after you sent that message?

A. At 0915 we requested her course and range and bearing from us. The exact statement is: "My course is 270. Interrogatory range and bearing from you."

Q. You told him your course?

A. Yes, sir.

Q. Now had you received any reply to your transmission of 0914?

A. No, sir.

Q. Did the commanding officer take some action upon the receipt of that message?

A. On the receipt of the message that she was attempting to blow up, he took the microphone and started communicating himself with the THRESHER.

Q. Then the 0915 transmission to him was made by the Commanding Officer of SKYLARK direct on the UQC equipment?

A. Yes.

Q. Was there an answer to that received from THRESHER?

A. No, sir. When he received no answer he commenced calling the THRESHER asking, "Are you in control?" And he repeated this question at least four times to my knowledge and received no answer.

Q. Now at this time, 0915, did the SKYLARK hold her course and speed?

A. Yes, sir.

Q. What was her speed at that time?

A. It was the same as before, two and a half knots.

Q. You had been on that speed for some time?

A. Yes, sir.

Q. While you had been proceeding at that speed, had THRESHER stayed within GERTRUDE range at all times previously?

A. Yes, sir.

Q. What does that indicate with respect to her speed?

A. It would indicate that her speed was slow but that she was opening to the south from us.

Q. Now at 0915 you said the commanding officer himself manned the UQC equipment and sent inquiries to THRESHER?

A. Yes, sir.

Q. While he was transmitting at that time could he hear any sounds coming from THRESHER, or could you?

A. No, sir.

Q. Why is that? Do you have an explanation for that during the transmission?

A. Well normally during the transmission phase of UQC it blanks out all other sounds, and there's a short period after the transmission has gone out that this sound will still be blanked out due to the time it takes the signal to get down and get back.

Q. You said you heard "blowing" sounds?

A. Yes, sir.

Q. For how long a duration did those sounds continue within your hearing?

A. I would say not over three to four seconds that we could hear.

Q. But part of the interim period was taken up with transmissions out-bound from SKYLARK?

A. Yes, sir.

Q. What was the next thing you heard?

A. At 0917 we received a garbled message and we can only assume that it was at the tail end of one of our outgoing transmissions. Most of the message was blotted out but the two words that the commanding officer and myself caught that were clearly understood were, "test depth." There was something preceding it but we couldn't tell what it was.

Q. Something preceding it and then the two words, "test depth"?

A. Yes, sir.

Q. You heard that yourself?

A. Yes, sir.

Q. And there is no question in your mind about those two words?

A. No sir.

Q. How much of a garble preceded those two words in time span -- short, long?

A. Well it was rather short.

Q. The English language has a very distinct cadence to it. Can you make any judgment as to how many words might have preceded -- of course, it depends on the rhythm, but from the rhythm of it -- how many words preceded "test depth" that were garbled?

A. I would say not over two or three.

UNCLASSIFIED

Q. Now you say you heard the words "test depth" clearly?

A. Yes, sir.

Q. Did the commanding officer, who was on the equipment, say that he heard them too?

A. Yes, sir.

Q. Did he hear any more than that?

A. Both of us, shortly after that, heard a sound that registered with me as being familiar because of the fact that I had heard a lot of ships breaking up during World War II after having been torpedoed at depths. It sounded as though there was a compartment collapsing or something similar to that nature.

Q. Did you hear anything in addition to the sound which you identified as similar to a compartment breaking?

A. No, sir.

Q. Can you describe that sound to the court?

A. It is a rather muted, dull thud.

Q. Did the commanding officer indicate that he heard that?

A. Yes, sir.

Q. Was he able to form an opinion as to the source of the sound?

A. Both of us discussed it very shortly after and we agreed that it sounded similar to a breaking up noise.

Q. Now who was doing the recording in the UQC log of the times and entries during the critical period that you have covered in your testimony?

A. A Radioman Third Class named *BW*

Q. Is he known to you to be a reliable man?

A. Yes, sir.

Q. Would your previous knowledge of him lead you to have confidence in the accuracy of the times which he recorded?

A. Yes, sir.

Q. After hearing the sounds which followed the last transmission from THRESHER, what did SKYLARK do next?

A. Asked for a radio check with the possibility that he might have gone outside of GERTRUDE range and possibly put his periscope up or his radio antenna

Q. But did you keep steaming?

A. Yes, sir.

Q. Did you change your speed?

A. We stopped eventually and secured our fathometer and our sonar equipment so that we could hear better, and continued to try to communicate with the THRESHER.

Q. You made every effort to listen on the UQC?

A. Yes, sir.

Q. What was the setting on the volume control of the receiver on the UQC?

A. It was set as high as we could go without getting a lot of background squealing on it, which was almost maximum.

UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

Q. What did you hear?

A. Nothing.

Q. Now at 0931 did you take some further action?

A. At 0931 the commanding officer directed, and we conformed to his direction by requesting from THRESHER a radio check every sixty seconds.

Q. What was the purpose of that?

A. If she had gone out of GERTRUDE range and had put her antenna up, we would have been able to communicate with her.

Q. And did you continue with your GERTRUDE checks?

A. Yes, sir. GERTRUDE checks were made also every minute thereafter.

Q. What was your next action?

A. The next action that we took was at 1006, we asked THRESHER on GERTRUDE -- I'm sorry -- by radio: "QUEBEC, QUEBEC, QUEBEC."

Q. That's QUEBEC - Q-U-E-B-E-C

A. That's it, yes, sir.

Q. What is the meaning of sending a QUEBEC?

A. Well we asked her to indicate her position by any means possible.

Q. And was there any indication of her position subsequent to that made by her?

A. No sir.

Q. Were there any other significant noises heard by you on the UQC equipment?

A. No sir, just normal background noises.

Q. Then at 1058 you took your next action, did you not?

A. At 1058 we commenced dropping patterns of three hand grenades at intervals of about ten to fifteen minutes.

Q. What was the purpose of this?

A. The purpose of this was to alert the THRESHER that we were trying to communicate with her and that she should surface if possible.

Q. And was there any response from THRESHER?

A. None.

Q. Following that, what action did you take? At about 1100?

A. At 1100 we sent a communication on the radio telephone, the underwater telephone I should say, directing THRESHER to "Indicate your position or prepare to surface. Acknowledge within ten minutes or I will initiate SUBMISS."

Q. And that was at 1129?

A. At 1129 we sent a communication on the underwater telephone that: "We have initiated SUBMISS. Indicate your position."

Q. At 1100 you said you would, is that it?

A. Yes, sir.

Q. Did you sight an oil slick at that time?

A. No, sir, the oil slick was sighted later on in the day by the USS RECOVERY, an ARS.

Declassified by CNO ltr 5511.2/ 46
RPS/cmap Ser 09N2/9U527064 of
16 Feb 89

UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

Q. Now at any time during the operations with THRESHER prior to that, prior to this incident, did you hear machinery noises on your UQC or on your sonar, emanating from her?

A. Nothing that could be identified as machinery noises.

Q. Now you testified that your duties on board the SKYLARK included your office as Navigator, right?

A. Yes, sir.

Q. What was your position reference for the operation on which you based your reports?

A. The THRESHER's position in relation to us? The last position we had was her bearing and range of 147, 3400 yards from us.

Q. And how did you establish your position?

A. We established our position by LORAN.

Q. Can you go into some greater detail?

A. Well we have a LORAN DAS-4 Model, and we have two well established LORAN lines in the area and were getting excellent fixes from the LORAN.

Q. You would estimate then that your position was known with accuracy?

A. Yes, sir.

Q. Did the position of the oil slick sighted by RECOVERY, to which you have alluded, correspond with a reasonably postulated position for THRESHER?

A. Yes, sir.

Q. Where was the position of that oil slick?

A. It was about 7,000 yards to the southeast of the original position.

Q. What do you mean by the original position?

A. Well the position at which it commenced the test dive.

Q. And, paying particular attention to that time and the time when the oil slick was reported, what was the direction of wind and current?

A. The current, normally, according to pilot charts and books was indicated by our track was to the southwest at about four-tenths of a knot. The wind was blowing from about 300 at about 15 knots. And the oil slick tended in the downwind direction of the wind.

Q. Again this 300 is true?

A. Yes, sir.

Q. Now at 1129 you sent a message -- you made a transmission at that time?

A. Yes, sir.

Q. What was that?

A. "Have initiated SUBMISS. Indicate your position."

Q. Was there any reply to that transmission from THRESHER?

A. None.

Q. You received no reply?

A. No, sir.

UNCLASSIFIED

Q. Describe the operations of the SKYLARK thereafter?

A. We continued dropping grenades at intervals, and we continued checking with the GERTRUDE, and also with the radio, trying to get some sort of communication from her, and this continued on up until quite late in the evening as far as the grenades were concerned.

Q. And in the evening did you rendezvous with the USS RECOVERY?

A. We rendezvoused with her at about 1738, I believe it was, at which time she was sitting in the center of the oil slick.

Q. You saw the oil slick yourself?

A. Yes, sir, I have pictures of it.

Q. How were those pictures taken?

A. They were taken with a Polaroid camera, and at the time we had bright sunlight. One picture turned out very well. The other is rather bright due to the sunlight showing up off the water.

Q. If you have those prints, produce them.

A. (The witness did so.)

Q. These are they?

A. These are the pictures.

COUNSEL: I offer them to the court for the purpose of introducing them into evidence.

REPORTER: These will be Exhibits 17 and 18.

The photographs (Exhibits 17 and 18) were submitted to the court and were offered in evidence by counsel for the court for the purpose of introducing them into evidence.

WITNESS: The dark areas on the pictures are the actual clear water that was seen.

There being no objection, they were received in evidence.

PRESIDENT: I might add, for the benefit of the press in the room, that when we introduce these into the record they are not available. But I don't think you're missing a thing because I don't think they'd reproduce.

Q. As an eye witness on the spot, do those reflect a true reflection of what the camera lens viewed?

A. Yes, sir. I might add that this oil slick was approximately one-half mile wide by a mile and a quarter long, tending downwind.

Q. Could you say from your observation of it that it continued to grow?

A. It would be difficult to tell. You could not determine any real source. It looked as though it might have been one gush of oil and ended at that.

Q. You noted no increased growth while you observed it?

A. No, sir.

Q. How long did you observe it?

A. We were in the area of the oil slick for approximately two hours.

Q. Did you take samples of the oil slick?

A. Yes, sir.

Q. Do you have them with you?

A. I don't have them with me; they're on the way.

Q. Did you take anything else from the oil slick beside samples?
 A. We have one small item which resembles a fishing net float.

Q. Produce it.
 A. (The witness did so.)

COUNSEL: I offer it to the court for the purpose of introducing it into evidence.

The float (Exhibit 19) was submitted to the court and was offered in evidence by counsel for the court for the purpose of introducing it into evidence.

REPORTER: This will be Exhibit 19.

There being no objection, it was received in evidence.

Q. The reporter has marked here arabic numerals 1 and 9 as an exhibit. I note an additional number two with a sharp sign in front of it?

A. Yes, these were our numberings for the things that we picked up. The oil was the first, this was the second.

Q. You added it after retrieving it?

A. Yes, sir. We also retrieved an orange-colored rubber glove shortly after retrieving this spool type thing, and it was forwarded to the USS BLANDY, I believe, and forwarded by other means.

Q. Did the BLANDY deliver into your possession two items found in the area?

A. Yes, sir.

Q. Do you have them?

A. Yes, sir.

Q. Produce them.

A. The first item was a pair of rubber gloves. I think this is BLANDY's marking on that.

Q. Would it be better to say that there are two individual rubber gloves, and not necessarily a pair?

A. Yes, sir, both of them are meant for the right hand.

COUNSEL: I offer them for the purpose of introducing them into evidence.

REPORTER: These will be Exhibit 20.

Two rubber gloves (Exhibit 20) were submitted to the court and were offered in evidence by counsel for the court for the purpose of introducing them into evidence.

There being no objection, they were received in evidence.

WITNESS: And this piece of plastic material.

Q. Would you identify that as adhesive polyurethane?

A. I could not positively identify it because I don't know the distinguishing features between plastics.

COUNSEL: I offer this to the court for the purpose of introducing it into evidence.

REPORTER: This will be Exhibit 21.

The piece of plastic material (Exhibit 21) was submitted to the court and was offered in evidence by counsel for the court for the purpose of introducing it into evidence.

There being no objection, it was received in evidence.

Q. The arabic number "3" preceded by a sharp sign was added after that?
A. I believe this was BLANDY's marking.

Q. You have no knowledge of your own as to the actual source or circumstances of the acquisition?
A. No, sir, all I'm sure of is that it was found in the general vicinity of where we assume the THRESHER went down.

Q. Thereafter SKYLARK continued her search, did she not?
A. Yes, sir.

Q. And do you have charts and so forth to show the nature and extent of that search?
A. We have a track chart covering the entire period from the beginning of her test dive until -- I believe it is still running, the track chart, and also our navigational chart, and a chronological log of events which will be forwarded as soon as it is completed.

Q. You do not have them in your possession?
A. I do not have them.

Q. Now on that last item, Lieutenant, you heard with your own ears those significant transmissions around 0912, 14, and thereafter. Could you tell, either from recognition or from the tone of voice, who was talking on the phone from THRESHER?

A. I can only assume that from the tenor of the voice I would venture to say it would be the Commanding Officer because his voice was unhurriedly and had no note of hysteria; and I would assume it would be the Commanding Officer because he is the one most likely to carry on in this manner under difficult circumstances.

COUNSEL: I have no further questions.

Declassified by CNO ltr 5511.2/
RPS/cmap Ser 09N2/9U527064 of
16 Feb 89

Mr. ^{B4} _{B6} was introduced as reporter and was duly sworn, relieving

EXAMINATION BY THE COURT

Questions by a court member, CAPT ^{B6}:

Q. Mr. ^{B4} _{B6}, was SKYLARK, during this exercise, tracking THRESHER with her own sonar?

A. We could only track her at limited periods of time. Our sonar is limited to 1100 yards range. This is about maximum under motion conditions.

Q. This is by echo ranging on THRESHER?

A. Yes, sir. It is not a very satisfactory sonar that we had aboard.

Q. Now at the time that you heard the noises which you identified as possible break-up noises, this was shortly after 0917?

A. Yes, sir.

Q. Could you refer to your log. I'd like to ascertain this time as exactly as we can, recognizing that there are limitations here, but I believe at ~~0917~~ ⁰⁹¹⁷ you heard the garbled message?

A. Yes, sir.

Q. And the possible break-up sounds were subsequent to 0917?

A. Yes, sir.

Q. You heard these. Could you estimate that they were two minutes after the last--after the garbled transmission, or three minutes, or what kind of estimate?

A. The only thing I'm really sure of is that it was over a minute afterwards and we were both standing there listening for something else and heard this noise. The exact amount of time, I can't be sure because we didn't look at the clock or anything.

Q. At 0931 there was a transmission relative to radio communication?

A. Yes, sir.

Q. It is my understanding that at 0931 you--SKYLARK--began trying to call THRESHER at intervals, is that correct?

A. Yes, sir, every minute.

Q. All right. At 1058 you started dropping grenade signals?

A. Yes, sir.

Q. You mentioned dropping three charges at ten minutes, I think.

A. They were not all definitely ten or fifteen minutes apart.

Q. Right, but three charges?

A. Yes, when the commanding officer said they should be dropped generally.

Question by a court member, CAPT ^{B4}:

Q. Those will show up in your ship's log?

A. Yes, sir, and we have sent a message to SUBLANT informing him of this.

Q. Would you say that dropping three charges is an established signal which THRESHER could be expected to understand? Let me say this again. If THRESHER heard those signals, would they have an established meaning to THRESHER?

A. Yes, sir.

Q. And that meaning would be?

A. That would be to surface.

Questions by a court member, CAPT *By* 1:

Q. I have one question to start out with respect to the relative bearings involved, with respect to initial orientation at 0745, was the bearing 147, 3400 yards from the SKYLARK to the THRESHER or from the THRESHER to the SKYLARK?

A. No, we were 147, 3400 yards from the THRESHER.

Q. You are southeast?

A. Yes, sir, and she was heading in a southerly direction.

Q. Now let us understand. And you note your courses and speeds, is that correct?

A. Yes.

Q. Now, you were southeast of the THRESHER?

A. Yes, sir.

Q. And the oil slick at the--when discovered, was southeast of you?

A. Southeast of the position we were in at that time.

Q. And we have--

A. The bearing about 160, I believe it was.

Q. Of course we will have sufficient track charts with updated Loran positions.

A. Yes.

Q. To establish these positions?

A. Yes, sir.

Q. Relatively accurately?

A. Yes, sir.

Q. How accurate would you say, with respect to what your repeatabilities were with respect to your LORAN position in this particular area?

A. I'd say it was excellent at the time.

Q. What is "excellent"?

A. Oh within--

Q. Half a mile"

A. Yes, sir.

RADM *By* 1: There is some doubt in my mind as to where the relative bearing is but I think if we wait until we get the written transcript, then we can go back because I agree initially he gave it but later he got it turned around and we will have to wait until the testimony is written.

UNCLASSIFIED

REDIRECT EXAMINATION

Questions by counsel for the court:

Q. Was there some confusion in the logging of those columns as to whether it was "from" THRESHER or "to" THRESHER that you know of?

A. THRESHER has stated "hold you 147 at 3400 yards."

PRESIDENT: There couldn't be a mistake there. That "hold you" from the ship means you bear from me.

A. Yes, sir.

CAPT *GH* : Now I am clear.

Questions by the president:

Q. Mr. *GH*, you have said that there were two good lines that you were getting your LORAN fixes from?

A. Yes, sir.

Q. What was the angle between those lines?

A. Approximately 65 degrees.

Q. 65 degrees?

A. Yes, sir. We were substantiating them as nearly as possible with soundings after we activated our fathometer again.

Q. And were you in an area where the contours of the bottom gave you fairly good index of position?

A. Yes, sir. Within a ten mile distance off of the thousand fathometer curve, it shoaled down to 1600 fathoms, straight southeast and on either side it--well there actually was a sort of a valley effect in there 1600 yards deep in a circle from the thousand fathometer curve, and where we were initially, we got a sounding of 1280 fathoms, and running back and forth we could spot our sounding line in and get on the same depth again. It seemed to be pretty consistent.

Q. Now, going back to the transmission at 0917, which was garbled and which you think consisted of roughly four or five words, was there any indicating of panic in the voice as you could hear it at that time?

A. No, sir.

Q. None whatever. Do you have any theory, based on the garbled sounds that you heard before the two words that you did identify as to what any of those three-two or three preceding words--might have been?

A. Yes, sir. My commanding officer and myself both feel, although we can't be sure, that we heard the word "exceeding" prior to the "test depth."

Q. So if you had to bet--

A. If I had to make a direct statement, I would say this was it.

Q. How long had you been the navigator of the SKYLARK?

A. Since January 8, 1961.

Q. '61?

A. I'm sorry, '62.

Q. '62?

A. Yes, sir.

UNCLASSIFIED

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

The president of the court informed the witness that he was privileged to make any further statement covering anything related to the subject matter of the inquiry that he thought should be a matter of record in connection therewith, which had not been fully brought out by the previous questioning.

The witness made the following statement:

I can't really think of anything to add to this, except that we continued the search and picked up various articles of debris and so forth which we passed to the other ships in the area.

The witness was duly warned concerning his testimony and withdrew from the courtroom.

The court recessed at 1505 hours, 13 April 1963.

The court opened at 1515 hours, 13 April 1963.

All persons connected with the inquiry who were present when the court recessed are again present in court.

SL, boatswain's mate third class, U.S. Navy, was called as a witness by the court, was informed of the subject matter of the inquiry was advised of his rights under Article 31 of the Uniform Code of Military Justice, and examined as follows:

DIRECT EXAMINATION

Questions by counsel:

Q. This is an open session of the court and for that reason classified information should not be spoken here, indicated, or divulged by you. If the answer to any question that I ask you would include classified information, please so state instead of answering the question.

A. Aye, aye, sir.

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

A. *SL*, Boatswain's Mate Third, U. S. Navy, USS SKYLARK, ASR20.

Q. That is *SL* ?

A. Yes, sir.

Q. *SL* ...

A. Yes, sir.

Q. Directing your attention to the morning of 10 April of this year were you then stationed in SKYLARK?

A. Yes, sir.

Q. And at about 0745 in the morning, what was your station in SKYLARK?

A. I was assuming the watch on the bridge.

Q. And what was your watch on the bridge?

A. I assumed the watch as Boatswain's Mate of the watch and then I