



To MR. JOSEPH L. MEADORS  
USS Liberty Association  
USA

June 7 2012

## Distinguished Crewmembers and Families of the USS Liberty!

We deeply appreciate the efforts invested in perpetuating the memory of team mates lost in the tragic incident.

Thank you for your invitation to have words from some Israel Navy veterans in the memorial ceremony. Enclosed is a letter of [Cmr Refaeli](#) who, as a Lt, was commander of the MTB T-203.

I would also like to inform you that the IN Veterans Association get-together, on Friday, June 22 in the In the Haifa Naval Museum, will be about the issue of The USS Liberty incident. You are cordially invited to send a letter to be presented on the occasion.

I myself was closely involved with the tragic events, although I was not present in the area at the time. In my position as Executive Officer of the MTB Squadron I was waiting to be briefed, at the side of the Navy HQ CIC, and followed the incident as it happened. I have full knowledge of the state of mind of the men who took part in the incident.

Today, I am Chairman of the Israel Nautical College Alumni Association, and as such - I have first-hand knowledge of the attitude of Naval Personnel who took part, most of whom are INC graduates. Thus, my words are personal but represent the spirit of all INC Alumni.

I can assure you that there is not one person in our Navy or the state of Israel who is not feeling deeply sorry for the incident. The whole IN was blamed which led us to extreme efforts to regain our professional esteem. We are not denying, neither are we rejecting, our responsibility. The incident is displayed and presented in a prominent place in the Navy Museum for everyone to see. As a result of the initiative of veterans of the MTB Squadron The Director of the museum added a brass plaque carrying the names of the 34 crewmembers who died in the attack

[mail@bogreyam.org](mailto:mail@bogreyam.org)

פקס 04 9912707 ת"ד 2066 עכו POB 2066 Acre Israel 24100  
חשבוננו 523454 בנק פועלים סניף 729 ק' מוצקין ובנק הדאר 7025857



In June 1976 I had the honor and pleasure to command a couple of missile boats which crossed the Atlantic Ocean to participate and salute the USA for your Bicentennial festivities. I was accompanied by [Admiral Benjamin Telem CIC IN](#), and upon reaching Norfolk we were greeted by [Admiral Kidd](#). I was rather surprised that the first words in the admirals conversation were about the [USS Liberty](#) and the [USCGC Point Welcome](#) incidents.

Being in the frontline of democracy in a turbulent area we in Israel are enduring the experience of losing family members in early life and some of our friends are carrying the scars of war.

The term [friendly fire](#) is not a translation from Hebrew. In fact it was originally adopted by the [United States military](#). We acknowledge the fact that burden is much heavier on relatives and friends when injuries are inflicted by your own forces. We are supposed to be friends and you are right to be resentful. However, even after the incident, we have been regarding ourselves friends of the USA. Americans are greeted in Israel with utmost affection. You are warmly welcome to check it for yourselves.

As rational people, you are always looking for a reason, yet sometimes you may not find one, which keeps your mind troubled and anxious. The painful truth is that there was no reason at all. Thus, the burden on the crew and families is even greater. I heard about several conspiracy theories raised, in an effort to ease your pain. Facing the simple truth of a terrible unintentional accident, would not ease your pain, yet it would enhance your honor in my opinion.

Let us pray together that no such terrible mistakes will ever happen again to forces fighting for freedom and democracy.

I convey to you my colleagues deepest sorrow and empathy, we regard ourselves as your friends.

אלי רהב

RADM Eli Rahav IN (Ret)  
Chairman

[mail@bogreyam.org](mailto:mail@bogreyam.org)

פקס 04 9912707 ת"ד 2066 עכו 24100 Acre Israel 2066  
חשבוננו 523454 בנק פועלים סניף 729 ק' מוצקין ובנק הדאר 7025857



June 6 2012

DEAR MR. JOSEPH L. MEADORS !

As one of the three commanders of the torpedo boats which were involved in the attack, I want to refer to this event.

Since June 67 I am deeply troubled by the tragedy which caused the death of 34 USS Liberty's crew members and left many others wounded physically and emotionally.

I live in a country, involved during all the years since it turned independent in numerous wars and endless number of terrorist events, the outcome of which is , that almost every home in Israel has been somehow connected to bereavement or death, We fully understand and can feel the loss of a son, father , brother or husband.

No words will bring back those who died, no words can make up for the ultimate loss. But, let me assure you that, the incident happened as a result of an unfortunate sequence of mistakes, during a war, and we feel deeply sorry for the families who lost their beloved.

Rami Rephaeli  
Commander IN (Ret)



The writing on the plate is in Hebrew. As to express feelings its more sincere when done in mother language.

The free translation is Upper lines:

We express deep sorrow for 34 mates who were killed by us, in a battle that was not theirs, on board the USS Liberty, June 8<sup>th</sup> 1967.

Down line: May their memory be blessed! The Torpedo Squadron Veterans

[mail@bogreyam.org](mailto:mail@bogreyam.org)

פקס 04 9912707 ת"ד 2066 עכו 24100 Acre Israel 2066  
חשבוננו 523454 בנק פועלים סניף 729 ק' מוצקין ובנק הדאר 7025857