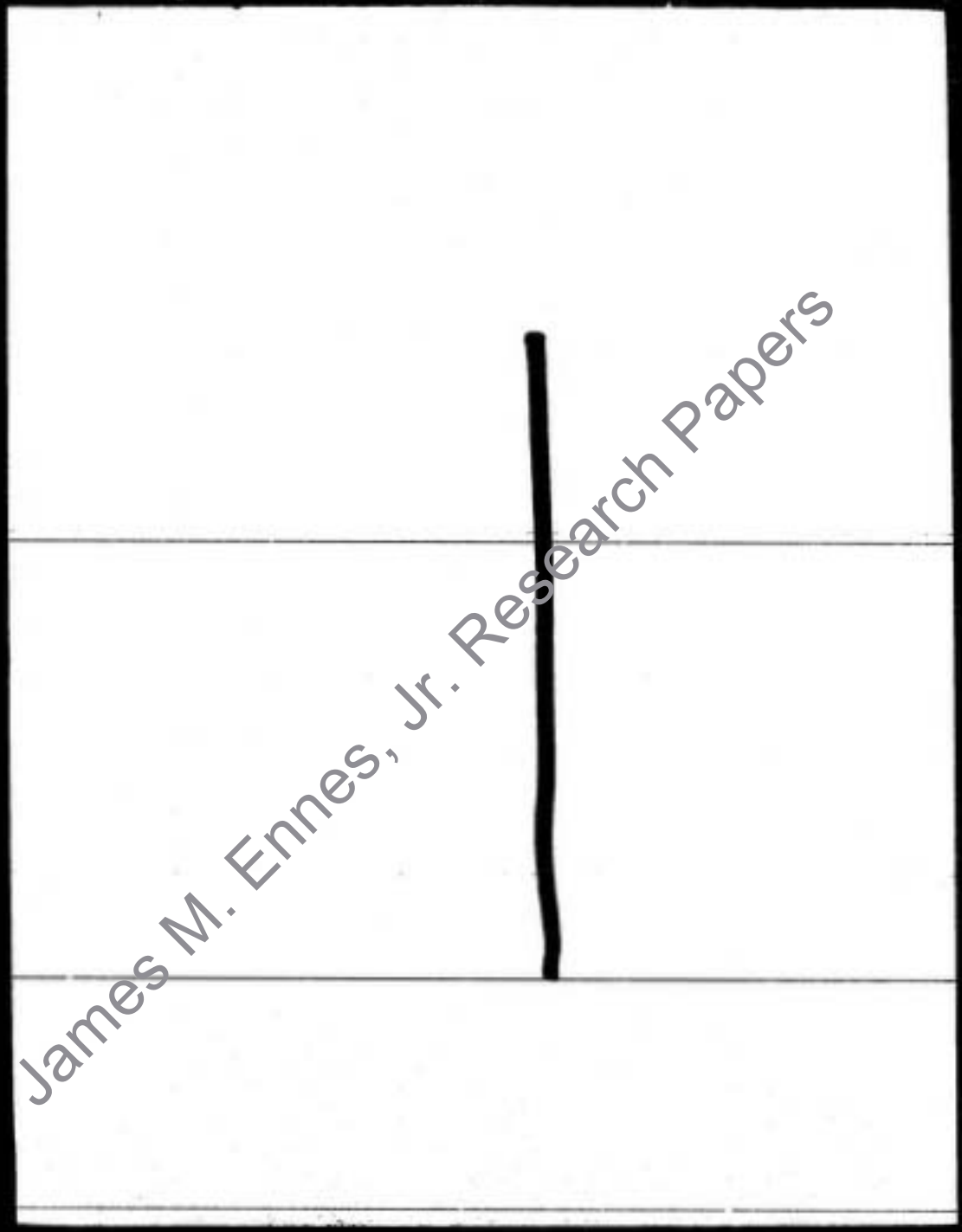

James M. Ennes, Jr. Research Papers

2

NOTICE NOTICE NOTICE NOTICE NOTICE NOTICE NOTICE

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The material contained here, along with some untranscribed tape recordings and a small amount of personal correspondence not included for reasons of privacy, along with the author's personal experiences, comprise the source material for the book, **Assault on the Liberty: The True Story of the Israeli Attack on an American Intelligence Ship** (Random House, 1980). Also included are several documents which became available after the book was published, such as remarks by such key players as Dean Rusk, Richard Helms, Lyndon Louis Tordella, Admiral Thomas Moorer, Captain Joseph Tully, Admiral Nan Morris and others, and the official State Department analysis of the Israeli excuse prepared for Dean Rusk and Eugene Rostow, which dismisses the Israeli excuse as contrary to sworn testimony of crewmen and other evidence available to the Department.

That analysis, known as "The Saland Report," was denied to Ennes during research for the book, but became available in 1983 as a result of an extended lawsuit under the Freedom of Information Act.

Also included are several excuses and apologia for the attack issued by the Israeli Foreign Office, American-Israel Public Affairs Committee, Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith, the History Department of the Israeli Defense Force, the Israeli government, various Israeli officials and pro-Israeli writers, the Israeli Embassy and various Israeli Consulates General. These excuses deserve special attention. A careful reader will note that the Israeli excuses tell stories strikingly different from the sworn testimony of survivors, disagree even with each other, and are physically impossible for several reasons.

This microfiche compilation was prepared in response to the many requests from scholars, authors and students for original source material, and because many of the documents are difficult to find and are becoming increasingly elusive with each passing month.

The original documents represented here will be deposited for permanent storage in the Middle East Section of the Library of the Hoover Institution, Stanford University, Stanford, California. They will be available there for supervised study within the Hoover Library by legitimate researchers and scholars.

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James M. Ennes, Jr.
February 21, 1986

James M. Ennes, Jr. Research Papers

2

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James M. Ennes, Jr.
February 21, 1986

James M. Ennes, Jr. Research Papers

3

100% P4



James M. Ennes, Jr. Research Papers

4

REMEMBER THE U.S.S. LIBERTY (AGTR-5)

James M. Ennes, Jr. Research Papers

5

EDITORIALS

—

SELECTED BOOK REVIEWS

—

LETTERS TO EDITORS

—

SELECTED NEWSPAPER AND MAGAZINE ARTICLES

FOLDER 1

James M. Ennes, Jr. Research Papers

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James M. Ennes, Jr. Research Papers

FOREWORD

This fifth edition of The Assault on the LIBERTY should be read by all Americans even though it has now been 18 years since Israeli warplanes and torpedo boats attacked for several hours a ship of the United States Navy. The ship was clearly identified, not only by its unique configuration, but by a very large U.S. flag which was flown at the time. The weather was calm and the visibility was excellent. During this unprovoked attack 34 U.S. Navy men were killed and 171 wounded. Nevertheless, to this day the American public does not know why the attack took place and who was involved overall.

In my opinion, the United States government as well as the Israeli government must share responsibility for this coverup. I cannot accept the claim by the Israelis that this was a case of mistaken identity. Having flown for years in both peace and war on surveillance flights over the ocean, my opinion is supported by a full career of locating and identifying ships at sea. Based on the way this tragedy was handled both in the United States and in Israel, one must conclude that there is much information that has not been made available to the public.

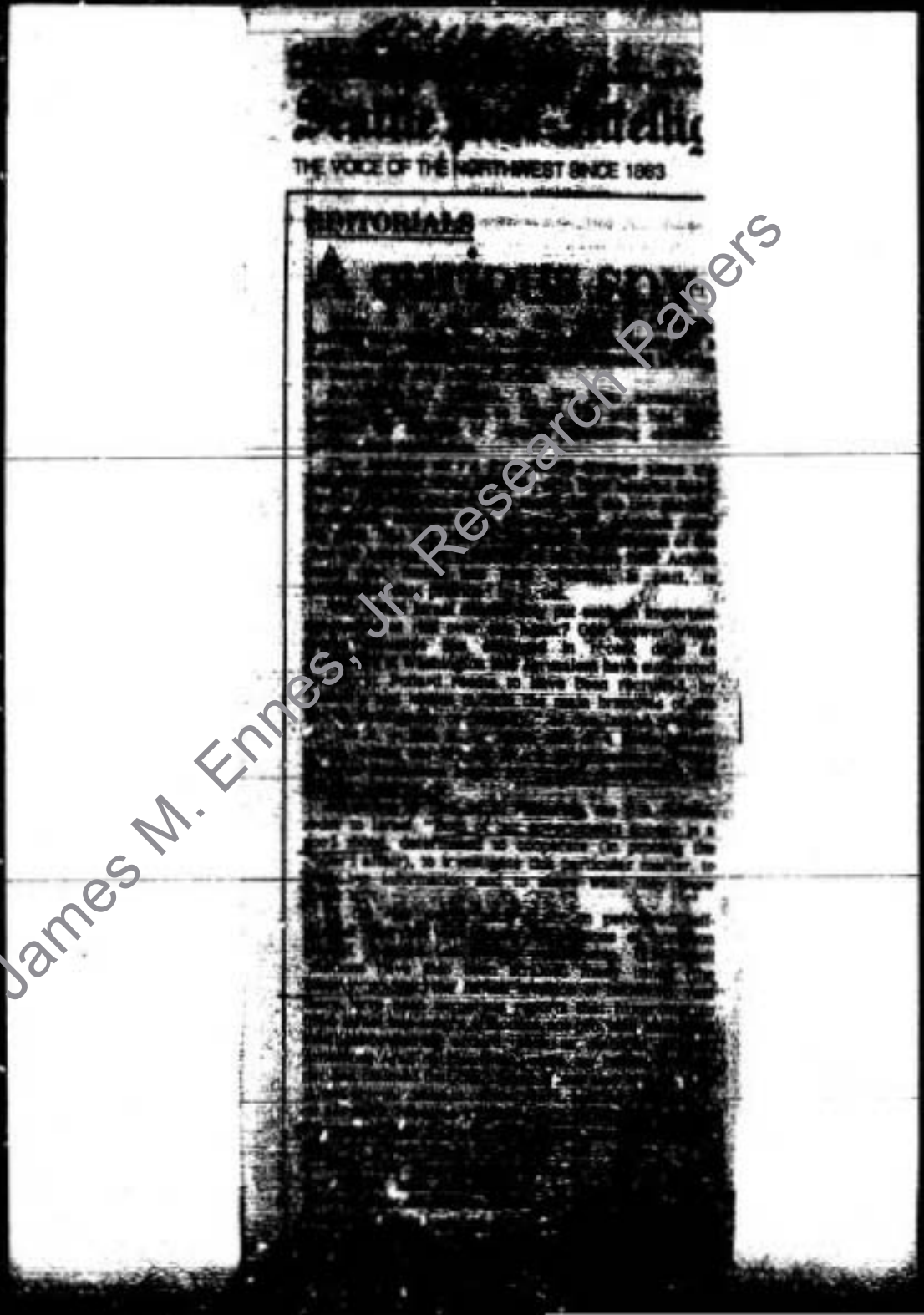
The U.S. Fleet, positioned nearby, received a distress call from the USS LIBERTY and the carrier dispatched a squadron to go to the defense of the disabled ship. Before the aircraft reached the LIBERTY, they received orders from Washington directing their return to their ship. Who issued such orders? So far, no one knows. In the United States all the information available to the U.S. government indicating those who participated in controlling this operation from Washington, together with the exact text of orders transmitted to the Mediterranean Fleet have never been made public.

I urge all of those who read this very interesting book to call on the Congress to once and for all clear the uncertainties, speculation, and unanswered questions surrounding this tragedy.

Thomas H. Moorer

Thomas H. Moorer
Admiral, U.S. Navy (Ret.)

James M. Ennes, Jr. Research Papers



THE VOICE OF THE NORTHWEST SINCE 1883

EDITORIALS

James M. Ennes, Jr. Research Papers

USS LIBERTY SURVIVORS WANT THE TRUTH

Admiral Moorer: Legitimate Questions Remain Unanswered

Congress is being asked to investigate the Israeli attack on the USS *Liberty* during the Arab-Israeli war of 1967. Thirty-four American sailors were killed and 171 wounded in the Israeli assault on the *Liberty*. The call for a congressional inquiry was made in a press conference held at the National Press Club in Washington on 11 December 1985.

The *Liberty*, a communications ship belonging to the U.S. Navy, was in the eastern Mediterranean when her crew members and military aircraft attacked it and severely damaged it on 8 June 1967. Israel claimed at the time that it was a case of mistaken identity, and the Johnson administration was quick to accept that unsatisfactory excuse for the Israeli attack. A subsequent investigation—intended to put the lid on the case rather than to uncover the truth about it—led to the formation of the USS Liberty Veterans Association by the survivors of the crew, who insist that the Israeli attack on their ship and the murder of 34 of their shipmates deserve to be truthfully resolved.

One of the survivors, Dr. James Ennes, who was the duty officer on the *Liberty* at the time of the Israeli attack, wrote a book, *The Assault on the Liberty*, describing the incredible story of the Israeli cover-up by the Johnson administration.

Participants in the Washington press conference included Mr. James Akins, a former U.S. ambassador to Saudi Arabia; Admiral Thomas H. Moorer (ret.), former Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and Chief of Naval Operations; Mr. Stan White (Chairman of the Liberty Veterans Association, and Mr. Joseph C. Lentini, former petty officer who was wounded on the *Liberty*. Ambassador Andrew I. Killgore, president of the American Educational Trust, which sponsored the press conference, chaired the meeting.

Admiral Moorer said that U.S. cooperation with Israel and its friends in the coverup has continued many people around the world that this demonstrates America's Stan White, a delegation he sent to Secretary of State George Shultz, Secretary of Defense Caspar Weinberger, Attorney General Edwin Meese, and FBI Director William Webster, asked in the name of the Liberty Veterans Association that the case of the attack on the *Liberty* be reopened and that a similar coverup in the case of Jonathan Pollard's spying for Israel not be permitted. The following are the texts of these two statements.

Admiral Moorer's Statement

We are asking for an investigation into the attack on the USS *Liberty* which occurred on June 8, 1967, on the fourth day of the six-day Arab-Israeli war. Israel said publicly at the time that the attack was a case of mistaken identity. There were many good reasons for the U.S. not to believe that explanation. But apparently for political reasons at the time, the U.S. investigation was limited to internal communications matters which contributed to U.S. vulnerability. The key questions remain. Who did Israel attack the U.S. Naval ship? Why has the U.S. never conducted an independent investigation to answer that question? It is these two unanswered questions which have caused so much grief to the families of the 34 Americans who were killed in the attack and to the 171 Americans who were wounded.



Injured American sailors

In the absence of official answers, the world has reached its own conclusions. Israel has concluded that ultimately anything it does now or in the United States will be forgiven or forgotten, provided it apologizes.

Based upon these two statements, it appears that other Middle East countries have concluded that the U.S. is so completely dominated by Israel and its American friends that it is an unreliable ally in the Middle East.

Our European allies and our Soviet adversaries have reached similar conclusions. None are in the best interests of the United States.

Finally, our own people, particularly those personally concerned with the case of the *Liberty*, increasingly believe that the monumentous designed to protect these interests have failed them in this case. Their legitimate questions about the attack on the *Liberty* remain

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James M. Ennes, Jr. Research Papers

USS LIBERTY

continued from page 10

unanswered officially. Some charge that they have been stonewalled when they have sought answers on their own.

In reopening the case that has haunted for 18 years we are well aware that we cannot bring back the dead or restore the wounded to the health they enjoyed before the attack. We can, however, keep faith with them and their families and with the oath we swore when we entered the service of our country. The answers, whatever they may be, can be no more damaging to the U.S. than the perceptions that have developed at home and abroad around this tragedy. It is, in our opinion, time to examine the Israeli attack on the *USS Liberty* and, if at all possible, to make all of the findings public. We call upon the Congress to conduct hearings similar to that conducted by the Congress with regard to the sinking of the Pueblo by the North Koreans in 1968.

White's Telegram

I am chairman of the USS Liberty Veterans Association, whose members are survivors and families of servicemen on the U.S. Naval ship attacked in international waters off Israel on June 8, 1967, with 34 American fatalities and 171 Americans wounded.

Although Israel eventually paid compensation to those wounded and to the families of those killed in that surprise and unprovoked attack on a U.S. Navy ship, there has never been a full public investigation and disclosure as to the causes of the attack. Nor has there been an explanation of wrongdoing by Israel because so much was hushed up, ignored or distorted, our organization was formed to assure that the American people eventually gain access to all of the facts.

It is for that purpose that I am respectfully sending you this telegram. My concern as chairman of the USS Liberty Association is that another cover-up such as that which occurred concerning the attack on our U.S. Naval ship not be allowed to take place concerning the full possible ramifications of Israeli involvement in the Pollard matter.

Prosecution of the Pollards is properly the responsibility of the U.S. Justice Department and is not the focus of the communication. My concern is simply that the investigation and resulting prosecution be addressed with all of the vigilance and promptness of the Walker and other recent espionage cases.

As the Washington *Post* editorially pointed out last Sunday, the Pollard case is being treated in Israel as though Israel is the victim and the United States the aggressor, instead of just the opposite.

All of this recalls the manner in which the *USS Liberty* episode was treated in Israel. In both situations there has been a pattern of unauthorized and unprovoked Israeli attacks against specific and long-standing interests, and then a carefully-managed cover-up with official sometimes continuing false explanations offered to account for each new fact that surfaces.

I want to be very clear that I am not anti-Israel. But I am pro-American. And in the *USS Liberty* attack and the Pollard case should make clear, there are times when American and Israeli interests are not the same.

U.S. compliance with Israeli attempts to manage the information that emerges is not in the interests of our country. I submit that what is at stake in the present investigation is the effectiveness and honesty of our government's investigative capabilities, and our willingness as a nation to face the truth, no matter how difficult that may be. Such effectiveness and honesty by our nation's institutions is necessary to retain the public confidence so essential to the survival of our free and democratic institutions.

It is with these concerns in mind, and against the background of having personally served on the *USS Liberty* when it was attacked, that I am respectfully sending this telegram. ☐



[illegible] ESPIONAGE

A New York Jew has been arrested "in connection" with being responsible for acts of vandalism against Jewish and Black in November 1985. New York police sources believe that the wealthy 39-year-old Gary S. Dunkel was given to responsible for smashing 15 shop windows, an act of anti-Jewish organizations will pin to blame on anti-Semitic Black nationalists and the Jewish Community Relations Council of New York offered a $5,000 reward for information leading to an arrest in the case.

The incident caused fears of anti-Semitism in the area, and it was labeled as the "Kristallnacht" attack, implying that it was the work of neo-Nazis. The New York police said that Dunkel, who admitted his responsibility for the acts of vandalism, explained that he had been motivated by religious fervor and by hatred, and he said that he wanted "to strike back."

ISRAEL'S SPIES

Continued from page 9

quickly built up the expertise. In 1979, the information traded appears to have involved the software technologies necessary for the advanced radar systems that are part of the foundations of Reagan's "Star Wars" concept.

In recent years, the Russians appear to have been able to get hold of most of the fundamental technologies from legitimate sources in spite of the fact that the Zionist lobby has been partly responsible for the US government imposing even tighter "CoCom" restrictions on the export of Western technology. If the Israelis wish to trade information for the release of Soviet Jews, they will have no supply secret intelligence rather than technological data.

Whatever the motives behind the Israeli espionage activities in the US, the CIA will be very anxious to know the extent of the spy networks—and where the information is going. ☐

Reprinted from *Middle East International* (London) No. 265 (20 December 1985).

James M. Ennes, III Research Papers

NCVA

CRYPTOLOG

NAVAL CRYPTOLOGIC VETERANS ASSOCIATION

Vol. 7, No. 2 | Eugene, Oregon | Winter 1988

U.S.S. LIBERTY

By CAPTAIN Joseph M. Tully, Jr., USN (Ret.)

As Commanding Officer of the USS SARATOGA, I had the unique view from the carrier's bridge of Sixth Fleet efforts to come to the aid of the USS LIBERTY when that ship came under attack by Israeli forces in 1967. It was an unsettling experience which still troubles me almost 20 years later.

I had assumed command of the SARATOGA in October 1966, relieving CAPT. H.F. Lacy. At that time I was already an experienced shipboard officer, having spent 2-1/2 years in the South Pacific, a year as Executive Officer aboard the Navy's first "super carrier", the USS FORRESTAL, and a year in command of the USS REDSHO with the Sixth Fleet in the Mediterranean.

After an overhaul in the United [illegible] returned to the

SAN ANTONIO: WE LIKED IT

By Grady Lewis

We think you [illegible] going to like San Antonio and the Gunter Hotel when you go to that city for the 1988 NCVA REUNION on 25, 26 and 27 September 1988. At least Alice and I did. On our return trip from Baltimore to Eugene, Oregon we spent a couple of days in San Antonio seeing the sights and previewing the Gunter

LIBERTY Continued from page 1

This Ready Strike Group consisted of 4 F4 fighters, F A4 fighter bombers and 4 A1 fighter bombers, all conventionally armed. To support this group I also launched 4 A4 tankers.

CINCSIXTHFLEET as OTC approved my decision and ordered the other carrier, USS AMERICA, to launch also and turned the Force into the wind. SARATOGA launched on time. To my surprise, USS AMERICA did not launch!

SARATOGA'S Strike Group had barely reached the horizon when Commander Carrier Division 4, who had meanwhile assumed or been made Officer in Tactical Command (OTC), ordered all aircraft returned. He then ordered both SARATOGA and AMERICA to ready similar strike groups to be launched in support of LIBERTY in 90 minutes.

James M. Eames, Jr. Research Papers

Mediterranean just in time for the beginning of the hostilities that preceded the Arab-Israeli Six-Day-War. Anticipating that the Sixth Fleet would be concentrated to the east, I recalled all aircraft and proceeded on an easterly course.

The Sixth Fleet carrier force was eventually ordered to operate in the vicinity of Crete, where we assumed a typical self defense formation. Sixth Fleet Commander, VADM William E. Martin, assumed tactical command (OTC), and began maneuvering the fleet in typical formations.

On 8 June while conducting these maneuvers, my communication officer came to the bridge with the following urgent message from the USS LIBERTY. "UNDER ATTACK BY UNIDENTIFIED AIR AND SURFACE UNITS. REQUEST IMMEDIATE ASSISTANCE."

I specifically asked my communication officer if he had verified the authenticity of the message, and he assured me he had.

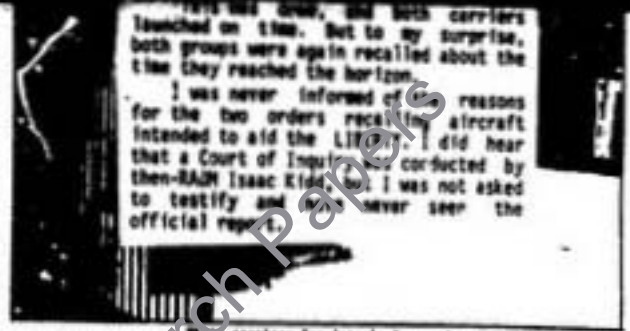
Because I knew ADM Martin was on the bridge of his flagship, I personnaly passed LIBERTY'S message in plain language voice over the primary tactical maneuvering circuit, "PRI-TAC". Then I directed my communication officer to pass it to all U.S. high commands in the European area, plus to the Chief of Naval Operations (CNO). Then, again on the Pri-Tac voice circuit, I sent personally the following message to Commander Sixth Fleet: "UNLESS OTHERWISE DIRECTED WILL LAUNCH MY READY STRIKE GROUP IN SUPPORT OF LIBERTY."

Continued on page ',

Manager Pat Lopez, herself an Army wife with a son just out of the Naval Academy, were us a personally escorted tour. Pat seemed justifiably proud of the hotel, and San Antonio. We also met several staff members and I think you will find the Gunter staff to be very friendly; eager to please and one which will provide excellent service.

On the outside, the Gunter is a 75-year-old hotel; in fact it has an official historical designation. On the inside, you can easily see the results of the several million dollars the Lincoln Hotel chain has put into the Gunter Hotel restoration. The public rooms are well pannelled, nicely lighted, and the effort to retain the flavor of the past is very obvious.

Continued on page 8



launched on time. But to my surprise, both groups were again recalled about the time they reached the horizon.

I was never informed of the reasons for the two orders recalling aircraft intended to aid the LIBERTY. I did hear that a Court of Inquiry was conducted by then-RADM Isaac Kidd, but I was not asked to testify and I never seen the official report.

Photo courtesy San Antonio Convention and Visitors Bureau

THE ALAMO--Shrine of Texas Liberty. The present building is the old chapel of Mission San Antonio de Valero, founded in 1718 by the Franciscan padres. In 1836, during the war for Texas independence, the Alamo was the scene of one of the most heroic events in the history of our nation. All of the 187 defending Texas soldiers were killed here while being besieged by Mexican forces under the Mexican General Santa Anna. The war cry, "Remember the Alamo", later carried the Texans to victory.

CRYPTOLOG SPECIAL
CHINA
PULLOUT SECTION
Pages A-1 through A-36

James McElmes, Jr. Research Papers

USS Liberty: Why the Cover-up?

Key questions surrounding the attack on the U.S.S. Liberty and the subsequent cover-up were posed by Admiral Thomas Moorer USN (Ret.), former Chief of Naval Operations and Commander of NATO Allied Command, Atlantic, and the U.S. Pacific Fleet, and author of numerous books and articles on strategic naval operations. Answers were supplied in testimony by crewmembers who were on duty June 8, 1967, when the ship was strafed and torpedoed by Israelis as she cruised the eastern Mediterranean, leaving 34 Americans dead and 171 wounded. The incident occurred just prior to Israel's invasion of Syria.



Admiral Moorer:

What really happened, and why was the ship attacked? The Israelis insisted, and do even now, that the attack was a case of mistaken identity. But I am certain that such a highly trained military force could not have made such a tragic error. There was clear visibility and this unique ship was very easy to identify. There was only a limited investigation afterward by the Congress, and President Johnson significantly understated the extent of the casualties. Was the objective the fact that Israel was planning to attack Syria the next day? Why did the Israeli report differ so widely from the Liberty crew, and how could such an attack, if in error, continue for so long?



James Ennes, bridge officer on the Liberty and author of *Assault on the Liberty*:

Most striking to me was that the Israelis came out in daylight with clear reconaissance aircraft circling us and passing directly overhead virtually at masthead level. Three of the men here could wave to the pilots and see them wave back. The Israelis' story is that they didn't even know we were here.

Joe Metters, signalman on the Liberty:

The confusion around the story is you have to say which version you are talking about. One Israeli version has it that the torpedo boats mistook us for the Al-Ganir, an Egyptian cattle steamer one-half as wide and with one-fourth the displacement.



Dave Lucas, ensign:

Afterward, we had basically no communications other than the magnetic compass and a hydrometer telling us how much water was under the keel. Nobody came. It was a very, very long night.

Rick Almeti:

People don't realize how big a torpedo hole can be. In damage control we had to keep the ship afloat. Then a helicopter came over after the attack and dropped a note down saying, 'Were there any casualties?' in a little brown paper bag with two oranges in it which rolled out on the deck. The captain wasn't too happy to see the note, I'm sure. Blood were all over the deck in pieces.

Stan Vick, senior enlisted man on board and electronics chief:

[illegible] told us help is only 20 minutes away. It never came. We waited all night. First, a Russian ship early in the morning came by and later two destroyers came along side to give us medical help and retrieve our captain, who was a true hero, staying up on the bridge all afternoon and night, although wounded. The captain of the USS Saratoga was the only person in the whole area who tried to help us by launching planes, but they were called back.

Bob Casale, officer of the Liberty Veterans' Association:

The attack lasted about an hour and 15 minutes, and what you have heard today is the true story, not one of the four official versions that have been circulating for so long. We've tried for several years to locate all the crew on the Liberty, but we get no cooperation from the State Department. Among our main goals is to find out why there was a cover-up and where was the help that we were told was coming.



Bob Schnell:

I recall a brilliant yellow flash, the bulkhead caving in, a desk hitting me, and when I woke up I was in the water. We finally got a hatch open and made several trips back into the compartment looking for people.

James M. Ennes, Jr. Research Papers

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Israeli Attack on U.S. Ship Reveals Failure of C³

James M. Ennes, Jr. Research Papers

DEFENSE ELECTRONICS

REPRINTED FROM OCTOBER 1981 EDITION OF DEFENSE ELECTRONICS MAGAZINE

Israeli Attack on U.S. Ship Reveals Failure of C3

Fourteen years ago, the USS Liberty was attacked by Israeli warplanes and ships, resulting in the deaths of 34 Americans and the wounding of 171 others. The attack lasted 2½ hours and ended the Navy's program of dedicated electronic intelligence collection ships.

By James M. Ennes, Jr., Deck Officer of the USS Liberty



Broadside view of the USS *Liberty* as it limps toward Malta after the June 8, 1967, attack by Israeli aircraft and torpedo boats

Fourteen years ago, one of the most serious peacetime American naval disasters occurred, and perhaps the most serious since the sinking of the battleship *Maine* in 1898. But while every bright schoolchild remembers the details of the explosion that led to the Spanish-American War, hardly anyone can recall the attack on the USS *Liberty* in 1967, which cost the lives of 34 Americans, wounded 171 others, and brought a premature end to the Navy's program of dedicated electronic intelligence collection ships.

The attack on the USS *Liberty* by Israeli forces on the fourth day of the Arab-Israeli Six-Day War is not widely known because the facts are politically and diplomatically awkward. The truth about the attack includes evidence that this was a planned, carefully coordinated and deliberate attack by a friendly power upon a known American naval vessel, and a botched exercise of Command, Control, and Communications. But such knowledge is politically unwelcome in the United States, so the facts about the attack were withheld from the American people.

In 1967, the US Navy operated a worldwide fleet of electronic intelligence collection ships under tasking from the Department of Defense. These consisted of United States Ships *Oxford*, *Georgetown*, and *Jamestown*, which operated on converted Liberty hulls; *Belmont* and

Editor's Note: *This article is printed by* DEFENSE ELECTRONICS *as an example of a direct attack on U.S. forces by a nation that has access to advanced western military equipment, and which is an ally. In light of the Libyan-U.S. air clash in August and the loss of advanced equipment in Iran, the danger of western technology being used against U.S. forces by a hostile Third World nation is apparent. The article is presented in unabridged form and represents only the views of its author.*

James M. Ennes, Jr. Research Papers

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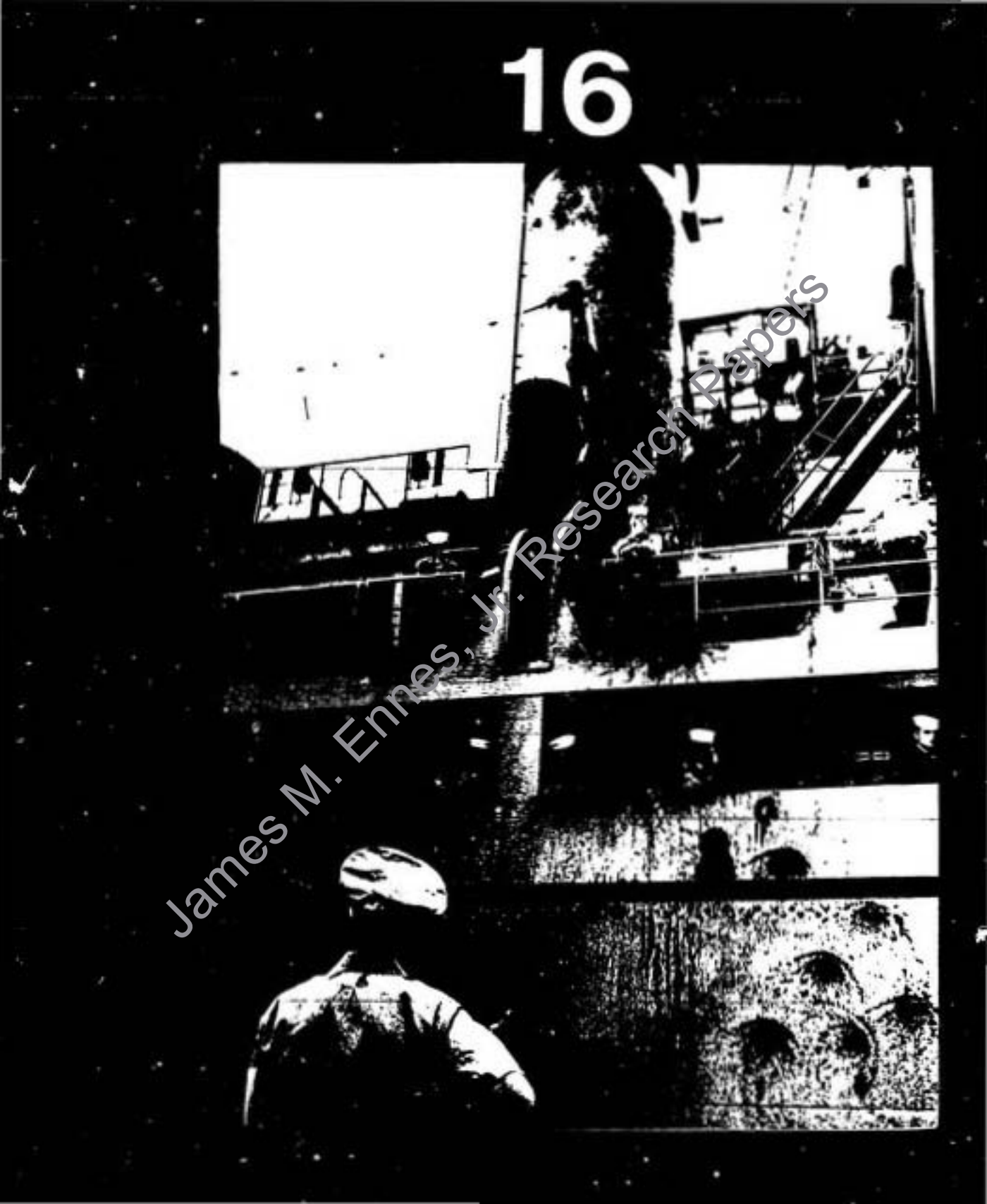

James M. Ennes, Jr. Research Papers

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Liberty, on Victory hulls; *Banner*, *Pueblo*, and *Palm Beach*, on converted 180-foot sub hulls; and civilian-manned United States Naval Ships *Private Jose E. Valdez* and *Sergeant Joseph P. Muller*, on converted 338-foot LMSI hulls.

In May 1967, as tension built rapidly toward what would soon become the "Six Day War," USS *Liberty* was diverted [illegible] her usual patrol area on the west coast of Africa to patrol a section of the Gaza Strip in the Eastern Mediterranean.

The trip required 10 days of hard steaming, and when *Liberty* arrived at her assigned station, the war was four days old and almost over.

I was *Liberty*'s electronic materials officer. A 34-year-old former enlisted man, I took special pride in my Navy commission, my lieutenant's rank, and my specialty in cryptology. I was soon to be assigned officer of the deck for special sea detail and general quarters. And as the ship arrived on station 13 miles from the Israeli and Egyptian coasts, I was [illegible] officer of the deck for the [illegible] watch.

Throughout the night

The ship had been reconnoitered the [illegible] night by Israeli military aircraft. Well before midnight, *Liberty*'s cryptologic operators had detected fire control radar directed



Commander William L. McGonagle, commanding officer of the technical research ship, surveys damage to his ship after the USS Liberty arrived safely at Valletta, Malta, on June 14, six days after the attack.

James M. Ennes, Jr. Research Papers

18

steadily at the ship by orbiting Israeli aircraft. But the supervisor on duty refused to believe that Israeli forces would direct fire control radar at an American ship, and so he insisted that the operators must have misinterpreted the signal. The signal went unreported.

0700 Hours

At about 0700, as I relieved the watch on the bridge, I was told that a "flying boxcar," later identified as an Israeli Nord 2501 Noratlas reconnaissance aircraft, had circled the ship from a distance at sunrise. I checked our colors, found them dirty and ragged after several days of high-speed steaming, and ordered them replaced. Two extra lookouts were stationed above the bridge, and I ordered them to keep an eye on the flag to assure that it never fouled.

0900 Hours

At 0900, the ship reached point "alfa," the northernmost point of our assigned patrol track. I turned south and slowed to five knots, and at that moment we were reconnoitered by a single jet aircraft. I immediately checked the flag and saw it clearly displayed in a good breeze. We were headed almost directly into a four-knot wind, giving us more [illegible] over the decks, which was more than enough to hold the flag aloft. For the next several hours, the wind increased steadily, reaching 12 knots over the deck before the ship came under attack.

1000 Hours

At about 1000, the ship was circled three times at low level by two armed Israeli Mirage jets, each carrying 18 rockets under each wing. One of the pilots was heard reporting by radio to Israeli headquarters that we were flying an American flag, but there was no news to the Israeli war room. Duty officers in the war room had identified the ship long before and had plotted her track on a large wall chart, along with her name, her top speed, and a reference to her intelligence mission. And according to several reports, Israel's immediate reaction to the ship's presence was to complain bitterly to the United States via the Central Intelligence Agency, demanding that the ship be moved.

The United States made several serious, almost frantic attempts to move the ship. As *Liberty* approached Gaza, the Joint Chiefs of Staff first sent a priority message ordering the ship to move 20 miles from the coast; the message was swamped by higher precedence traffic and was not processed until long after the crisis had ended. Hours later, a JCS duty officer phoned naval headquarters in London to relay an urgent JCS order to move the ship 100 miles from the coast; the telephone call was ignored, and *Liberty*'s copy of a confirming message was misrouted to the Philippines before being returned to the Pentagon, where it was again misrouted, this time to Fort Meade in Maryland, where it was lost.

Eventually, at least six critical messages were lost, delayed, or otherwise mishandled. Any one of the messages might have saved *Liberty*. None reached the ship.

During the next four hours, the ship was visited five more times by Israeli reconnaissance aircraft, usually flying at very low level, and always close enough that I could readily see the pilot. On one occasion, the captain was on the bridge when the Noratlas approached at masthead level, causing him to warn me of a possible bombing run; the aircraft passed overhead at such low level that the deck plating shuddered.

The continued close surveillance was reassuring. Israel was an ally and, although several Arab states were



Scarred from her June 8, 1967, attack, the USS *Liberty* arrives at Valletta, Malta. * Ninty-four crewmembers were dead, 171 wounded from Israeli aircraft and torpedo boat assaults

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then hostile toward the United States. Israel clearly dominated the sky, and we were considered to be watched so closely, as this seemed so aware that there could be no mistakes.

1400 Hours

After being relieved of the watch at noon, I spent most of the noon hour on the bridge preparing for a general quarters drill scheduled for 1300. Finally, at 1400, all drills and bridge duties were completed, and I was preparing to go below after nearly seven hours on the bridge when three aircraft and three high-speed surface craft were simultaneously picked up on radar, all approaching the ship from the starboard quarter.

Moments later, the ship came under severe and continued attack, first by Israeli Mirage jets that momentarily knocked out our four pony 50-caliber machine guns and disabled all radio antennas, then by slower Israeli Mystère jets, which plastered the stack, gun mounts, open bridge, and superstructure with an inferno of napalm.

When technicians jury-rigged an antenna in order to call for help, radiomen found the frequencies blocked by buzz saw signals from the jets. Radiomen worked on their hands and knees and held microphones close to the deck to escape smoke and heat from fires nearby, and in less than nine minutes, they broke through the jamming. The carrier *Saratoga*, operating about 500 miles away with the Sixth Fleet near Crete, was first to answer.

On the bridge of the *Saratoga*, Captain Joseph [illegible] promptly turned his ship into the wind and relayed *Liberty*'s message to the Sixth Fleet commander, Vice Admiral William Martin, who was on the bridge of his flagship conducting maneuvering exercises. Because of the emergency, Captain Tully addressed the message directly to Admiral Martin with his personal callsign on the Primary Tactical Maneuvering Circuit (PRI-TAC), and then he duplicated the transmission by teletype and flashing light with information copies to naval headquarters in Washington and London.

Admiral Martin immediately directed carriers *Saratoga* and *America* to launch aircraft to defend *Liberty*, but when the launch order was executed, only *Saratoga* complied. Except for some F-4 Phantoms that were eventually sent up to defend the fleet, *America* did not respond. She had, according to some reports, been authorized to relax from an alert posture that was imposed on much of the rest of the fleet. (The aircraft *America* did launch for air defense were thought by some to have been armed with nuclear weapons, since it was widely known that nuclear-armed weapons were in an alert status, but it is now clear that no such aircraft were launched.)

Captain Tully sent a flashing light query to Captain Donald Engen on the *America*, and got no reply. Moments later *Saratoga*'s aircraft were recalled with no explanation by Rear Admiral Lawrence Geis, who commanded the carrier task force.

America, which had no appropriate conventional armament in position, started bringing up weapons from below decks, while *Saratoga*, which was prepared to defend the *Liberty*, was required to wait impotently for White House permission.

Meanwhile, unobstructed by Sixth Fleet air power, the three Israeli torpedo boats arrived on schedule to finish the job. The target was already in flames after 25 to 30 minutes of aerial strafing and napalm bombardment by perhaps a dozen aircraft.

The boats approached at high speed and fired torpedoes from 2,000 yards out, owing to a near collision between two boats at the moment of firing, the first shots were wild. One torpedo passed safely astern, where it missed by a bare 25 yards. Another passed so close ahead of the ship that it vanished under the point of the bow, "sounding like a motorboat" to Petty Officer Rick Aumett, who stood, astonished, on the forecastle. And one torpedo made a direct hit on the ship's cryptologic spaces, where it killed 25 men and momentarily trapped at least 50 more in the flooded compartment.

1515 Hours

When *Liberty* miraculously remained afloat with a 40-foot hole in her belly, the torpedomen methodically machine-gunned exposed fire fighters and medical personnel for much of the next 40 minutes while watching the ship slowly sink lower in the water. Finally, at 1515, after word came from the bridge to prepare to abandon ship, *Liberty* crewmen launched three rubber rafts and tied them astern. The torpedomen machine-gunned the empty rafts, plucked one out of the water, and set a course for their base at Ashdod.

Liberty was alone, in flames, dead in the water, and sinking. Her radios were dead. Thirty-four men were dead or dying and 171 more were wounded. There was no sign of the Sixth Fleet, which only three days before had refused the ship's request for a destroyer escort and had promised to have air support overhead within ten minutes of any emergency.

1545 Hours

At 1545, the Sixth Fleet, having received *Liberty*'s call for help 90 minutes earlier, finally launched White House-authorized aircraft in *Liberty*'s defense, advised pilots of their authority to use lethal force, and filled the airwaves with plain language traffic supporting and describing the mission. Almost instantly, the Israeli government summoned the U.S. Naval Attaché to the foreign liaison office to report that Israeli forces had "erroneously attacked a U.S. ship" and to offer "abject apologies."

1632 Hours

At 1632, the torpedo boats returned to *Liberty* to ask: "Do you need help?" The reply from the bridge was obscene. The attack, after more than two-and-one-half hours, was over.

Coverup Begins

The coverup began a few hours later.

First, the Secretary of Defense directed that only his office could release information about the attack. The order was repeated, paraphrased, and reinforced throughout the chain of command. Soon, *Liberty* sailors were being reminded daily that they could say nothing about the attack to anyone, not even to members of their own families. A court of inquiry was to be held, the men were told, and nothing could be said until the court had completed its work.

The court held hearings aboard the ship during emergency repair work at Malta, but the hearings were limited and some of the most important witnesses were not called at all. Lookouts who might have described pre-attack reconnaissance were not asked to testify. My own sworn statement as officer-of-the-deck was read to the court, but inexplicably failed to find its way into the transcript. Deck logs for my watch were rewritten in my absence and without my knowledge, and without reference to the reconnaissance noted during my watch.

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Quartermaster's Notebook entries during the reconnaissance period were not filed with the record of the court. Photographs of reconnaissance aircraft and of the ship's freely flying flag were introduced to the court but were not filed in the record of the court.

Despite the oversights, however, an abundance of evidence did find its way into the record, although the record is such a jumble that expert knowledge and deep study is needed to make sense of it. The record reflects reports from several officers and senior crewmen who told the court of extensive, low-level reconnaissance and described the ship's flag flying freely in a good breeze in plain sight of low-flying aircraft; the record includes descriptions of an extended, carefully coordinated attack that can only have been planned in advance; it includes reports from radiomen of sophisticated jamming, which was limited to the frequencies needed to summon help. The record also includes a report of an Israeli excuse for the attack, which was so unlikely as to discredit even further any claim that the attack was a mistake.

Unfortunately, none of that evidence found its way to the American public; it was classified Top Secret and locked away from the prying eyes of the press. Instead, almost the only material declassified and released was that which supported the official claim that the attack was a mistake — the rest remained locked up in the top secret vault of the Navy Judge Advocate General.

Meanwhile, our government complained bitterly, but privately, to Israel that *Liberty* was identified before the attack, and characterized the affair officially as a "quite literally incomprehensible attack [which] must be condemned as an act of military recklessness reflecting wanton disregard for human life." Such candor, however, was only for diplomatic channels. Publicly, the Johnson administration supported the premise that the attack was brief, spontaneous, casual, and erroneous.

Instead of describing repeated reconnaissance flights as low as 200 feet directly overhead, the U.S. government reported publicly that the attack was an understandable case of mistaken identity, which was preceded by only three very distant and rather casual reconnaissance flights. The Johnson administration ignored the ship's logs and testimony of ship's officers and reported that the faulty identification was understandable because the flag hung limp at the mast on a windless day, despite evidence of a 12-knot wind. Instead of describing a prolonged and carefully coordinated attack in which the ship was under heavy fire for 75 minutes and calling desperately for help for another 75 minutes, the U.S. government reported that the air attack lasted only six minutes and that all firing ended when the torpedo boats drew close enough to see our flag. Our government repeated Israel's claim that the ship was mistaken for the Egyptian freighter *El Quseir*, but failed to note that *El Quseir* was a 40-year-old cattle boat, then moored at Alexandria, in poor shape, soon to be sold for scrap, probably incapable of leaving

ber pier, and a most improbable candidate for a Liberty-look-alike.

Crew's Speech Was Restricted

The *Liberty* crew had been told early in the coverup that they would be free to talk to the press once the court of inquiry report was declassified and released. But this was not to be. The long-awaited freedom to speak was fraught with so many restrictions as to be no freedom at all. Men were told that they could say *only* what had been said by the court of inquiry and that they must use exactly the same words that the court had used. "Therefore," men were told in the ship's Plan-of-the-Day and in warnings read to them at morning quarters, "there is nothing new that we would be able to tell them in an interview."

The fact that the radios were jammed, that napalm was used, that the life rafts were shot up in the water, that American forces failed to arrive during a 2½-hour ordeal, or that most of the crew considered that attack deliberate, were all among details omitted from our government's published version of the court of inquiry report, so those matters were not to be discussed.

Such orders, I believe, were an overreaction to any legitimate concern for security, and perhaps they were not even legal orders, but they did serve to intimidate the crew, keeping the story under wraps for many years.

What has been the cost of the *Liberty* coverup?

One obvious cost has been a deeply shaken faith among the many who know the truth. Some *Liberty* survivors have told me that they abandoned a Navy career because of their dismay over the attack; a *Liberty* officer told me that he would not want his son to serve in the military because he no longer feels confident that our country will support its forces in combat.

But more important are the lessons that have not been learned. Seven months after the *Liberty* attack, Commander Lloyd Bucher sailed the USS *Pueblo* from Japan toward North Korea on an intelligence mission quite similar to *Liberty*'s. Commander Bucher was refused gunfire training for his gun crews, he was limited to 100 rounds of ammunition for each of his puny deck-mounted machine guns, and he was required by his seniors to wrap his guns in canvas "so as not to appear hostile." Like *Liberty*, he was assured that "in the unlikely event" he got in trouble, friendly fighter aircraft could be overhead in minutes. When he did get in trouble, the fighter cover failed to arrive—just as with *Liberty*. The very forces that were to have protected him failed to perform—just as with *Liberty*.

Commander Bucher now believes that, had the full story of the *Liberty* attack been known to planners and commanders involved with the *Pueblo*, the *Pueblo* tragedy might have ended quite differently. Instead, the *Pueblo* was attacked and captured under circumstances very similar to those seen so recently in the *Liberty* attack, and the American military response was the same: no visible reaction at all.

Behind-the-Scenes Efforts

Even before the *Pueblo* capture, the government took some behind-the-scenes steps to protect the intelligence ships: those operating in particularly dangerous waters, such as USNS *Sergeant Muller* near Cuba, were given destroyer escorts. Some consideration was given to flying oversize flags or to painting the American flag on the ships' decks. When it became clear that adequate protection would add tremendously to an already expensive operation, the ships were removed from service and the technical research ship program was dismantled.

Loss of this nation's fleet of dedicated intelligence collecting ships was deeply felt in the intelligence community. No other platform can quite do the same job. Clearly, other sensors are available, but no other platform can put 300 or more men within a few miles of an emitter for days or even weeks at a time, complete with many thousands of pounds of support equipment, and all with limitless technical resources instantly available by radio from home.

So when the ships were lost, with them went much of their unique intelligence-gathering capability. Important among the abilities lost—beyond direct support to local commanders and SIGINT support to national authorities—was the ships' capacity to locate, collect, and report sophisticated foreign electromagnetic signals for addition to the national data base of known characteristics of electronic emitters, where the knowledge could aid in development of electronic warfare countermeasures.

While other platforms can do much of this work, probably no other vehicle can do it as well, and certainly no other sensor can track a target as thoroughly. The extent of loss may not be known until some distant commander is suddenly faced by a new and unknown electronic threat for which he has no effective defense.

Military Review, in a recent review of *Assault on the Liberty*, aptly noted that "in its vital interest, a state must, on occasion, be brutal. . . ." Perhaps that, too, is a lesson to be learned from the *Liberty* affair: the lesson that a state, no matter how seemingly friendly toward the United States, is, above all, a sovereign, independent, self-interested nation and will put its own national interests first if forced to make a choice; that we cannot depend upon the forbearance of a friendly state when that state perceives that we are doing something unfriendly, such as observing its secret war preparations from a neutral position; and that, if we do, we should be prepared to defend the observers.

But because the friendly nation in this case is the nation of Israel, and because the nation of Israel is widely, passionately, and expensively supported in the United States, and perhaps also because a proper inquiry would reveal a humiliating failure of Command, Control, and Communications, an adequate investigation of the attack on the USS *Liberty* has yet to be politically palatable.

And so the lessons of warfare, diplomacy, politics, and history remain unlearned. ■

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PEOPLE weekly (ISSN 0093-7673) published weekly, except two issues combined in one in June and July, and $40 per year in the U.S., by Time Inc., 541 N. Fairbanks Court, Chicago, IL 60611. Principal office, Rockefeller Center, New York, N.Y. 10020. Jonathan A. Bingham, President; J. Richard Munro, Executive Vice President; Charles B. Bear, Secretary. Second class postage paid at Chicago, IL and at additional mailing offices. Authorized as second class mail by the Post Office Dept., Ottawa, Canada and for payment of postage in cash. Owner reserves the right to accept or reject any subscription order. Time & Life Building, Chicago, IL 60611.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to PEOPLE weekly, Time & Life Building, 541 N. Fairbanks Court, Chicago, IL 60611. Send all other mail to PEOPLE, Time & Life Building, Rockefeller Center, New York, N.Y. 10020. Time Inc. assumes no responsibility for unsolicited photographs and manuscripts, which must be accompanied by a self-addressed, stamped envelope if the material is to be returned.

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A.A.

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THE ISRAELI ATTACK ON THE U.S. SPY SHIP 'LIBERTY': A NEW BOOK CLAIMS IT WAS DELIBERATE



"Initially in the White House thought the attack was an accident," says Ennes, visiting the U.S.S. Missouri near Seattle.

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[illegible] 300 miles away. Only when U.S. planes were on the way, Ennes claims, did the Israelis acknowledge their "mistake."

Ennes, who suffered a crushed leg, and the other crew members had a new shock in store when rescue ships reached the *Liberty*. Senior officers from the Navy and the Department of Defense warned, "Don't answer any questions, and don't talk to the press." Ennes argues that the Johnson administration, eager to mend fences with Israel, endorsed the Navy's desire to forget the incident. "The cover-up consisted of not investigating fully, not asking questions," he says. "There's always a concern when intelligence is involved. The attitude is 'My God, don't say anything about anything.'"

In particular Ennes accuses Capt. William McGonagle, who received the Congressional Medal of Honor for heroism aboard the *Liberty*, of minimizing the attack to the Navy court of inquiry.

To this day the Navy stands by the court's unusually ambivalent report. "The U.S.S. *Liberty* was in international waters, properly marked as to her identity and nationality and in calm, clear weather when she suffered an unprovoked attack," it says. Yet: "The court had insufficient information before it to make a judgment on the reason for the decision to attack." The Israelis are firm. "There is no truth to the report that it was an attack," says Avlezer Pazner, of the Israeli embassy in Washington. "The bombing was a mistake we deeply regret, and indemnities we have paid to the families of the people killed" (more than $3 million to them and nearly $3.5 million to the injured crewmen).

To research the book during his year-long recuperation, Ennes interviewed dozens of the *Liberty*'s 259 survivors and later obtained declassified government documents through the Freedom of Information Act. To get around mandatory review of the manuscript by the Navy he waited until after his retirement in July 1978 to sign with a publisher. Still, he says he betrayed no secrets in his book—"There are some things I'm not free to talk about, I'm still under a strict security oath." Now living in the Seattle area with his wife and three children, Ennes is pleased with his second career as a writer—the book is selling briskly—but even more gratified by the reaction of shipmates from the *Liberty*. "They thought it was pretty good," he allows modestly, "and that it was about time."

SAM A. ANGELOFF



Sen. Richard Taylor (left) and Lieut. James O'Connor were among 34 Americans died in the Israeli attack.



Two men died in this forward gun tub, which took heavy rocket fire. Later, Israeli fighters dropped napalm on the ship.



Listing to starboard, the Liberty (above) limped into port. "From the Israeli standpoint, the attack was probably a sound military decision," argues Ennes (right, in uniform in 1968).



I thought, 'We're all going to die,'" says former naval officer James M. Ennes Jr. "Some of the men were so terrified they called out for their mamas. I thought that only happened in the movies. They wept and prayed and fell down—and then went out in front of the guns and gave their lives." The rain of death that fell on Ennes and the rest of the crew of the U.S.S. *Liberty* on June 8, 1967, was friendly fire: At the height of the Six-Day War, Israeli planes and gunboats attacked and nearly sank the American intelligence ship [illegible] 15 miles off the coast of Egypt. Thirty-four Americans were killed, 171 were wounded. The Israeli government apologized, claiming that its pilots had mistaken the *Liberty* for an Egyptian freighter. There the matter pretty much rested until [illegible] ago when Ennes, now 48, published a book titled *Assault on the Liberty* (Random House).

In it the author angrily charges, "The attack was too neat, too precise, to be accidental." He claims it was part of a calculated effort to keep the U.S. in the dark about Israel's imminent invasion of Syria. The *Liberty* had sophisticated equipment capable of monitoring Tel Aviv's orders to its troops on the Syrian border. "The Israelis knew if we found out," Ennes says, "there would be tremendous pressure on them from the White House, because of President Johnson's effort to cool down the war."

The Israelis made repeated reconnaissance flights before attacking, Ennes says. "We were flying a large American flag and our numbers were visible." The attack lasted one hour and a quarter, involved up to a dozen aircraft and three torpedo boats and ended with the machine-gunning of three life rafts. Israeli planes also jammed the *Liberty*'s radio calls for help. "It's almost impossible to jam somebody without knowing who they are," says Ennes, who was a code and communications specialist.

Ennes suspects that Israeli commanders, including then Defense Minister Moshe Dayan, expected the *Liberty* to be sunk with all hands—and thus no witnesses. But the ship managed to send a message to the Sixth

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Remember The 'Liberty'

ASSAULT ON THE LIBERTY: The True Story of the Israeli Attack on an American Intelligence Ship. By James M. Ennes Jr. Random House. 299 pp. $9.95

By L. M. BUCHER

TRAGEDY, COLOSSAL communications blunders and a classic government cover-up, abetted by the U.S. Navy, are the main ingredients of this excellent book by James M. Ennes Jr. A cryptographic specialist, Lieutenant Ennes was one of 287 men aboard the USS *Liberty* on June 8, 1967, when Israeli air and naval forces attacked and inflicted tremendous damage on the ship. Thirty-four Americans were killed; Ennes was one of the 171 others who were wounded.

Thank God the entire crew was not killed. Had they been, the *Liberty* incident might be forever forgotten, like the unarmed Navy surveillance aircraft shot down by North Korea in April 1969.

I believe that, if the lessons of the *Liberty* had been known to planners and commanders involved with the USS *Pueblo*, the sorry tragedy of that ship would never have happened as it did. The "Pueblo Incident," in which I was a principal player, bore many striking resemblances to the story of the *Liberty*. The two ships had almost identical electronic surveillance missions, although *Liberty's* displacement was more than 15 times that of *Pueblo* and she was crewed by more than three times the personnel. The similarities are a terrible confusion in command and control, a lack of response to desperate calls for assistance during attack and a cover-up for [illegible] at the top. But *Liberty* was pounded [illegible] heavily than *Pueblo* was, with far more [illegible]



THE U.S. "LIBERTY" [illegible]

James M. Ennes, Jr. Research Papers

[illegible] Egyptian relations began [illegible] "[illegible]," seeing an opportunity to [illegible] large [illegible] of electronic intelligence, ordered *Liberty* from [illegible] operations along the African [illegible] to the [illegible] contiguous to Israel and Egypt. The ship arrived just after hostilities erupted.

Liberty's captain, Commander William L. McGonagle, realized the great danger inherent in operating in a war zone and requested close support from the commander of the Sixth Fleet. As we later to be the case with *Pueblo*, close support was denied. McGonagle was promised, however, as I was on the *Pueblo*, that help would be instantaneous in the event of trouble. Carrier air support was only 10 minutes away.

Later, seven minutes after the first devastating rocket attack from Israeli jets, *Liberty's* call for help was acknowledged by the carrier USS *Saratoga*. Incredibly, not one *Saratoga* aircraft ever arrived to help the stricken ship. Nor for that matter did any U.S. military assistance arrive during the hour and 20 minutes of continuous air and torpedo boat attacks.

This debacle is partially explained by the author. The Naval Court of Inquiry that looked into the affair abysmally failed to fix any blame for the terrible failure to aid compatriots undergoing foreign attack. Not only was blame not fixed, the facts were covered up.

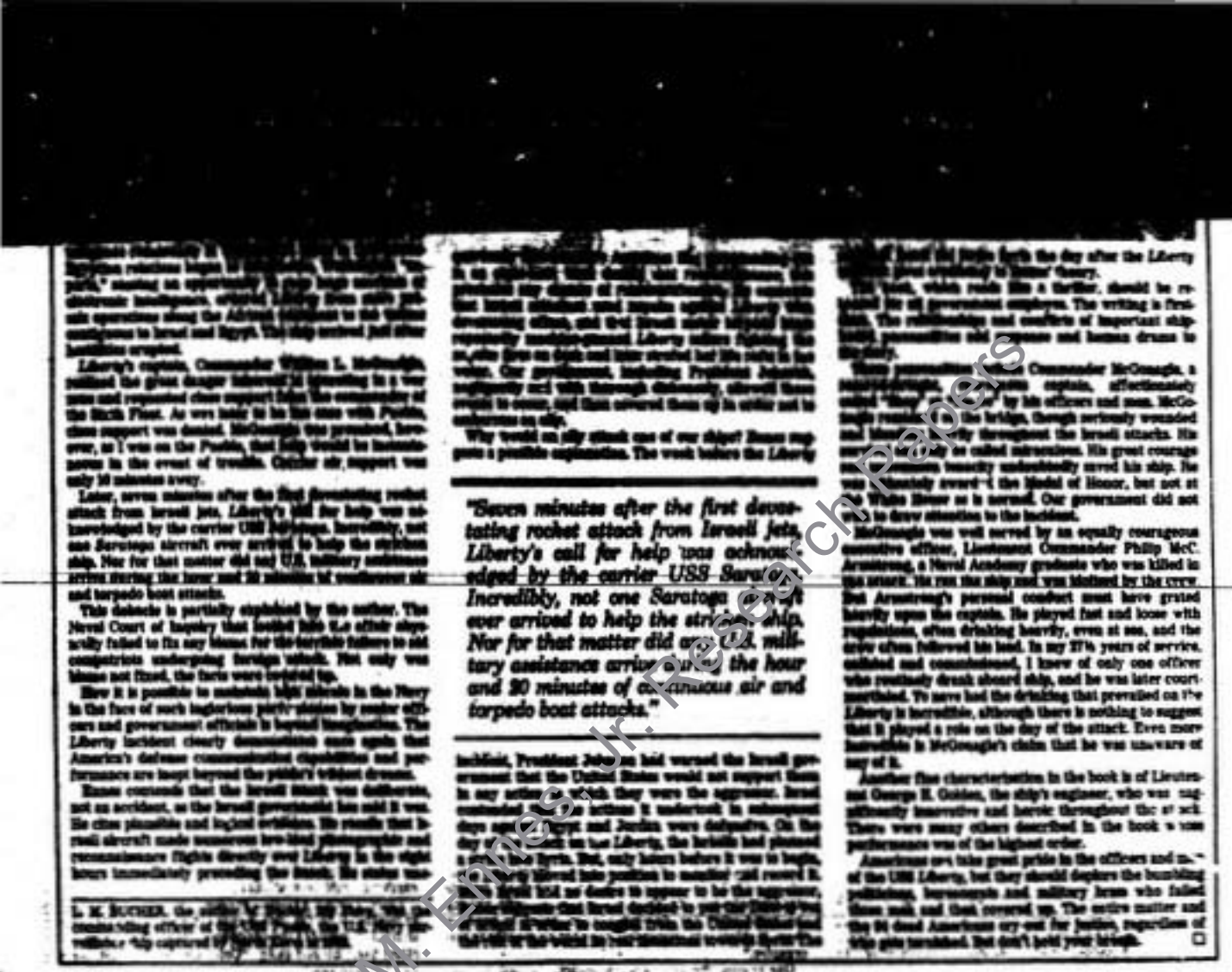
How it is possible to maintain high morale in the Navy in the face of such inglorious performance by senior officers and government officials is beyond imagination. The *Liberty* incident clearly demonstrates once again that America's defense communication capabilities and performance are inept beyond the public's wildest dreams.

Ennes contends that the Israeli attack was deliberate, not an accident, as the Israeli government has said it was. He cites plausible and logical evidence. He recalls that Israeli aircraft made numerous low-level photographic and reconnaissance flights directly over *Liberty* in the eight hours immediately preceding the attack. He states [illegible]

L. M. BUCHER, the author of [illegible], [illegible] the commanding officer of the USS *Pueblo*, the U.S. Navy surveillance ship captured by [illegible] in 1968.

[illegible] in an [illegible] that [illegible] the [illegible] of [illegible] that Israeli [illegible] against *Liberty* when devastating offices, and that Israeli [illegible] repeatedly [illegible] *Liberty* [illegible] the [illegible] fires on deck and later strafed her life rafts in the water. Our government, including President Johnson, negligently and with thorough dishonesty, allowed these events to occur, and then covered them up in order not to embarrass an ally.

Why would an ally attack one of our ships? Ennes suggests a possible explanation. The week before the *Liberty*



> *"Seven minutes after the first devastating rocket attack from Israeli jets, Liberty's call for help was acknowledged by the carrier USS Saratoga. Incredibly, not one Saratoga aircraft ever arrived to help the stricken ship. Nor for that matter did any U.S. military assistance arrive during the hour and 20 minutes of continuous air and torpedo boat attacks."*

incident, President Johnson had warned the Israeli government that the United States would not support them in any action in which they were the aggressor. Israel contended that the actions it undertook in subsequent days against Egypt and Jordan were defensive. On the day of the attack on the *Liberty*, the Israelis had planned a [illegible] into Syria. But, only hours before it was to begin, [illegible] moved into position to monitor and record it. [illegible] Israel had no desire to appear to be the aggressor, [illegible] that Israel decided to put the [illegible] of [illegible] to coagle from the United States and [illegible] the world to [illegible] towards Syria. The [illegible] the day after the *Liberty* [illegible] to [illegible] theory.

The book, which reads like a thriller, should be [illegible] for all government employes. The writing is first-class. The relationships and conflicts of important ship-board personalities add suspense and human drama to the story.

[illegible] Commander McGonagle, a [illegible] captain, affectionately called "[illegible]" by his officers and men. McGonagle remained on the bridge, though seriously wounded and [illegible] throughout the Israeli attacks. His [illegible] called miraculous. His great courage [illegible] tenacity undoubtedly saved his ship. He was [illegible] award of the Medal of Honor, but not at the White House as is normal. Our government did not wish to draw attention to the incident.

McGonagle was well served by an equally courageous executive officer, Lieutenant Commander Philip McC. Armstrong, a Naval Academy graduate who was killed in the attack. He ran the ship and was idolized by the crew. But Armstrong's personal conduct must have grated heavily upon the captain. He played fast and loose with regulations, often drinking heavily, even at sea, and the crew often followed his lead. In my 27½ years of service, enlisted and commissioned, I knew of only one officer who routinely drank aboard ship, and he was later court-martialed. To have had the drinking that prevailed on the *Liberty* is incredible, although there is nothing to suggest that it played a role on the day of the attack. Even more incredible is McGonagle's claim that he was unaware of any of it.

Another fine characterization in the book is of Lieutenant George H. Golden, the ship's engineer, who was magnificently innovative and heroic throughout the attack. There were many others described in the book whose performance was of the highest order.

Americans can take great pride in the officers and men of the USS *Liberty*, but they should deplore the bumbling politicians, bureaucrats and military brass who failed them such and then covered up. The entire matter and the 34 dead Americans cry out for justice, regardless of who gets tarnished. But don't hold your breath. □

James M. Ennes, Jr. Research Papers

Congressional Record

United States of America

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 97th CONGRESS, SECOND SESSION

Vol. 128 WASHINGTON, THURSDAY, MAY 27, 1982 No. 67

Senate

HONORING THE CREW OF THE U.S.S. "LIBERTY"

● Mr. DENTON. Mr. President, as we approach this Memorial Day holiday, I believe it is fitting and proper that we take a moment to reflect on the true purpose of this day and to honor the countless number of dedicated men and women who have served our Nation with courage, conviction, and dignity under difficult and trying circumstances.

In consonance with this national celebration, I would like to call the attention of my colleagues to the upcoming reunion of the crew of the U.S.S. *Liberty*. The events surrounding the fate of U.S.S. *Liberty* have been shrouded in secrecy, but, regardless of events, the bravery, discipline, and diligence of her crew instills a sense of pride and admiration that commands the respect of all Americans.

On June 8, 1967, while operating in the Mediterranean Sea, U.S.S. *Liberty* (AGTR-5) was attacked from the air, without warning. Napalm, rocket, cannon, and machinegun fire were brought to bear against *Liberty*. This air assault was followed by attack from motor torpedo boats, inflicting grievous damage from cannon and torpedo fire. When the unprovoked attack was over, there were 34 dead and 171 wounded among the crew of 294.

Only superior damage control and selfless dedication to duty prevented the sinking of the *Liberty*. Courage and discipline characterized the actions of the crew. Bravery was the rule. Captain William L. McGonagle was awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor for his actions during and after the attack. Although seriously wounded, Captain McGonagle refused medical attention, remaining on the bridge to retain his ship and lead his men. Numerous members of the crew were cited for acts of heroism. The crew of the U.S.S. *Liberty* displayed an efficiency in battle that commands our respect and admiration. This ship and the exceptional men who served on her have truly earned a place of honor in our history.

Mr. President, as we celebrate this Memorial Day, let us pay tribute to the men of the *Liberty*, and to the millions of Americans who have worked, suffered, and died to protect and preserve the blessings of liberty for ourselves and our posterity.●

James M. Ennes Jr. Research Papers

Dear

I am a survivor of the attack by Israel upon the American naval vessel USS Liberty during the Six Day War in 1967. From my personal experiences that day I am convinced that the attack was deliberate and that our government is not telling the truth it. My shipmates agree. So do former leaders of the era such as Dean Rusk, Richard Helms, Louis Tordella and former JCS Chairman Admiral Thomas Moorer.

I know that the Department of State regularly informs members of Congress that the department has "no information to substantiate allegations that Israel deliberately attacked the USS Liberty." However, I am not satisfied with that reply.

Therefore, won't you please do this:

1. Read the "Transcript of the U.S. Navy Court of Inquiry into the Israeli attack on the USS Liberty." This is available from the Navy Judge Advocate General and is public information.

2. Notice that certain "Findings of Fact" are contrary to evidence in the file. For example:

Finding: The U.S. flag may have hung limp at the mast due to windless conditions, making recognition difficult. However, this finding is unsupported by evidence and is contrary to sworn statements by crewmen.

Finding: The ship was misidentified due to limited reconnaissance. However, sworn statements by survivors show that reconnaissance was intense, frequent, and conducted from low-level.

Finding: The attack was an accident. However, there is no evidence to support this finding and much in the record to refute it.

Vital questions remain unanswered:

The Israeli excuse has been officially determined by the Department of State to be untrue. (Source: 21 September 1967 report by State Department Legal Adviser Carl F. Salans.) Then-Secretary of State Dean Rusk has said publicly that he considers the Israeli excuse untrue. Why then does our government still publicly support and rely upon that excuse?

Why did the U.S. Navy publish "findings of fact" that are unsupported by evidence, and why does our government accept those findings.

Why were Sixth Fleet rescue aircraft recalled while the ship was still under attack and calling for help?

Why does the official Israeli excuse differ markedly from sworn testimony of survivors?

These and related questions cry out for answers. Won't you look into the matter and let us know what can be done?

Sincerely,

Individual letters are always best. Ideally, you should write an original letter, perhaps asking some of the questions suggested here. If you don't want to do that, you can retype this letter or rewrite it in your own handwriting. Finally, you can detach this note, sign this letter, add the date, your address and your congressman's name, and mail it as-is.

Your congressman's name and local address can be found in some local telephone directories. His Washington address is (for representatives) House of Representatives, Washington, D.C. 20515; (for senators) United States Senate, Washington, D.C. 20510.

Telephone inquiries are effective. Call 202 224-3121 and ask the operator to connect you with your congressman.

James M. Ennes Jr. Research Papers

Page A10 Saturday, September 14, 1985

The Virginian-Pilot

Editorials

Liberty's untold story

Retired Adm. Thomas Moorer correctly accuses the United States and Israel of deliberately obscuring the particulars of the 1967 attack by Israeli warplanes and torpedo boats on the U.S. intelligence-gathering ship *Liberty* in which 34 U.S. Navy men were killed and 171 wounded. We support Admiral Moorer's motion that Congress set the record straight "once and for all [to] clear up the uncertainties, speculation and unanswered questions surrounding this tragedy."

If Admiral Moorer, who is a former chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, is still angry about the *Liberty* massacre, he has cause: Israel's attack on *Liberty* was mistaken by the attackers for an Egyptian ship, was apparently unbelievable and unconscionable. The vessel was cruising in international waters 15 miles off the Sinai Peninsula at the time of the Six-Day War, and its flag and markings were unmistakably American and the murderous onslaught occurred in clear weather.

The Admiral's conjecture about motive — that the Israelis attacked *Liberty* to prevent Washington from being forewarned about an Israeli military push into Syria the next day — almost certainly is on the mark: President Johnson reportedly had sternly cautioned Israel against just such a move.

Israel paid reparations following the attack. But that does not satisfy the continuing passion for truth about the death and destruction wreaked on *Liberty* on June 8, 1967. Was *Liberty* warned by U.S. authorities? If not, why not? Were U.S. fighters dispatched to defend *Liberty*, only to be recalled on orders from Washington? If so, what could possibly justify intentional failure to protect virtually defenseless U.S. military personnel under attack from any quarter?

Admiral Moorer says the public should have the facts. Agreed.

Admiral charges cover-up of attack

James M. Ennes, Jr. Research Papers

Admiral charges cover-up of attack

WASHINGTON (AP) — Retired Admiral Thomas Moorer accused the U.S. and Israeli governments Saturday of covering up evidence surrounding the 1967 Israeli attack on the American intelligence ship USS Liberty.

Thirty-four Americans crewmen were killed and 171 wounded in the combined air and sea attack June 8, 1967, against the reconnaissance ship, which was cruising in international waters 15 miles off the Sinai Peninsula during the Six-Day War.

Israel maintains that its fighter pilots, who buzzed the ship for eight hours before the attack, and torpedo boat crews, mistook the Liberty for an Egyptian ship.

"The Israelis maintain this was simply a case of mistaken identity, but this clearly does not hold water," said Moorer, who was chief of naval operations at the time of the attack. "In clear visibility, this unique ship was very easy to identify."

"The Israeli forces [illegible] the ship and then proceeded to attack over an extended period of time. There is simply no way the fighter pilots and torpedo boat crews could have come to such a conclusion," he said.

Moorer, a former chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, joined a dozen surviving crew members of the USS Liberty at a seminar during the annual convention of the American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee in Washington.

Moorer said the electronics-laden ship could not have been misidentified by highly trained Israeli pilots.

He suggested that the incident was a deliberate attack to prevent the Liberty from picking up [illegible] that would have [illegible] the United States of an Israeli military push into Syria the next day.

Israel occupied the Sinai Peninsula, the Gaza Strip and East Jerusalem during the Six-Day War and drove 12 miles into Syrian territory.

The retired admiral charged that President Johnson "significantly understated the extent of the casualties," and said no formal congressional hearings were held on the incident, as was the case after the capture of the USS Pueblo by North Korea in 1968.

"Based on the way this tragedy was handled, both in the United States and Israel, one must conclude there is much information that has not been made available to the public," said Moorer, who was a member of President Reagan's Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board from 1982 to 1984.

The U.S. Sixth Fleet, positioned nearby, received a distress call from the Liberty, and one carrier dispatched a squadron to search for the disabled ship. Before the ship was found, the fleet received orders from Washington ordering the planes back.

"In the United States [illegible] information available to the government indicating [illegible] participated in controlling the operation from Washington, together with the exact text of orders transmitted to the Mediterranean fleet and the Liberty have never been made public," said Moorer.

Moorer called on the Congress to "once and for all clear up the uncertainties, speculation and unanswered questions surrounding this tragedy, which is still thought by many to be a deliberate cover-up on the part of the government of Israel as well as the government of the United States."

Joseph Meaders, a signalman aboard the Liberty, said it was his job to ensure that proper flags were flying on the ship, and said an American flag was clearly visible while Israeli planes staged 12 reconnaissance flights over the ship during an eight-hour period preceding the attack. His account contradicted the Israeli version, which said that no flag was visible.

Meaders said the flag was [illegible] during the initial wave of fighter-bomber assaults, but a larger flag was hoisted before Israeli torpedo boats joined the [illegible].

Liberty crew member Rick Almotti said that during a lull in the attack, an Israeli [illegible] dropped a note onto the ship's deck with the [illegible] "Were there any



THOMAS MOORER
Ship "was very easy to identify"

REMEMBER THE U.S.S. LIBERTY (AGTR-5)

U.S.S. LIBERTY
AGTR-5

James M. Barnes Jr. Research Papers

could do to what to do with the Christmas bonus they weren't sure. This year, President Ferguson decided to do something about it, something that, as he put it, he hoped would boost company morale.

That something was not your boring, predictable, uninspirational Christmas bonus, which traditional employers have normally imposed on their employees. It was not, in other words, uninspired old money. No, each and every one of Southwest Air-

Scrooge in D.C.

MERRY CHRISTMAS . . . the check is in the mail. The District Summer Jobs for Youth program ended officially in the first week of September. But yesterday, in the next-to-last week of December, the city's Department of Employment Services, which runs —in a manner of speaking—the summer jobs program, was still trying to get out paychecks for that program. According to DES officials, several hundred (they don't know exactly how many) young people still are owed money by the jobs program. Three hundred of the young people's complaints about non-payment have been researched in the last few days in an attempt to get them their money in time for Christmas. But checks for only half of those 300 youngsters were ever located and certified as being owed to the youngsters as of yesterday morning.

That teen-agers who worked a summer job are still not paid, four months after the last worker said good-bye, is the latest evidence of how badly managed the jobs program has been for the last two years. This summer, the jobs program has been a mess. Some work sites have had too many youngsters assigned to work, so that young people are left to sit around or play ball until quitting time; hardly a good lesson for people who are learning what it is like to get a job. At other job sites, too few young people have been assigned, leaving employers hanging for other workers. There have even been job sites where employers have asked for young people and none have been assigned.

These [illegible] befall young people who are lucky enough to actually get registered and assigned to a job in the summer program. Last year, parents of low-income youngsters had to accompany their children—taking time off from low-paying jobs—to job centers so their children could register for work. In those cases where children could not convince parents to go with them to the job sites, the youngsters never got registered. For some other youngsters, the job assignment never came in the mail, although they had registered and been promised one.

Yet the worst of the job program's headaches was its inability to pay the young people—right up to this Christmas Day. Now is the time to end this mess. Let's call it a Christmas present to the children of the city. The first step necessary will be for the Department of Employment Services to get a payroll system in place now—immediately—and test it to see if it works. The second step is to line up employers for next summer's jobs and register all the young people for those jobs in the next two months. In March and April, the employers and the young people can be matched by interests, needs and neighborhoods. In May, any mistakes or problems can be corrected so the program can get off to a fast start in June. It would be a shame for the city government to have to play Scrooge again next year to children from poor families.

The Liberty Affair

NO SINGLE incident within memory involving the United States and a friendly nation has left a more bitter taste than the sinking of the intelligence ship USS Liberty off Gaza during the 1967 Mideast war. Thirty-four American Navy men died in an 80-minute Israeli air-and-sea assault that Israelis have attributed ever since to a case of mistaken identity: they say they mistook the American electronic surveillance vessel for an Egyptian supply ship. An American court of inquiry found that an "unprovoked" Israeli attack had been made on a ship "properly marked as to her identity and nationality" but did not speculate on the reason for the attack.

More recently, a retired Navy officer who was wounded in the attack, alleging a cover-up, has reported some telling details. The Liberty was flying a bright new flag, he said, and one or more of the half-dozen Israeli planes that flew over just before the attack identified it correctly in a message sent back to shore. The attackers, he went on, were intent not only on sinking the ship but on killing the crew: life rafts were shot up and spirited away. The motive attributed was to keep the Liberty, which had the equipment to eavesdrop on Israeli battlefield communications, from informing the U.S. government that Israel was planning to invade Syria, as it shortly did.

Was the United States, in putting an intelligence ship in a war zone, counting too casually on the forbearance of a nation that, however friendly, was engaged in a war that, many felt was a struggle for its very survival? Did Israel, in hitting the ship, really make a mistake or was it trading with intolerable cynicism on its overall relationship with the United States? Certainly the two governments have shown no inclination to address such questions. Indeed, just the other day, acting without prior notice during the transition lull, they rubbed the slate clean by finally moving to tackle on the sum that Israel will pay for American damage claims. But the affair cannot be considered to be over. The facts are for the future to tell.

James M. Ennes, Jr. Research Papers

1967 attack on ship 'puzzles' ex-admiral

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Ret. rd Admiral Thomas Moorer accused the U.S. and Israeli governments Saturday of covering up evidence surrounding the 1967 Israeli attack on a American intelligence ship USS Liberty.

Thirty-four American crewmen were killed and 171 wounded in the combined air and sea attack June 8, 1967, against the reconnaissance ship, cruising in international waters 15 miles off the Sinai Peninsula during the Six-Day War.

Israel maintains its fighter pilots, who learned the ship for eight hours prior to the attack, and its patrol boat crews, mistook the Liberty for an Egyptian ship.

"The Israelis maintain it was simply a case of mistaken identity, but this ship was flying a bold water," said Moorer, who was chief of naval operations at the time of the attack. "In clear visibility, this ship ... was very easy to identify.

"The Israeli forces circled the ship and then proceeded to attack over an extended period of time."

Joseph Meadors, a signalman aboard the Liberty, said it was his job to ensure that proper flags were flying, and said an American flag was clearly visible. The Israelis maintained no flag was visible.

Moorer, a former chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, joined a dozen surviving crew members of the USS Liberty at a seminar during the annual convention of the American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee in Washington.

Moorer suggested the incident was a deliberate attack to prevent the Liberty from picking up signals that would have warned the United States of an Israeli military push into Syria the next day.

Israel occupied the Sinai Peninsula, the Gaza Strip and East Jerusalem during the Six-Day War, and drove 13 miles into Syrian territory.

The retired admiral charged that President Johnson "significantly understated the extent of the casualties," and said no formal congressional hearings were held on the incident, as was the case following the capture of the USS Pueblo by North Korea in 1968.

"Based on the way the tragedy was handled, both by the United States and Israel, one must conclude that much information that has not been made available to the public," said Moorer, who was a member of President Reagan's Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board from 1982 to 1984.

The U.S. Sixth Fleet, positioned nearby, received a distress call from the Liberty, and one carrier dispatched a squadron to search for the disabled ship. Before the ship was found, the fleet received orders from Washington ordering the planes back.

Moorer called on Congress to "once and for all clear up the uncertainties ... surrounding this tragedy."

James M. Ennes, Jr. Research Papers

James M. Ennes, Jr.
THE USS LIBERTY NEWSLETTER
Post Office Box 789
Woodinville, Washington 98072

Dear TROA friend:

Please excuse this impersonal way of answering your recent note to Liberty Veterans Association Chairman Stan White. Stan asked me to tell you about our organization. However, we have been so overwhelmed with mail (all of it, incidentally, very friendly) that individual replies are impossible.

Stan is taking a needed rest from his exhausting duties as president. He originally agreed to serve three years, but has actually served almost five years. The new president is Joe McGorra, who was present on the bridge with me during the attack. Joe can be reached through the address above, while Stan will remain as Chairman of the Board and President Emeritus as long as he is willing. Stan is a retired Master Chief Cryptologic Technician who was Master Chief Petty Officer of the USS Liberty and holds a special place of honor with all of us.

The USS Liberty Veterans Association has been organized informally for five years and formally for three. We have located about 160 former crewmen, most of whom are members. In addition, we have about 200 associate members whose annual dues help make us large enough to support our quarterly newsletter. Our goals are to find the remaining survivors, to tell the truth about the attack, to correct the public record about the attack, to honor our fallen shipmates, and to bring proper recognition to our heroic commanding officer, Captain William McGonagle.

(Though awarded the Medal of Honor for bravery, Captain McGonagle's medal was not presented by the President in the White House as is customary; for political reasons and over the protests of the Chief of Naval Operations, his medal was presented almost in secret in the Washington Navy Yard. Meanwhile, the gravestone marking the mutilated remains of six of our shipmates at Arlington National Cemetery was evasively marked "DIED IN THE EASTERN MEDITERRANEAN." After considerable struggle, we persuaded the government to change that to read, "KILLED - USS LIBERTY.")

We also hope to see a serious reinvestigation into the circumstances of the attack, as we consider the original investigation inadequate. This month retired JCS Chairman Admiral Thomas Moorer (who was CNO when the original investigation was approved) publicly renewed his call for a reinvestigation.

James M. Ennes Jr. Research Papers

Support for our story from the Retired Officers Association is gratifying, and we hope many of you will write to the magazine as you did to us. It is certain that "the other side" will be applying pressure. Now TROA will need your support to withstand the charges that are bound to result.

American veterans organizations often find this story inappropriate for their members, partly because of pro-Israeli intimidation. Before finding space in The Retired Officer, for example, the article was rejected as too controversial by American Legion Magazine (which originally commissioned and then rejected it), VFW Magazine, and two smaller veterans organizations. Both the Legion and the VFW have supported the Liberty in the past, but both turned to jelly when pressure is applied.

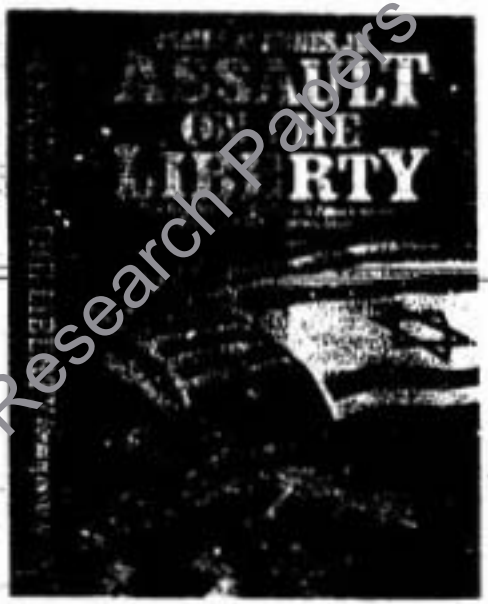
~~The current edition of the USS LIBERTY NEWSLETTER will be mailed Monday. In mid-May that you got a complimentary copy.~~ The newsletter is the best way to follow Liberty developments. We are making progress with our story, and it is sometimes exciting to watch. We hope you will subscribe, as we need your moral support. We also need your financial support, as we are not large enough to support our newsletter and public affairs program without outside help. Several of our own crewmen and a number of other subscribers contribute $100 to $300 annually, and occasionally even more. Since we have recently been granted tax exempt status by the IRS, any contributions beyond the basic $10 subscription fee are tax deductible.

Also, I am enclosing an order form for a signed copy of my book, Assault on the Liberty, in case you care to read the full story of the attack. The book has been widely praised and was honored by the U S Naval Institute as a "Notable Naval Book" soon after it was published. Unfortunately, booksellers seem to have trouble finding it, even though it is still stocked by one of America's leading publishers.

Yours very truly, Jim Ennes

James M. Ennes, Jr. Research Papers

ASSAULT ON THE LIBERTY



By James M. Ennes, Jr.

James M. Ennes, Jr. Research Papers

THE TRUE STORY OF THE ISRAELI ATTACK ON AN AMERICAN INTELLIGENCE SHIP.

In 1967 an American naval vessel, USS LIBERTY, was attacked in international waters by air and naval forces of Israel. The prolonged, carefully orchestrated assault killed 34 crewmen and wounded 171, but the entire matter was brushed aside by our government despite evidence that it was deliberate. Now a ship's officer who survived the attack reveals the full story for the first time.

Selected as a

by the
United States Naval Institute

Reads like a thriller. The writing is first class. The relationships and conflicts of important shipboard personalities add suspense and human drama to the story. – THE WASHINGTON POST

This book is remarkably enjoyable – a balance between "The Cruel Sea" and "Mister Roberts" One of the finest accounts of combat at sea. The most important book you'll read this year.
– THE HARTFORD COURANT

A lively, thoroughly researched account. If this book received more attention, U.S. policies in the Middle East might be better balanced and more successful. It is well worth reading.
– John K. Stevenson III

As Ennes fills in the critical details of the incident, he also succeeds in giving us the human face that has been so strangely absent.
– THE WASHINGTON STAR

Random House
4th printing now available
316pp, many photographs, index

Americans owe it to themselves to read Assault on the Liberty. – THE BOSTON PILOT

This excellent book, with its 50-page appendix filled with corroborating details and documents, leaves one angry, distressed and proud at the chicanery, stupidity and bravery that exist side by side in this great democracy. – SHIPMATE
(U.S. Naval Academy Alumni Assn. Magazine)

A disgraceful story of Navy bungling, government cover-up and Israeli duplicity that is well worth reading. And remembering.
– THE ATLANTA JOURNAL

Every American should read Assault on the Liberty.
– ADMIRAL THOMAS H. MOORER, USN (Ret.)

Terry's Book Shop, P.O. Box 789
Woodinville, Washington 98072

Please send me _____ copies of ASSAULT ON THE LIBERTY at $13.95 each postpaid.

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James M. Ennes, Jr. Research Papers

Moorer charges cover-up in '67 Israeli attack on ship

WASHINGTON (AP) — Retired Adm. Thomas H. Moorer Saturday accused the U.S. and Israeli governments of covering up evidence surrounding the 1967 Israeli attack on the American intelligence ship Liberty.

Thirty-four American crewmen were killed and 171 wounded in the combined air and sea attack on June 8, 1967, against the Liberty, cruising in international waters 15 miles off the Sinai Peninsula during the Six-Day War.

Israel maintains that its fighter pilots, who buzzed the ship for eight hours before the attack, and torpedo boat crews, mistook the Liberty for an Egyptian ship.

"The Israelis maintain this was simply a case of mistaken identity, but this clearly does not hold water," said Moorer, who was chief of naval operations at the time of the attack. "In clear visibility, this unique ship was very easy to identify."

He said it could not have been misidentified by the highly trained Israeli pilots.

"The Israeli forces circled the ship and then proceeded to attack over an extended period of time. There is simply no way the fighter pilots and torpedo boat crews could have come to such a conclusion," he said.

Moorer, a former chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, joined a dozen surviving crewmembers of the Liberty at a seminar during the annual convention of the American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee in Washington.

He suggested that the attack was a deliberate attack to prevent the Liberty from picking up signals that would have warned the world of plans of an Israeli military push into Syria the next day.

Israel occupied the Sinai Peninsula, the Gaza Strip and East Jerusalem during the Six-Day War, and drove 12 miles into Syrian territory.

Moorer charged (h2) then-President Johnson "significantly downsized the extent of the casualties," and he said no formal congressional hearings were held on the attack, as was the case following the capture of the Pueblo by North Korea in 1968.

"Based on the way this tragedy was handled, both in the United States and Israel, one must conclude there is much information that has not been made available to the public," said Moorer, who was a member of President Reagan's Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board from 1982 to 1984.

The 6th Fleet, positioned nearby, received a distress call from the Liberty, and one carrier dispatched a squadron of planes to search for the disabled ship. Before the ship was located, the fleet received orders from Washington ordering the planes back.

Moorer called on Congress to, "once and for all, clear up the uncertainties, speculation and unanswered questions surrounding this tragedy, which is still thought by many to be a deliberate cover-up on the part of the government of Israel, as well as the government of the United States."

Joseph Meadors, a signalman aboard the Liberty, who said it was his job to ensure that proper flags were flying on the ship, said an American flag was clearly visible while Israeli planes staged 13 flights over the ship during an eight-hour period preceding the attack. His account contradicted the Israeli version, which maintained that no flag was visible.



File photo

Adm. Thomas H. Moorer

Meadors said the flag was downed during the first wave of fighter-bomber assaults, but a larger flag was hoisted before torpedo boats joined the attack.

Another crewmember, Rick Aimetti, said that, during a lull in the attack, an Israeli helicopter dropped a note onto the ship's deck with the message, "Were there any wounded?"

James M. Ennes, Jr. Research Papers

Did Israel intentionally

James M. Ennes, Jr. Research Papers


rik U.S. ship?

James M. Ennes, Jr. Research Papers

Americans still claim '67 attack by Israel no mistake



President Lyndon B. Johnson ordered aircraft into the air



Dean Rusk
then-secretary of state

On June 8, 1967, in the midst of the six-day Arab-Israeli war, Israeli warplanes and gunboats attacked the USS Liberty, a lightly armed American naval intelligence vessel, in the Mediterranean Sea off the Sinai coast.

Thirty-four American died and 171 were wounded. Fearing the attack had come from the Soviets, President Lyndon B. Johnson ordered armed aircraft from U.S. Sixth Fleet carriers into the air.

According to Johnson's memoirs, a supersecret reconnaissance was aborted only after a flurry of messages on the Washington-Moscow hotline, in which the Soviets frantically sought information on the Middle East and in vague responses by moving the Sixth Fleet closer to Syria, a Soviet ally.

The still outstanding question is: Did or did not a modern Israeli aeronautics attack the U.S. ship, or whether — as the Israeli journalists said in a recent article, quoting Israeli government documents — it was a "tragic accident" of awesome scientific.

Top U.S. diplomatic, intelligence and military officials of that time — including former Secretary of State Dean Rusk — said the surviving Liberty crewmen may in one area. The two Israeli journalists acknowledge that for "qualified reasons again."

George B. Golden, a lieutenant on the Liberty was because the ship's account is consistent where the executive officer was killed in the attack, said The Associated Press he had "proof." That is the incident's a remarks that the Israeli planes and gunboats first referred to the Liberty as an American ship before attacking it.

"It is ridiculous to say this was an accident," retired Adm. Thomas H. Moorer, who was U.S. Chief of Naval Operations in 1967, said in a telephone interview.

"The (Israeli) article crosses very short of putting the matter to rest. In the real world, there is no way it could have happened" the way the Israeli journalists describe it, he said.

"Congress should investigate this matter once and for all," said Moorer, who currently is senior research fellow at the University of Georgia's Center for Strategic and International Studies.

The controversy was revived by two Israeli writers, Ninth Condoyan and Dan Schiff, in an article published in the September issue of The Atlantic magazine in the United States and in The Jerusalem Post in Israel. Citing "still-classified Israeli evidence," they argue that the Liberty was not taken for an Egyptian ship.

But Americans who have kept mum at the behest say the article makes no new evidence. Rather, the article mentioned "long declassified Israeli government documents that were reported as evidentiary by the U.S. government years ago," according to Cmdr. James M. Eason Jr., the Liberty's skipper in 1967 back on the incident.

"U.S. intelligence documents" showed the Israelis attacked the Liberty deliberately. They knew she was an American ship, not to attack the Golan Heights — a move the United States rejected in fact of pressure by Soviet military intervention — Eason said.

The Johnson administration suppressed for the "tragic attack" immediately after the attack, and the motivation for the deed and cover-up "remain unclear, and eventually, after 10 years, forced the U.S. government to [illegible] of the attack. Certainly the U.S. government's [illegible] case closed.

Former Israeli Gen. Matti Peled, former CIA director William E. Colby and Louis W. Tordella, the former deputy director of the National Security Agency, told the AP in separate interviews that they didn't believe Israeli claims that the attack was accidental.

A dozen surviving Liberty officers and men

On June 8, 1967, in the midst of the six-day Arab-Israeli war, Israeli warplanes and gunboats attacked the USS Liberty, a lightly armed U.S. naval intelligence vessel, killing 34 Americans.

taken for an Egyptian ship, the Liberty was then attacked by the planes and later by the gunboats.

This account is disputed by the survivors of the Liberty's 294-man crew.

Golden said, "I and proud that they knew who we were. We had monitored the communications between the Israeli planes and gunboats and their bases in which they referred to us as an American ship.

"I turned my proud over to an admiral, but I don't know what was done with it. The Court of Inquiry [said later by the U.S. Navy] was a whitewash," Golden asserted. "There were also just too many people trying to shut our mouths. Somebody higher up was putting a squeeze on our people not to say anything about the incident. The information I had showed it was not an accident, and our government knows this."

Eason and other Liberty officers interviewed also dismissed the Court of Inquiry documented vital evidence and that there was a U.S. government coverup of the incident. They said Liberty crewmen were forbidden to discuss the matter for several months, even with their families.

Of Israeli claims the ship bore an identification, Eason — the Liberty's deck officer just before the attack — said, "That very morning I had ordered a broadcast flag put up. It was streaming freely in a 15-knot wind. Liberty's identification marks, GTES, were painted on her sides 10 feet high."

Spokesman [illegible] said U.S. confirmed in a separate statement it is he had put up the wrong flag. "When it was shot down by the Israeli planes," David said, "I put up a suitable ensign that was three times bigger. When the Israeli gunboats attacked, I had flashing with my lamp 'US NAVY SHIP' until my lamp was shot out and I was wounded. I don't know they wanted us all dead."

Wayne L. Smith, the Liberty's chief radioman, said, "The Israelis pursued five of our 26 radio circuits as we tried to call U.S. Navy [illegible] for help" 400 miles away.

Chief Petty Officer Stanley W. Wiehe, president of the Liberty Veterans Association, said, "The Israeli planes and gunboats spent nearly 15 minutes attacking us with rockets, machine guns and napalm. Cannon shells ripped our ship from bow to stern. They machine-gunned our lifeboats as they tried [illegible] of the crew. Many of the survivors [illegible] of their comrades who became [illegible] Israeli fire."

Those complaints were overlooked by Adm. Isaac C. Kidd, who conducted the U.S. Court of Inquiry.

"There's nothing new about that," Kidd said of the charges. "I knew some people were unhappy about the inquiry. Every witness has his viewpoint of one particular aspect of the incident, which he thinks is important — but he did not see the complete picture."

Kidd said his inquiry had been limited to establishing any culpability or negligence within the U.S. Navy. It weighed out no case for censure or punishment. "The inquiry did not go into the responsibility of the attacking forces," he said.

Israeli government [illegible] have found nobody to blame.

"I have never believed the Israeli explanation," Rusk said in a telephone interview. And if they did attack an unidentified ship, he added, "even then would have been reckless considering the number of Soviet ships in the area."

In his memoirs, Johnson revealed that he personally warned the Kremlin on the hotline that he had knowledge of "an investigation" the attack.

Gen. Yitzhak Rabin, then Israeli Chief of Staff, commented in his autobiography that Johnson "feared the presence overhead of arriving U.S. aircraft to attack the Soviet fleet in the Mediterranean" — a fear that Rabin estimated at around 75 minutes.

The days later, on June 10, Johnson faced an even bigger decision. On that day, the president received the [illegible] were on the hotline threatening "military intervention" if the Israelis did not immediately stop their attack on the Golan Heights.

Johnson, who wrote that "the peace of the world trembled a hairtrigger," countered by alerting the Sixth Fleet 50 miles closer to the Syrian coast.

The peril of a superpower confrontation ended when Johnson told the Soviets he "had received assurances" that Israel "would make the remainder with Syria completely effective."

"At least," Rabin wrote in his memoirs, "we were not plunged into a third world war" as a result of the Liberty incident.

James M. Barnes Jr. Research Papers

An article by two Israeli journalists in the September issue of **Atlantic** magazine presents what is described as "new evidence" that the attack on the USS **Liberty** was a mistake, and not a deliberate attack as claimed by some.

Associated Press reporter David Smyth conducted his own investigation of the **Liberty** matter, interviewing several **Liberty** crewmen and national leaders of the era.

The resulting story was widely printed during the week of October 29, 1984, but seems to have been overlooked in many of the major population centers such as New York and Washington, D.C.

James M. Ennes, Jr. Research Papers

NAVY TIMES

An Independent Newspaper Serving Navy, Marine Corps and Coast Guard People

35th YEAR, NO. 11 ©1982 Times Journal Co. DECEMBER 20, 1982 $1.50

Moorer Wants Probe of Attack on Liberty

By TOM BURGESS
Times Staff Writer

WASHINGTON — Adm. Thomas Moorer (USN-Ret.), former chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, has called for release of all documents held by the U.S. and Israeli governments pertaining to the unprovoked Israeli attack on the U.S. Navy intelligence-gathering ship Liberty June 8, 1967.

Moorer, who with former Liberty crewmen spoke to reporters here Dec. 13, said he wants the Israelis to explain why they attacked. He also wants the government to disclose why the Johnson administration apparently withheld aid from Liberty that could have been provided from nearby carrier forces.

To answer these questions, Moorer said Congress should begin an investigation into the 15-year-old affair.

"We want to know two things," said Moorer. "First, we already have an apology and compensation from Israel, what we don't have is why they decided to attack and attempt to sink an American ship. Secondly, why were the aircraft launched by the Saratoga recalled while Liberty was being strafed and torpedoed," he asked.

Former Liberty crewman Stanley White, who is chairman of the Liberty Veterans Association; Joseph Lentini, a former Liberty petty officer; and James Ennes, a former Navy intelligence officer, were aboard Liberty during the combined Israeli gunboat and aerial attack. Ennes wrote the first book on the assault on Liberty in 1979.

Ennes said the recalled call for a new congressional investigation was prompted by the discovery of Israeli espionage activities directed at U.S. military secrets. Jonathan Pollard, a former Naval Investigative Service employee, was arrested Nov. 21 and charged with stealing information on U.S. weapons systems. Pollard and his wife, Ann Henderson-Pollard, made an aborted attempt to flee the country by seeking asylum at the Israeli embassy here. The government charges against the pair were announced Nov. 30.

Moorer said it is "very doubtful that the U.S. will not react strongly toward Israel over the Pollard case, as he did over the case in the 1967 Israeli attack on Liberty. "There is no doubt that the Israeli lobby in this country is very powerful," Moorer said.

Unnamed sources who served on Saratoga at the time said Israel attacked Liberty because the U.S. spy ship was listening to Israeli secret radio communications, which detailed the impending Israeli attack against Egyptian forces in the Sinai desert. On the day of the attack, Israel was in the fourth day of its Six-Day War with Egypt.

Aircraft carrier Saratoga was operating off the Israeli coast and launched four F-4 Phantom jets, four A-4 bombers and four A-1 [illegible] minutes after Liberty radioed a distress call to the carrier at 12:00 p.m. (Greenwich Time).

Records from the Navy's Court of Inquiry, conducted in 1967 by Rear Adm. Isaac Kidd, show that Liberty's radio distress call was acknowledged by Saratoga, which launched her 12 jets, plus tanker aircraft. By the time Saratoga's jets reached the horizon, according to Capt. Joseph Tully, Saratoga's commanding officer, an order from Vice Adm. William E. Martin, then commander Sixth Fleet, recalled the aircraft to the carrier.

Martin, who was embarked in the Sixth Fleet flagship Little Rock, near Crete, had no other aircraft en route to Liberty, though carrier America was within sight of Saratoga.

Martin ordered America and Saratoga to launch planes a second time 90 minutes later, but only after Liberty was struck by torpedoes in the interim between the two aborted rescue attempts. Thirty-four Liberty sailors died in the 90-minute attack by an Israeli gunboat and aircraft.

Martin called back the second rescue sortie after he received an apology by message from Israel. Besides the dead, 171 Liberty crewmen lay wounded aboard the ship, which never was closer than 12 miles of Israel's shoreline, said Ennes.

Ennes told *Navy Times* Dec. 17 that neither he nor others at the press conference had received encouragement or information from Congress, regarding a new investigation.

A Congressional investigation into the Liberty assault was convened by the House Armed Services Committee and issued a report on May 10, 1971 that dealt only with Defense Department worldwide communications.

The Liberty affair was discussed in the hearings because a June 8 Joint Chiefs of Staff message to Liberty instructing the ship to move further away from Israel before the attack was delayed 90 hours because of a communications systems glitch. The House hearings did not delve into the cause of the attack or the apparent U.S. unwillingness to come to Liberty's aid.

James M. Ennes Jr. Research Papers

November 27, 1985
Show #1178

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Press contact: Laura Wassner (212) 887-4995

[redacted] me to press office (which nixed my request) so I've asked [redacted] to letter to wish me luck (he will have plenty of advice [illegible] it's [illegible])

Jim
[illegible]
Best
D

Espionage Epidemic?

In Washington

TED KOPPEL ..... Anchor

Guests

In Austin, Texas

Admiral BOBBY INMAN ..... Former CIA Deputy Director

Report from ABC Correspondent

BOB ZELNICK, in Tel Aviv

RICHARD N. KAPLAN ..... Executive Producer

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Transcript produced by Journal Graphics, Inc., New York, N.Y.

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James M. Ennes, Jr. Research Papers

ABC NEWS NIGHTLINE Air Date: November 27, 1985

Espionage Epidemic?

TED KOPPEL /voice-over/: Jonathan Pollard, accused of spying for Israel and Pakistani Ronald Pelton, accused of spying for the Soviet Union; Larry Wu-Tai Chin, accused of spying for China. All worked for super-secret U.S. agencies; all were indicted today.

/voice-over/ Good evening. I'm Ted Koppel and this is Nightline.

/voice-over/ It's as though the country had been struck by a sudden epidemic of espionage but it's actually been going on for years. We look at what's going on with a man who spent much of his career at or near the top of the intelligence community.

ANNOUNCER: This is ABC News Nightline. Reporting from Washington, Ted Koppel.

KOPPEL: Somehow we expect our adversaries to spy on us and when we hear of espionage conducted in behalf of the Soviet Union or the People's Republic of China, we may wonder about the motives of the Americans who spied for them, but we rarely question the motives of the governments that hired the spies. After all, the United States routinely tries to do the same thing in Moscow and Beijing. But Israel is a friendly government. More than that, it is a government very heavily dependent on the good will and the generosity of the United States. Why would it jeopardize that good will when Washington already provides it with enormous quantities of intelligence material? Here's our Tel Aviv bureau chief, Sam Donaldson.

SAM DONALDSON /voice-over/: Jonathan Pollard, 31 years old, an American Jew, employee of the Naval Investigative Service, apprehended outside the Israeli Embassy in Washington, accused of selling top-secret data to Israel. Sources here say Pollard's embassy contact man, 27-year-old Ilan Kfir, has already been brought home. A more senior embassy official may follow. It's enough to give an Israeli prime minister a case of instant heartburn.

SHIMON PERES, Israeli Prime Minister: Espionage? No.

DONALDSON /voice-over/: From the outset, Israel's leaders have declared their ignorance of the Pollard operation, pledging a full investigation of what they say is a deviation from Israeli policy.

AVI PAZNER, Foreign Ministry spokesman: It is Israel's policy to refrain from any intelligence activity related to the United States in view of the close and special relationship of friendship prevailing between the two countries.

DONALDSON /voice-over/: The strategic relationship between Israel and the United States is close, and leaders of the two countries are generally solicitous of each other's turf. Yet, veterans of Israel's highly skilled and professional intelligence community have expressed doubts that an operation as sensitive as the Pollard matter could have occurred without high-level oversight.

ITZHAK KORCZ, former intelligence officials: I don't think that any intelligence agency has that authority to do it on its own.

DONALDSON /voice-over/: Pollard was a frequent visitor to Israel who once visited at the Weizman Institute near Tel Aviv. Israeli press reports suggest he was recruited not by Israel's much feared Mossad intelligence agency, but by this man, Rafi Eitan, former Prime Minister Menachem Begin's adviser on terrorism. Eitan has worked in the Defense Ministry under three ministers — Ariel Sharon, Moshe Arens and Yitzhak Rabin. All are maintaining silence pending the outcome of an investigation conducted by Prime Minister Peres.

/no camera/ Israel already gets much U.S. intelligence developed from both human and technical sources. But there are advantages to prying information free and unbidden.

/voice-over/ Consider October's bombing raid against PLO headquarters in Tunis. At the time, Israeli officials bragged about its pinpoint accuracy.

YITZHAK RABIN, Israeli Defense Minister: The long arm of the IDF can reach terrorism wherever it is located.

DONALDSON /voice-over/: Satellite photos and PLO communications intercepted by American vessels could have been useful in identifying key targets in an operation the U.S. could not sanction in advance. Also, sources here say much of the Pollard intelligence deals with estimates of the performance of Egyptian troops in operations like Bright Star, an exercise conducted

James M. Barnes, Jr. Research Papers

jointly with the United States. The U.S. provides Israel with little information about the military situation in such pro-Western Arab countries as Egypt, Jordan and Saudi Arabia. There are times when Israeli and American interests clash. In 1954, with Britain planning to turn the Suez Canal over to Egypt and the United States seeking to strengthen ties with the Nasser government, [illegible] tried to sow Western doubts about Egypt, and in June, 1967, in the midst of the six-day [illegible], Israeli planes attacked the American spy ship *Liberty*, killing 34 sailors and wounding 171. The vessel had been buzzed by Israeli aircraft for six hours and attacked for two hours. [illegible] and President Lyndon Johnson accepted Israel's claim that her pilots thought the [illegible] Egyptian.

JAMES BANFORD, intelligence expert: The United States never conducted any intensive congressional hearings into it; the administration at the time seemed to try to hide the whole incident under the rug because of embarrassment. I don't think— I think it could have been pursued a lot more vigorously than it was.

ZELNICK *(voice-over)*: There have been other incidents as well. The suspected 1960s diversion of uranium from this Pennsylvania facility to Israel's widely [illegible] nuclear arsenal, and last year's reported theft from the United States of nuclear triggering devices, again for the Israeli program. In the Pollard case, like these earlier examples, [illegible] their private anger American officials have moved quickly to heal the wounds.

THOMAS PICKERING, U.S. Ambassador to Israel: I am hopeful and I have a conviction that both governments can work together to [illegible] resolve the problem of any damage that might be done.

ZELNICK *(voice-over)*: The United States tolerates these occasional Israeli excesses because Washington believes it's paying more than its money's worth from the strategic partnership with Israel. America's F-15 and F-16 aircraft were first tested in combat by Israel. These Israeli-made reconnaissance Drone aircraft [illegible] purchased by the Pentagon after proving their worth in Lebanon. The Navy also [illegible] Israeli Kafir jets for training purposes, the plane [illegible] similar to Soviet MiGs. Israel [illegible] America's Sixth Fleet at the port of Haifa, giving the U.S. something very close to a base in this vital part of the world. These troops from the predominantly Christian [illegible] Lebanese army are trained and equipped by Israel. Similar instruction has been [illegible] security forces from Central and South American countries, a situation where direct U.S. involvement would have been awkward. And this was the Israeli weapons display [illegible] air show in the Negev. Israel has provided spare parts of American equipment to [illegible] sold weapons to other recipients where direct U.S. sales would have caused [illegible] political controversy. In intelligence, too, the Israelis have delivered key contributions in three major areas.

SHLOMO GAZIT, former intelligence chief: One is what is going on in the Middle East. This is obviously our main effort. The other is technical data on Soviet material which has been or is being used by our neighboring countries, and three is terrorism in the Middle East and in [illegible].

ZELNICK *(voice-over)*: After every war the Israelis have turned over captured Soviet guns, tanks and anti-aircraft weapons for analysis by the United States. In the Lebanon war the Israelis showed that reconnaissance planes, artillery and bombs could take out Soviet ground-to-air missiles manned by the Syrians, and the thousands of PLO, Shiite and other Arab prisoners interrogated in Israeli jails over the years have provided the West with information of incalculable value in the long battle against terrorism.

(on camera) Diplomats have been called honorable men sent abroad to lie for their countries. Espionage is an even blacker art. Practiced by a tough little nation like Israel against foes and even friends, it can be downright nasty. Incidents like the Pollard affair cause America to think twice about its relationship with Israel, but all such reassessments have concluded that the Israelis have proven themselves too many times in too many ways to be discarded. This is Bob Zelnick for Nightline in Tel Aviv.

COPPEL: When we come back we'll talk about the Pollard case and today's other major espionage arraignments with one of America's top intelligence professionals, Admiral Bobby Inman.

(commercial break)

COPPEL: Three of the people who went to court today on espionage charges were employed by three American intelligence organizations: U.S. Naval Intelligence, the National Security Agency,

James M. Ennes, Jr. Research Papers

USS Liberty: A Symbol of Government Secrecy

By RONALD FRASER

A MYTHICAL, almost religious quality surrounds the word "liberty." It appears in our most sacred national documents, patriotic songs and on our coins. Around the globe, the Statue of Liberty Enlightening the World, has become its best known symbol.

As craftsmen restore the weather-worn statue, others Americans struggle, under the USS Liberty banner, to shore-up a government accountable to its people.

Following the 1967 Israeli attack on the ship in which 34 American sailors died, the USS Liberty was sold for scrap. Yet for her survivors she remains a tarnished symbol of government secrecy — a top level cover up.

Unless that stain too is removed, the statue's centennial celebration, set for Oct. 28, 1986, will seem counterfeit, a spectacular imitation of a lost ideal. Why keep the torch lit, many may ask, if the spirit behind the light is cold?

Fate, it seems, has bound this ship and this statue. French sculptor Frederic Bartholdi first proposed his giant figure of a robed woman with raised torch, in 1869 as an elegant lighthouse for the entrance to the newly opened Suez Canal. Egypt rejected the idea, and it was accepted a few years later in New York harbor.

On June 8, 1967, as it was over the horizon from the statue's first-chosen Suez site, Israeli air and naval forces rocketed, napalmed and torpedoed the USS Liberty, claiming its elite airmen and sailors mistook the unique, near defenseless American vessel for an Egyptian warship.



Navy Photo by PH2 G.L. Moody

On June 8, 1967, Israeli air and naval forces rocketed, napalmed and torpedoed research ship Liberty (AGTR-6), killing 34 American sailors. Liberty was scrapped, but her survivors still wonder why the U.S. Congress did not order a full investigation of the attack to clear up a host of lingering questions.

The statue was a gift from the French people. Ironically, Israel, a reality in large part because of America's commitment to freedom for all people, flew French-built Mirage and Mystere jets against the Liberty.

Finally, 1982 signaled an era of renewal for both the ship's survivors and the statue. In May, with President Reagan's help, the Statue of Liberty-Ellis Island Centennial Commission was created with Lee Iacocca, chairman of the Chrysler Corp., at its helm.

In June of that year, former crew members launched the USS Liberty Veterans Association. Signalman Joe Meadors, wounded in the attack, is its current president.

Mr. Iacocca's mission is the restoration of a metal and mortar symbol of the American dream. Mr. Meadors and his shipmates

[illegible] prayed tens of millions of dolla[illegible] seek to restore not a sh.p, b[illegible] trust in their government.

While Mr. Iacocca already h[illegible] out of corporate America, inclu[illegible]ing millions from large veteran[illegible] groups, Mr. Meadors has not [illegible] found a lever to pry the tru[illegible] from his government.

What has been denied the[illegible] simple sailors for 17 years? Wh[illegible] do they want?

They want to know why th[illegible] government abandoned them [illegible] der fire when a U.S. carrier bat[illegible] group, with fighters on hot ca[illegible]pults, was just minutes awa[illegible] They want to know why the Wh[illegible] House ordered American w[illegible] planes — already en route to h[illegible] the striken ship — to return [illegible] their carrier?

They also want to know why t[illegible] U.S. Congress has not yet order[illegible] a full investigation of the incid[illegible] to clear up these and a host [illegible] other lingering questions.

The list of admirals and c[illegible] gressmen throwing their supp[illegible] behind a congressional inquiry [illegible] slowly growing and include Ad[illegible] Arleigh Burke and Adm. Thom[illegible] Moorer, both former Chiefs of N[illegible] val Operations.

Liberty survivors are simp[illegible] calling on their direct represen[illegible] tives in the Congress to bring [illegible] executive branch to account [illegible] its actions in this affair. Is t[illegible] too much to ask, on the eve of [illegible] consensual of our Beloved Sta[illegible] of Liberty? It was, afterall, on [illegible] namesake these patriots bled [illegible] died.

Is it not their right to ask [illegible] reason why and to receive a [illegible] cent reply?

Ronald Fraser is a naval affa[illegible] writer who lives in the Washing[illegible] D.C., area.

James M. Ennes, Jr. Research Papers

Americans are paying a price for their support of Israel



Max Morris

It is time for plain talk and straight thought about America's relationship with Israel. Just as Israel's elected government must put its perceived national interests first, so should our own administration give priority to America's national interests. It is evident that these two sets of interests do not necessarily coincide.

History shows examples of previous divergences. One occurred exactly 15 years ago last week. In June, 1967, Israeli jet fighters and torpedo boats deliberately attacked a U.S. Navy ship. Thirty-four U.S. sailors were killed and 171 were wounded aboard USS Liberty.

Our president then, the late Lyndon Johnson, did not order retaliation. In fact, he and his secretary of defense, Robert S. McNamara, called back the 6th Fleet jets that were sent to protect Liberty within minutes after its unarmed radio call for help was received.

I know, I was on the bridge of the USS Saratoga when the radio call for help came, when Captain Joe Tully, bless him, ordered the protective jet launch and when the White House ordered us to recall the jets.

The Israelis continued their attack on American sailors for almost an hour more. We were forbidden to help and could only listen to Liberty's calls for air cover, thanks to President Johnson and McNamara, who was appointed the next year to head the World Bank.

Israel was following its national interests that day. It did not want U.S. authorities to know what was happening in its preemptive Sinai attack. There is clear evidence Israelis knew that Liberty was a U.S. Navy ship. The attack was deliberate and there was no mistake. They lied when they later claimed otherwise, just as Prime Minister Begin lied about going only 25 miles into Lebanon last week.

President Johnson was never precise as to why he felt it was in the U.S. national interest not to protect American lives. Perhaps he just wanted to lose no domestic support for the Democratic Party by shooting down Israeli jets. But it was his decision and he made it.

Those of us involved will never forget what he and his aides did not say. At worst, it was close to treason. At its least, it was a gross misconception of America's true national interest.

President Reagan could fall into similar error in regard to present Israeli actions. The cost to U.S. citizens would be high, literally and figuratively.

The international political costs of tacitly supporting Israel's attacks are manifest. We are becoming isolated not just from moderate Middle East states but from Western allies, too. This cost will climb.

Other costs are less obvious but may prove even more expensive. On the economic side, U.S. taxpayers again will have to pay a major portion of Israel's defense expenditures, including those for the attacks that have killed thousands of Lebanese civilians.

A year or so ago, a local rabbi, in response to a column, wrote that Israel had never asked Americans for any "personal sacrifice." That year the aid, forgiven loans and other assistance that Israel extracted from American taxpayers was over $2 billion. This year it will reach $7 billion.

A quick calculation shows this amounts to a subsidy of about $1,300 U.S. tax dollars for every family unit in Israel. Poorer U.S. families whose benefits have been cut might consider these billions going to a developed, semi-socialist state a "personal sacrifice."

An even more deadly hidden cost is the gratuitous exposure of our latest military technology to the Russians. Editorials speak glowingly of the successes of the F-15 and F-16 jets, plus other advances' systems that our administrations have given to Israel. Each jet, for example, is equipped with sophisticated electronic countermeasures and guidance radar. The latest air-to-air missiles are being fired.

Russian "security group" men in Syria are monitoring every attack, every signal, every radar-jamming action. Moscow's military masters are learning what we would use if they attack the West. They can alter weapons and develop countersystems. U.S. pilots eventually will "pay" for this unneeded use of our newest systems, perhaps with their lives. No "personal sacrifice?"

Syrian MiGs and SA-6 missiles, on the other hand, are obsolescent and poorly operated. We gain nothing new in knowledge of Russian systems from the Israeli successes.

A final hidden cost can still be avoided. Israel and its U.S. support bloc want to guilt us into placing U.S. troops along the borders with Lebanon and Syria as a "peacekeeping" or buffer force. Major U.S. media that are pro-Israel quietly are pushing this as a quid pro quo for "persuading" Prime Minister Begin to withdraw his attacking army. Again, no "personal sacrifice?"

Americans already are along the Egypt-Israel border as a "tripwire" force. Israeli military officers have told me that this was their strategic dream for decades. Contrary to news stories, they could hardly wait to give back the Sinai once America agreed to patrol their own border for them. Again, is that no "personal sacrifice?"

If they trick us into doing the same thing in the north, it will leave them free to concentrate on their remaining border and attack Jordan if they wish, no doubt claiming retaliation for "provocation and attacks."

It is totally unacceptable for U.S. troops to be ordered to such duty. We need to tell our senators this today and demand a clear response. If we delay, the pro-Israel lobby and its media friends will pressure Congress and the president to send a U.S. force to "secure peace."

As stated, Prime Minister Begin (now in Washington) can follow what he perceives as Israel's national interest. He is the leader of that state.

We, in turn, should do the same. We have laws about use of U.S.-supplied weapons. We have rules about use of U.S. soldiers. We have reason to cut foreign aid. What our president and Congress need to do is think straight and put U.S. interests first for a change.

The Florida Times-Union, Jacksonville, Wednesday, June 23, 1982 A-11

James M. Ennes Jr. Research Papers

May 27, 1988
Vol. IV, No. 8

THE WASHINGTON REPORT ON MIDDLE EAST AFFAIRS



A survey of United States relations with Middle East countries

Policy/p.1--Adm. Thomas Moorer, a former Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, writes on the 18th anniversary of Israel's attack on the USS Liberty that Israel's claim of mistaken identity is no more credible today than it was back then.

Editorial/p.2--The Holocaust warrants remembrance, just as now there should be no hypocrisy among those who would fail to speak out against present-day holocausts being committed against other groups of people.

Media/p.3--Roberta Strauss Feuerlicht's book *The Fate of the Jews* should have placed her in the center of a raging controversy. Instead, she was [illegible] to death with silence.

Update on Congress/p.4--Congress soon will be taking its final step toward passage of a free trade agreement between the U.S. and Israel.

Lobby Activities/p.5--News that the CIA was involved in a terrorist bombing in Beirut brought a harsh condemnation of the Administration from ADC. AIPAC, meanwhile, is trying to ensure that King Hussein goes home empty-handed from his visit to Washington.

Personality/p.7--Running the Middle East office of the National Council of Churches is both challenging and exciting for Charles Kimball, though maybe not as dramatic as his involvement in the Iranian hostage crisis five years ago.

Facts For Your Files/p.8--A chronology of U.S.-Middle East relations.

Trade and Finance/p.9--Two reports, one on Egypt and the other on Israel, explain why U.S. investments are lagging in the former and just how fast unemployment is rising in the latter.

Book Review/p.10--When, in the beginning of her book on the origins of the Arab-Israeli conflict, author Joan Peters tries to sell you the notion that she's objective, don't buy it. That advice also goes for her book.

Policy

USS Liberty: Questions Persist

By Thomas H. Moorer

June 8, 1985, marks the 18th anniversary of a major event which still leaves many questions to which some are searching for an answer while others fear the true story will be made public.

On that day, when visibility was excellent and the sea was calm, the USS Liberty was cruising about 15 miles off the Sinai coast of Egypt. This ship, which was converted from a merchantman, had a unique topside configuration due to communication antennae and special equipment installed in her superstructure. As a matter of fact, she was the only ship with such clearly identifiable characteristics operating in the entire Mediterranean Sea. She was the easiest ship in the U.S. Navy to identify.

All of a sudden, without warning, the USS Liberty was attacked repeatedly by machine gun fire, rockets, napalm, and, finally, torpedoes fired from Israeli jet aircraft and torpedo boats. When the smoke cleared and the Israeli forces returned to base, the 294 crew of the heavily damaged ship had suffered 34 Americans dead and 171 wounded. So, what did really happen? Why was the ship attacked?

Israel continues to insist that the attack was a case of mistaken identity. However, this claim simply does not hold water. I personally have spent thousands of hours in peace and war searching for and identifying ships on the high seas. Based on this experience, I am certain that a highly trained military force such as the Israelis possess could not have made such a tragic error of misidentification. As a matter of fact, in clear visibility this unique ship was flying a very large, eight foot American flag. Furthermore, Israeli planes circled the ship beforehand and then proceeded to attack her over an extended period of time. There is simply no way that the Israeli pilots and torpedo boat crews could have concluded that it was anything other than a U.S. ship. *(Continued on page 3, column 1)*

Managing Editor: George F. Smalley. Published 18 times per year by the American Educational Trust (AET), a nonprofit foundation. AET officers: President, Andrew I. Killgore. Executive Director, Richard Curtiss. Newsletter subscriptions: $50 if paid by institutions; $25 if paid by individuals or educational institutions ($50 for all overseas subscriptions). Reduced price of $23 for each extra subscription by institutions at same U.S. address. AET and Newsletter address: P.O. Box 53062, Washington, D.C. 20009. Tel: Newsletter (202) 939-6050; AET (202) 939-6060. Toll free calls for both Newsletter and AET: (800) 368-5788.

James M. Ennes, Jr. Research Papers

As survivors recall the attack on the Liberty

By Christie Blalock

- The truth will be told. Sooner rather than later. If we are to learn the lessons of history and avoid the mistakes of the past. That is the commitment pledged by survivors of the USS Liberty who recently held their first reunion since the Israeli attack on their ship during the 1967 Arab-Israeli war. The group has formed the USS Liberty Veterans Association to keep the memory of the Liberty alive and to see that the facts of this outrage are finally brought to light.

On June 8, 1967, the Liberty, a clearly marked unarmed intelligence ship of the U.S. Navy, was attacked by Israeli jets and torpedo boats in international waters off the Sinai coast. Thirty-four of her 294 crewmen were killed and 171 others were injured. In the Washington courthouse for the reunion, survivors told of the ship's ordeal, describing how it was strafed, bombed, napalmed, and torpedoed.

Israel quickly apologized, explaining that it was a tragic case of mistaken identity in the heat of war. The US government accepted this explanation — incredibly, without question.

The ship's crew was forbidden to talk with the press until after the Naval Court of Inquiry report was issued that afterward was ordered lost to discuss the attack — even with the press, their families, or even their families. The incident was closed and classified until very recently from public view.

But, as the White shareholders, "[illegible] is not relevant," and, as subsequent facts in the first time in 15 years, the truth of this day's events emerges.

Israel's claim of mistaken identity was belied by crewmen who had been manning on deck and had warned by the Israeli pilots reconnoitering the ship just minutes and hours preceding the attack. Also by the fact that Israel had been monitoring these Israeli pilots identifying the Liberty as an American ship.

The significance and of piloting a ship [illegible] still known early in the day and later replaced by the huge 50-foot holiday flag to replace the one that had been shot away in the first attack [illegible] from a

crewman who could not attach significance signaling the Israeli [illegible] Just it was a US vessel and receiving a "We do not understand" reply from the Israelis. Previous reconnaissance having their boats machine-gunned as they tried to get out the sinking signaler flags.

Israel's admission, reported in The Christian Science Monitor, that it had learned of its mistake only after picking up survivors in the rafts seemed especially brazen to the men who had watched the torpedo boats systematically shoot up the Liberty's life rafts after the "progress to abandon ship" order had been given. The fact that this claim, which is supported or allow by Israel's account of the time nor by its own official military reports, portrays Israel in a benevolent light [illegible] galling.

It is time, many crewmen believe, that the truth not politely [illegible] is validate. The [illegible] of the [illegible] Adm. Thomas Moorer, former chief of naval operations and chairman of the joint chiefs of staff, agrees.

"I have never accepted the explanation that it was a case of mistaken identity," he told the group.

But the crew's frustration was directed far more toward their own government than toward Israel. They remembered the military help promised that was not materialize. They remembered the heavily-censored messages stating that kept the Liberty in danger — orders long after it should have been lifted. They remembered having evidence or ground or ignored in the official account and a Naval Court of Inquiry report whose conclusions were not supported by its evidence. They still feared the violent reprisals who was given the [illegible] medal of honor not at the White House by the president or in ceremony, but at the Washington Navy Yard [illegible] secretary of the navy — with virtually no publicity.

And the Liberty's former officers, who were cooperating with Washington arm of the state, *National Ally*, have heavy hearts of the evidence.

"The way they did things I'm surprised they didn't just send it to [illegible] the 16th Street Bridge," retired Admiral Moorer wryly.

In deciding to hold its reunion and work toward government release of the truth, there was no desire for revenge or [illegible] against the state of Israel. Rather survivors want to make sure that their fallen shipmates receive [illegible] and they want the American people to know [illegible]. They see larger lessons that have yet to be [illegible].

In maintaining what amounts to a 19-year cover-up of the [illegible], the US government has further lessened its credibility. Friend and foe alike receive the message that the US will be guided more by political expediency than by the facts. Aggressed in the Vietnam war and unwilling to confront a client ally whose cause had considerable domestic political support, the Johnson administration took the easy way out and has actively engaged in covering up the facts. This effort has yet to be [illegible].

Because the details were suppressed, little was done to correct the various military breakdowns. Such failures became infinitely more dangerous in a nuclear age. Many, including its captain, feel that the North Korean seizure of the USS Pueblo, a similar electronic intelligence ship, which occurred only six months after the Liberty incident never would have happened had the Liberty's experience been more widely known, if only among the military. Only after the Pueblo were such ships taken out of service, although the Soviet Union continues to use them extensively.

The Liberty's experience shows how quickly and easily the US can be drawn into a conflict and how, in international affairs, once governments place their own national desires [illegible] above all else.

These lessons are particularly important in light of the current volatile situation in the Middle East.

The wish of the USS Liberty went the public to know that it's never too late to learn the truth, and that only by knowing the truth of the past can present decisions be made to safeguard the future.

Christie Blalock, whose husband took part in the ill-fated mission of Liberty survivors, is a free-lance writer.

James M. Ennes, Jr. Research Papers

The New York Times

NEW YORK, FRIDAY, DECEMBER 19, 1980

Israeli Payment to Close the Book On '67 Attack on U.S. Navy Vessel

By BERNARD WEINRAUB

WASHINGTON, Dec. 18 — The United States and Israel announced today that they had finally closed the book on one of the most controversial episodes in the history of the Arab-Israeli conflict, the attack by Israeli warplanes and torpedo boats on the American intelligence ship Liberty in the midst of the 1967 war.

The State Department announced that Israel had agreed to pay $3.32 million to settle claims by families of 34 American sailors killed in the attack and by 171 survivors who were injured. The Israeli Government also agreed to pay $3.5 million to settle claims for damage to the ship.

The $6.8 million payment, to be made in three installments by March 1, 1981, would be the largest ever made by Israel to the United States. Israel has already paid $40 million in military assistance this year and is scheduled to receive $2.2 billion in economic and military aid in 1981.

Israel Accepts Responsibility

The incident, which took place on June 8, 1967, while the vessel was off the Gulf of Sinai during Israel's six-day war with Egypt, Syria and Jordan, has been described in testimony from 20 Navy survivors as deliberate and unprovoked. Israel accepted full responsibility for the 30-minute attack, but insisted that it was a mistake, that the pilots and torpedo boat crews had thought the ship was Egyptian, and that it was not clearly marked as an American vessel. Israel has also insisted that the ship was in a combat zone and that it was operating in violation of international law.

The United States Navy, which conducted a court of inquiry soon after the attack, said that the Liberty was in international waters, "properly identified as a U.S. naval ship" and that the attack was "unprovoked, deliberate and unjustified." And the Navy court of inquiry said that Israel had failed to conduct a "thorough, searching investigation" of the attack.

Mr. Reston, who was a correspondent on the vessel, charged that the Government tried to cover up facts that revealed that the Pentagon had failed to protect the ship adequately and that messages ordering the Liberty out of the area were not delivered in time to the vessel in 1967.

In announcing the Reston said the Administration of President Lyndon B. Johnson, in June, 1967, at the six-day war, did not want to jeopardize Israel by raising public doubts in America that the attack was an accident.

"We know that the true story of the attack was covered up," Mr. Reston wrote. "But was it covered up by panic, fear, and blind overreaction, or did a responsible American official deliberately withhold the truth?"

"We know that Israel's excuse for attacking the ship cannot possibly be true," he said, "why has our Government not demanded a better explanation?"

Attorneys Claim in Reduced

Israeli officials said today that the United States, originally asked for more than $17 million in civil damages and accrued interest for the Liberty, which was repaired but never returned to duty again.

The Israelis said that the two countries, and shortly after the Presidential election Ambassador Ephraim Evron approached Vice President Mondale and suggested that the matter be resolved by the United States' forgiving the interest of about $20 million and reducing the claims for damages from $17.5 million to $6 million.

The Israelis said that Mr. Mondale was able to win President Carter's approval for the $6 million figure. As a result, when Mr. Evron met with Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs, David D. Newsom, to negotiate the claims, he learned that the $6 million offer had been accepted.

Israeli officials again insisted today that the attack was an accident and that Israel deeply regretted it.

Continued From Page A1

THE NEW YORK TIMES, FRIDAY, DECEMBER 19, 1980

Israel and U.S. Close Book on '67 Attack on Navy Ship

James M. Ennes Jr. Research Papers

Los Angeles Times

Wednesday, June 30, 1982

Why Was Ship Hit During 1967 War?

U.S. Survivors of Israeli Attack Still Seek Answers

By BRYCE NELSON, Times Staff Writer

WASHINGTON—On land, that sunny June 8, 1967, the Israelis and Arabs were locked in deadly combat in the Six-Day War.

At sea, just 14 miles off Egypt's Sinai coast, it was another story. There, unseen aboard the U.S. intelligence ship Liberty idled on the deck, occasionally waving to Israeli reconnaissance pilots as they flew overhead. All was peaceful.

Then, suddenly, electronics technician Donald L. Blalock recalls, "World War III seemed to start out." Without warning, Israeli jets—which flew a large American flag and had other clear markings—were hit repeatedly by rockets, cannon fire, napalm and bombs from Israeli jet fighters and motor torpedo boats.

The final casualty count: 34 Americans dead and 171 wounded, out of a crew of 294.

The Israelis said at the time, and still do 15 years later, that the attack was a case of mistaken identity. Blalock and many of the Liberty's other survivors say it was a calculated attack on a U.S. ship by a government that perhaps wanted to silence the United States from listening to wartime radio communications.

The Israelis called off their attack before sinking the Liberty and apologized to the U.S. government within 24½ hours. Later, the Israelis paid more than $6 million in damages to the wounded and to the families of the dead. While expressing some incredulity, U.S. officials have accepted the Israeli explanation of the attack.

But not the Liberty's survivors. About 80 of them met in Washing-

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Continued From First Page

ton this month for their first reunion. And they publicly expressed their disbelief of the Israeli explanation and their anger at what they termed participation by the U.S. government in a cover-up of the facts.

"On June 8, 1967, we were attacked by an Israeli force [illegible]," Blalock told his fellow survivors. "Since that time, we've been forgotten by our military. We've been forgotten by our government. We have never been known by the American people. We have survived only by the grace of God. We must never forget."

Adding to their bitterness is their knowledge that not only did U.S. planes fail to come to their rescue, but aircraft dispatched from the 6th Fleet were actually called back to their carrier before they reached the burning vessel.

The survivors say they were told by U.S. Navy officials not to discuss what happened to the Liberty. Those who have left the Navy, however, say they now feel free to talk.

"The reason we waited so long to talk is that we were scared," said former Petty Officer Glenn L. Bonham.

'Don't Answer Questions'

As the Liberty's wounded were taken onto U.S. ships on the day after the attack, they were told to keep quiet, according to the survivors.

"Don't answer any questions," former Lt. James M. Ennes Jr. said he was told by a naval intelligence officer who hunched over his stretcher after he was taken onto the carrier Amerlon. "Don't talk to the press or anyone else until you're told it's all right."

Ennes didn't talk while he was in the Navy, but afterward he published a book, "Assault on the Liberty," which has sparked much of the renewed controversy over the attack. Ennes and his fellow survivors are part of a [illegible]ocut inaction by the U.S. Navy as they are about the Israeli attack.

Nine minutes after the attack began, the Liberty got a message to the U.S. 6th Fleet, operating 400 miles away near Crete, but no U.S. planes ever came to its aid. Eventually, the Israeli torpedo boats that attacked after the jet raids halted their fire, and the Israelis later offered assistance, which the Liberty refused. The next offer of assistance, which the Liberty also declined, came from a Soviet guided-missile destroyer about 10 hours after the attack. No U.S. surface ships were near the Liberty, and the Liberty's sailors saw none until they met up with two U.S. destroyers at 7 a.m. the next day.

"The whole damn thing defies explanation," Adm.

James M. Ennes Jr. Research Papers

'Sure the attack could have been deliberate. They (the Israelis) had sightings beforehand of the ship.'

Arleigh A. Burke, chief of U.S. naval operations from 1955 to 1961 and now retired, said recently: "If you were writing this as a novel, it would be unbelievable."

Several of the top U.S. government figures in office during that period share the crew's doubts. Adm. Thomas H. Moorer, chief of naval operations from 1967 to 1970 and later chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, told the survivors that he thought their ordeal was the result of an intentional attack on a U.S. ship.

Dean Rusk, secretary of state at the time of the attack, said in a recent interview, "Sure the attack could have been deliberate. They (the Israelis) had sightings beforehand of the ship."

Rusk stopped short of labeling the attack a deliberate assault, but he said, "It was an outrageous affair. I don't buy the Israeli explanation. We were never able to get to the heart of what happened."

Survivors of the Liberty allege that the cover-up of their experience means that the nation will be more likely to blunder into similar incidents in the future.

Lloyd M. Mather, captain of the Pueblo, the intelligence ship that was captured by the North Koreans on Jan. 23, 1968, told the Liberty survivors at the reunion here that his ship would have been less likely to have gotten into trouble if he had been adequately informed of what had happened seven months earlier to the Liberty.

Clear-cut answers to the question of what happened to the Liberty have been buried in layers of military classification.

The Israeli government convened a court of inquiry, but its record has not been made public. A U.S. naval court of inquiry conferred itself with U.S. Navy actions and heard no Israeli witnesses. The U.S. Navy and the Israeli Defense Force recently issued formal statements in response to Times inquiries about the incident, but neither replied to specific questions.

Later Disputed Issue

But based on U.S. documents, Israeli statements, memoirs of U.S. and Israeli officials and interviews, here are parts of the Liberty story [illegible] open to dispute.

—Israel had not been warned by the United States that the Liberty, which the government called "the most sophisticated spy ship in the world," would be operating in the eastern Mediterranean. American officials said it is not U.S. policy to tell the other nations of ships operating in international waters.

—U.S. military facilities sent five messages to the Liberty telling it to move farther from the coast in the 18 hours before the attack. Because of mix-ups and a communications overload caused by the Arab-Israeli war, the Liberty never received the messages. A subcommittee of the House Armed Services Committee investigating the incident called this "one of the most incredible failures of communications in the history of the Department of Defense."

—The unarmed Liberty was sailing slowly west in international waters about 14 nautical miles north of Egypt's Sinai coast on a clear day. There was no war or war warfare going on in the area around the ship. Israeli and Arab forces already had occupied the adjacent coastal [illegible]

[illegible] of its Israeli attack. Israel did not ask the ship to identify itself, nor did the Israelis try by surface ship or helicopter the Liberty's nationality before beginning their aerial attack at 2 p.m. local time.

—The Liberty did not provoke an attack by firing one of its four 50-caliber machine guns, although it did fire at both the Israeli planes and torpedo boats after the attack began. The Israelis did not report any damage, their attacking craft or any casualties among their military personnel.

—The attack consisted of strafing runs by Israeli jets and, later, an attack by three torpedo boats. The Israelis broke off the attack after hitting the Liberty with a torpedo and strafing the ship from their torpedo boats.

Perhaps the Israelis' most convincing argument is that they lacked sufficient motive to intentionally attack the Liberty. "Why should Israel deliberately attack an American ship?" asked a statement issued by the Israeli Embassy in response to Times inquiries. "Friendship with the United States is the cornerstone of Israel's foreign policy. It would require an extremely strong provocation [illegible] to risk making an enemy of the United States."

Evron, who was desk officer on the Liberty on the morning of the attack, maintains in his book on the incident that the Israelis wanted the Liberty out of the way because radio messages about their forthcoming attack on Syria to the Golan Heights would not be intercepted.

Evron argues that the Israelis did not want then-President Lyndon B. Johnson to put any pressure on them to refrain from the attack in the Golan Heights.

The Israelis argue that the attack was precipitated by reports, which later turned out to be erroneous, that Israeli positions were being shelled from the sea. The Israelis said they thought the Liberty was the Egyptian supply ship El Kuseir. U.S. naval experts, however, including Adm. Moorer, said no officer would have mistaken the much smaller, older Egyptian ship for the Liberty, a different type of ship with an elaborate antenna.

To former Secretary of State Rusk, the bitterness of the Liberty's crew members is natural, but "what the fellows on the Liberty don't understand is that you don't let everything collapse because of this (attack). You pick up the pieces and get on with it. You don't go to war over this."

What the Liberty's survivors said at their reunion here is not that their government should have gone to war, but that the nation has a responsibility to find out why they were attacked and to honor properly the memory of the 34 shipmates who died at the hands of a friendly nation on a calm June day off the coast of Egypt.

James M. Ennes, Jr. Research Papers

Every American should read The Assault on the LIBERTY, which is told so well by James Ennes. It only does his account set forth the bravery and dedication to duty of many fine young Americans caught in a most difficult position not of their own making, but it also tells a story of political intrigue and explains to a large degree why the facts in this very sad case have not been fully passed on to the American people.

The attack on the LIBERTY by Israeli aircraft and ships could not possibly have been a case of mistaken identity. The ship was savagely strafed and fired upon as well as torpedoed in good visibility while she was flying the American flag at a clear silhouette that could not possibly have been mistaken for a ship operated by the Egyptian forces. While it is too late to correct the suppression of this information insofar as its impact on the events of the time, nevertheless this book sets forth in clear terms the story of a very sad event in our history. Why did the press who have been so active in exploring other events in greatest detail give this matter such perfunctory attention? Read this book and make up your own mind.

Thomas H. Moorer
Admiral, U.S. Navy (Ret.)

James M. Ennes, Jr. Research Papers

ARN - 2/9/83

Evans and Novak



New tactics of the Israeli lobby

By ROWLAND EVANS and ROBERT NOVAK

WASHINGTON — A new campaign by the Israeli lobby to turn its friends in Congress against President Reagan's peace plan while convincing them that protracted occupation of Lebanon is necessary began on Feb. 4, coinciding with the escalating blasts against the U.S. in Israel by Defense Minister Ariel Sharon.

Senior aides of about 30 prominent members of the Senate and House from both parties, chosen because of their seats on committees influential in Mideast affairs, listened behind closed doors for two hours to an Israeli government specialist on Lebanon. He explained why Israel may have to keep troops across the border "between five and 15 years" — a situation fatal to Reagan's proposed Israeli-Arab political solution.

That resonated with what Gen. Sharon was saying in Israel a few days earlier. He accused the Reagan administration of exploiting incidents in Lebanon between the U.S. Marines and Israeli forces to "tarnish" Israel's reputation. "Israel's will cannot be bent," Sharon declared.

The two events point to a seemingly unavoidable collision course between the U.S. and Israel. Such a confrontation surely would be followed by punitive U.S. action against Israel, no matter what Reagan's advisers say publicly. That punishment could be coming off or reducing U.S. aid, but it is not yet decided just what the president will do to ensure an American Mideast policy independent of Israel.

The Feb. 4 briefing on Capitol Hill marked the revelry of the American-Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC) into aggressive lobbying on behalf of Israel. A period of [illegible] by AIPAC began when its executive director, Thomas A. Dine, publicly [illegible] Reagan's Mideast peace plan [illegible] Sept. 1. Taken in conjunction with Sharon's attacks on the administration, the president's foreign policy advisers regard the renewal of operations on the Hill by Dine as bad news for Reagan.

In the opinion of one congressional insider who attended the Feb. 4 briefing, AIPAC "never moves" without testing the water in Israel. Thus, Dine's re-emergence reinforced White House concern that Sharon and Prime Minister Menachem Begin will not make life easy for Reagan in the crucial weeks just ahead.

The president himself had been coming to that conclusion, with rising anger. When Reagan heard about the first checkpoint incident between Israel and the Marines, he told aides that the Israelis must have threatened the Marines intentionally — "like the [illegible] with the Liberty." The Liberty, a U.S. [illegible] intelligence-gathering vessel, was attacked by Israeli warships and warplanes with the loss of 34 American lives during the 1967 Arab-Israeli war.

Even in that frame of mind, the president was startled when he read Sharon's interview with the Israeli newspaper *Ma'ariv* (in an underlined and annotated transcript prepared by Reagan's staff). That transcript shows how far Sharon — and presumably Begin — will go in rejecting Reagan's plan for Israeli understanding of the U.S. peace plan.

"The Americans are wrong," said Sharon, "because they want to prove that Israel can be made to give in under pressure." He accused the administration of bragging to the Arabs — particularly Jordan's King Hussein — that it "will twist Israel's arm" to force its troops out of Lebanon. Such an Israeli withdrawal is the essential condition for Hussein to join West Bank negotiations.

Sharon told *Ma'ariv* precisely what the Israeli specialist on Lebanon told the congressional aides: There will be no quick troop withdrawal. If Hussein understands that "Israel's will cannot be bent" in Lebanon, said Sharon, the king "will obviously realize that it cannot" be bent by the U.S. on the West Bank either. "Then," he continued, ridiculing the Reagan peace plan, "all this day-dreaming about political solutions deviating from the Israeli government's will disappear."

These are lighting words, and Israel and AIPAC are warring for the soil of the U.S. Congress against Ronald Reagan. The last time they tried that, in an attempt to block AWACS aircraft promised by Reagan to Saudi Arabia, the effort boomeranged. Reagan's closest aides say privately it will boomerang again, no matter how many conversions AIPAC makes on Capitol Hill in its new offensive.

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James A. Baker, Jr. Research Papers

Liberty crew doubts '67 Israel attack an error

OFF THE GAZA STRIP COASTLINE — It is nearly 2 p.m., June 8, 1967. Although unidentified aircraft have been flying overhead all morning, the crew members of the U.S.S. Liberty electronic intelligence ship continue their duties unconcerned. Suddenly Mirage fighter jets swoop down and begin strafing the ship at maximum level. A napalm replica of the shot-down American flag with "holiday colors" — an "Old Glory"

B. David Person — June 7, 1982

When the weekend 10th USS Liberty survivors of the 1967 Israeli attack on their ship in the Mediterranean packed a Hotel Washington suite for their first reunion ever. After 15 years of officially mandated silence about the incident, what emerged from the get-together was a shared frustration over their unresolved suspicions that the Israeli attack was "deliberate."

The reunion was the first time they could share their experience with anyone they felt "free to talk to."

"We haven't had a chance in 15 years to get together, put our heads together and find out who it all happened," said survivor Ron Castleb, 33, a construction company owner from Modesto, Calif. "I drove to get here, and I wasn't going to throw it for nothing. If we can find blown up, I would have taken a plane."

Some former crewmen could not afford the trip. Others had their own reasons for not attending.

"Some said it was too much trouble," explained former signalman Joe Meadors, 35, now working as an oil drilling and accounting supervisor for Aramco in Saudi Arabia. "They didn't think they wanted to live through it again."

When asked to recount their experiences prior to and during the attack, a moment of pained silence fell upon one group of "old friends" gathered in the hotel suite.

Their belief that the U.S. government is "not telling the whole truth" about circumstances of the incident and their quest now, largely ignored charges that the government failed to give both the deceased and the survivors "the recognition they deserve."

This "pact" was one they could speak about at length. The Project unspoken pact, that of having written: "In death, of many of their comrades in action, created no dissension. Although Israel eventually paid $100,000 to each of the families of those killed and an average of just under $20,000 to each of the wounded, all seemed to feel "could not do enough."

"At one point I got mad at a reporter that's all," said Chuck Jones, a former CT now involved in recreational vehicle sales in Columbus, Ohio. "I started to tell something then, but now I feel that values there were not there. I can't do it in my own mind, it wasn't a mistake. But I don't have those guys."

"They were doing what they were told," said Allen Blalock, 36, another former CT and now a watch foreman in Minneapolis. "Or they might not have known. It's not from the guys on the line up up — it's not his fault at all," he claimed.

"The Israelis had some people in charge at that particular time who should be held responsible," agreed Glandis. "We're not blaming the Israeli people. Every newspaper article I've ever read makes it try to look like

three times normal size which billows out in a 12-knot wind. Several more surging runs result.

Before the attack is through, the ship is ravished, napalmed and ransacked over a two-hour period by what are identified later as Israeli air and naval forces. They originally were believed to be Egyptian.

In what one crew member describes as "a miracle," the ship refuses to sink. Yet the attack leaves 34 killed. Of a crew of 294, 171 are wounded. The skipper, Capt. William L. McGonagle, seriously injured, refuses medical attention and remains on the bridge to guide the crippled Liberty to Malta. He later was awarded the Medal of Honor.

The survivors are told of Israel's apology for "a tragic mistake," and that U.S. air cover did not arrive because the attack lasted only five minutes and would have arrived too late



Among those attending reunion 15 years after the Israeli attack on their ship, the U.S.S. Liberty, are (l-r) crewmen Bob Schnier, Gene Kirk, Chuck Jones and Joe Meadors

we're trying to condemn the Israelis," and were not.

James M. Ennes, who was the chief executive officer on board at the time of the book "Assault on the Liberty," takes exception to Israeli accounts of the events. A majority of the survivors agree. Specifically, they:

1. The ship's commanding officer and executive officer believed and refused a request by Israeli planes to identify themselves.

2. Israeli claims used as the justification for the Israelis to go ahead with an attack.

3. Israel flew an extra large U.S. flag billowing at 12 to 15 knots and U.S. Navy hull numbers all clearly identified the ship as American.

4. Israeli documents show recorded communications between Israel's reconnaissance aircraft over the Liberty and Tel Aviv headquarters command identifying the ship to be American hours before the attack.

Ennes, who was wounded in the attack, uses these findings as the basis of his belief that the attack was deliberate.

"Certainly Israeli forces and their war council knew who we were," he said. He claimed that former aides had the impact because of was at a position to detect Israeli military communications, which could reveal the unknown purpose of Soviet Cruise Missiles.

Aware of President Lyndon B. Johnson's wishing that the United States would give Israel decisive American support "only in self-defense, and not in attacks against her neighbors," Ennes says in his book that Israel could not have put troops into Syria without being seen as the aggressor, especially "with the U.S.S. Liberty lumbering Liberty would have to go."

He claims the planned attack of the Golan Heights was delayed one day by the late Brig. Gen. David Elazar so the Liberty could be disabled.

Donald Blalock, of Savage, Md., a civilian assigned to the Liberty and one of a handful of survivors at the complex ceremonies where the torpedo struck, spoke for everyone when he declared, "the only way we'll ever know us if the Israelis come out and say so," something not expected very soon.

"We should have stood up a little bit, instead of accepting their apology just like that, added Kirk. As a group of how the U.S. government reacted to the attack, he is on high-level complaints with the likes of former U.S. Secretaries of Defense and State, Robert McNamara and Dean Rusk, and retired Joint Chiefs of Staff chairman Adm. Thomas H. Moorer.

Long steering the attack "could not possibly have been a case of mistaken identity," Moorer has said. "The ship was strafed and fired upon as well as torpedoed in good visibility while she was flying the American flag."

Meadors asked "how many Russian intelligence operators have been wiped out? You know if one of those were sunk, they'd go to war over that."

Most of the survivors preferred not to address the "politics" of the incident at all.

"I want to make it crystal clear that, from my standpoint, I'm not here because of any treaty questions," said Jones. "I'm here strictly for these guys. After 15 years, and it doesn't matter who it is, we get here to the hotel, you walk down the hall and here comes Grisinski! It's just like you saw him yesterday!"

Blalock, who set up the reunion program, related one story which seemed to best exemplify how the former crew members feel.

"I got a call from a guy who had heard about the reunion from a Memorial Day recording on the radio," he said. He knew nothing about the organization. He called my wife and said it was great to hear about it, and sent him all the information. But he couldn't make it down. But he was close enough and called him. I said, 'Gee, you're only a few hours away, why aren't you going to make it?'

The man explained that he had been under psychiatric care since the attack. Blalock said. "He told me since he'd heard about the reunion, he started crying again. I told him we don't want to stress anybody up. The point when we first thought of this we realized it is going to bring up a lot of memories, some damn good and funny ones and some very painful.

"Then he had a meeting with his doctor the next day. He called me the next night and said, 'The doctor told me it would probably be good for me to get and to get this out of me. There are a lot of guys like that."

Bob Schnell, 39, of La Grande, Ore., volunteered "Buddha" by former shipmates until the group he helped "the truth coming out" would help others to respect the sacrifices the military makes for the country and to avoid an experience one crewman had when he returned home after the attack.

"His neighbor asked how he was, and told was she was glad he was well and 'welcome back home,'" Buddha said. "Then she asked him 'Is it true you were over there spying?'

"When he told her he wasn't free to say, she replied, 'Well, if you guys were, you got just exactly what you deserved.'"

James M. Ennes Jr. Research Papers

ADLAI E. STEVENSON
ILLINOIS

COMMITTEE ON BANKING, HOUSING AND URBAN AFFAIRS
SUBCOMMITTEE ON INTERNATIONAL FINANCE (CHAIRMAN)
COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE, SCIENCE AND TRANSPORTATION
SUBCOMMITTEE ON SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY AND SPACE (CHAIRMAN)
[redacted]
SELECT COMMITTEE ON INTELLIGENCE
SUBCOMMITTEE ON COLLECTION, PRODUCTION AND QUALITY OF INTELLIGENCE (CHAIRMAN)
DEMOCRATIC POLICY COMMITTEE

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20510

September 9, 1980

Mr. James M. Ennes, Jr.
[redacted]

Dear Mr. Ennes:

If the following is suitable, you are welcome to use it on the cover of the second edition:

> This is a lively, thoroughly researched account of an Israeli attack that took the lives of 34 American seamen, wounded others, including the author, and nearly destroyed the U.S.S. Liberty. From all I can learn, the attack was deliberate, as Mr. Ennes demonstrates, and the facts, including the Navy's bungling before and during the attack, were covered up. If this book received more attention, U.S. policies in the Middle East might be better balanced and more successful. It is well worth reading.

To mention this book in the Record, it would be helpful to have something I could place in the Record. A book review might serve the purpose. If you can supply something, I'd be happy to oblige.

The Congress never investigated this matter and I don't detect much enthusiasm for getting into it now. My own time here is running short. Nevertheless, I am trying to get access to the files that were denied you. If I succeed, we'll be in a position to decide what if anything more to do. The staff was much impressed by your comments during the meeting I arranged. I am trying to follow up.

I enclose a copy of my speech in the Senate supporting my unsuccessful amendment to cut economic assistance for Israel.

With best wishes,

Sincerely,

Enclosure

James M. Ennes, Jr. Research Papers

Lessons from the 1967 Israeli attack on the USS Liberty ●

Questions still surround the event which led the Navy to alter its listening techniques

By staff correspondents of The Christian Science Monitor

Washington

A new chapter in naval warfare is being written as Britain and Argentina duel over control of the Falkland Islands. But this week end, in Washington, a group of Americans retrieve are remembering one of the most disgraceful episodes in American naval history.

The incident is the sinking of the USS Liberty, which took place on June 8, 1967. The event still somewhat shrouded in secrecy, raised the question of whether the state of Israel militarily sank a United States military vessel.

From the incident, US military planners learned some unpleasant lessons about the shortcomings of the American military communications system. They also learned the tragically unpredictable consequences of hostilities in the Middle East – specifically how a conflict in that volatile region can quickly involve the United States.

Survivors of the US electronic intelligence-gathering ship – which Israel attacked with torpedoes, napalm, rockets, cannon, and machine-gun fire during the "Six-day war" between Israel and Egypt – are determined to see that the lessons aren't lost on the US Navy. All of those who were aboard the USS Liberty are expected at a Washington reunion this weekend (June 5-6). The gathering will doubtless rekindle the controversy that surrounded the sinking of the Liberty a decade and a half ago.

"There's been very little restraint among the crew for almost 15 years," says reunion organizer James M. Ennes Jr.

Mr. Ennes, who was a Lieutenant and cryptography specialist aboard the vessel, has been one of the chief critics of the US government's handling of the incident. He claimed in a 1979 book "Assault on the Liberty" that the attack on the ship was a premeditated act, rather than a case of mistaken identity – as the Israelis have claimed.

Israel maintains that its assault on the Liberty was a tragic error, for which it regrets and officially apologized. It paid a total of $6,000,000 to the families of those killed and $3,623,275 to those who were injured. To compensate for the damage to the Liberty, which never returned to duty, Israel agreed to pay three annual installments of $3 million, the last of which is due on June 23, 1982.

Calling the attack "an honest mistake in the heat of war," one Israeli source now charging a deadline from a "breakdown in communications" between the Israeli navy, army, and fighter aircraft. "There are a lot of ships around a US ship," says the source, who says that Ennes has failed to distinguish convincingly why the destruction of the Liberty would have been to Israel's advantage.

Mr. Ennes' Israeli source also says reporting comments have appeared in the Israeli press to wrap up with Israel's attack on the US. As recently as this year, the Anti-Defamation League was giving as its explanation: "Israel's ... [illegible] ... of Israel's role in the incident.

But the sinking of the Liberty is perhaps [illegible] – notably, by Ennes and other survivors, who insist that the complete story has yet to be told. They have won a number of converts over the years. Retired Adm. Thomas H. Moorer, who became Chief of Naval Operations some three weeks after the Liberty was attacked and who served as chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) from 1970-74, is to be the keynote speaker at the reunion banquet. He has long boosted the attack "could and possibly have been a case of mistaken identity."

"The ship was savagely strafed and fired upon as well as torpedoed in good visibility while she was flying the American flag," he has declared. Altogether, 34 men were killed and 171 wounded in the Israeli attack.

The USS Liberty arrived on station off the Sinai Mtn. on June 5, 1967, after 10 days' steaming from Aldabra, the capital of Dhofar Coast and a port call at Rota, Spain. She had been ordered to the eastern Mediterranean by the JCS to perform what Ennes has described as "a general listening mission."

Here, by monitoring the myriad radio signals, the ship was presumably able, at least, to track the course of the Arab-Israeli fighting onshore. But the vessel was struck by the attention of Israel's military commanders.

Ennes recounts that [illegible] the Liberty under surveillance for days. Photo-reconnaissance aircraft circled the vessel 11 times. He claims that at least Mirage jets then rocketed the ship subsequent it. Soviet Mystere aircraft then [illegible] the Liberty's bridge, gun mounts, bridge, and superstructure for 30 minutes. Finally, he says, three motor torpedo boats moved in to deliver the final blow. The fighting ceased.

Survivors, however, insisted, but a third assault on the Liberty somehow touching a defined code to her side.

"The Israeli government says it never saw the strongly attached any ship of an ally especially one flying the American flag. It claims that the first time it realized the enormity of an mistake was when airliners were picked up in Minnesota and informed the Israeli crew that they had torpedoed an American ship.

In a 45-page report submitted to Adm. Thomas Hayward, US Chief of Naval Operations, the commander in chief of the Israeli Navy, Rear Adm. Shmi Ahlong, states that after thorough investigations, there could be no doubt that the attack on the Liberty came about as a result of "terminal error" by the forces that operated on the spot and by the headquarters that supervised them.

"Incidents of this kind do occur in wartime," said Rear Admiral Ahlong.

An Israeli Embassy official in Washington pointed out that in past Middle East wars, Israeli ground, land, and air force units had, on a number of occasions, as a result of communications problems, accidentally attacked their own men, tanks, and planes. The official also stated that the Liberty was operating, prior to the 1967 attack, in an area considered a battle zone and at a time when Egyptian vessels were shelling the El-Arish coast.

But many survivors doubt the Israeli version of events. What particularly rankles them is the Israeli's private assertion – reported in the pages of Insight – that the Liberty was identified itself to the Israelis before the attack began was one of confusion.

A former Navy pilot recalls the Liberty incident

By Brad Knickerbocker
Staff correspondent of
The Christian Science Monitor

Washington

In his military classic titled "On War," Prussian strategist Karl von Clausewitz once used the word friction to describe the obstacles or haste that separate the theoretical from the real.

"Everything is very simple in war, but the simplest thing is difficult," he wrote. "These difficulties accumulate and produce a friction which no mind can imagine exactly who has not seen war."

Von Clausewitz included bad weather, fear, confusion, equipment breaking down, plans bodging up.

If anything seemed to characterize the USS Liberty episode, it was this friction generated by the heat of conflict. The men on the Liberty certainly experienced this. So did many of us aboard the USS Saratoga, one of the five US aircraft carriers in the Med[iterranean] when the Liberty was attacked.

I was a young naval aviator at a time, flying A-4 Skyhawks with the "VA-34 Blue Blasters" of Attack Squadron 34. I'm not a particularly lucky spare-carrier to a division whose principal players were admirals, diplomats, and heads of state. But the deadened feeling for an agonizingly long time after the attack began was one of confusion.

Aircraft were hurriedly armed with bombs, rockets, and air-to-air missiles. Flight-deck crewmen in brightly colored jerseys scrambled as the Saratoga turned into the wind, the catapults prepared for launch. The first flight of Skyhawks and F-4 Phantoms lurched off the ship, rendezvoused, and headed for the Liberty.

Those of us assigned to the second launch began our briefing with reports from various relayed and air intelligence officers. We assumed to be more questions than answers. We were attacking the Liberty – why? We had to go rendezvoused at this point.

Briefers used large maps of the area, pointing out surface-to-air missile sites, antiaircraft emplacements, possible fighter and other military locations. It was assumed that the Soviet Union was providing Egypt with military advisers and technicians of both ways, including [illegible] and MiG fighters.

The battle in the Mideast was between Israel and the Arab regimes, but this assumed that the Soviet Union – especially if the Liberty had been under Arab attack and the Soviets was at least indirectly involved.

With a couple of hours, however, the tension was reduced considerably. Israel said it had mistakenly attacked the US ship. The first flight of aircraft from the Saratoga was recalled without engaging in combat, and the flight did not launch. My readied initiative would have to wait for Vietnam.

It's not for me to say how badly the Navy's communications system squeezed that day, or whether there was a subsequent "coverup," as some Liberty survivors allege. But I can't clearly and clearly have right was Clausewitz was about "friction."

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Liberty in the aftermath of the June 8, 1967, attack off Sinai — US Navy photo

Ennes, who was stationed [illegible] Israel attack, requested a Freedom of Information Act request, a copy of a secret Navy cable that casts doubt on that assertion. In it, Navy Rear Admiral Isaac C. Kidd states that the commanding officer and executive on the Liberty fully deny they ever received a request for identification from the Israeli torpedo boats. They were adamant in denying that they were refused to identify the Liberty. Rear Admiral Kidd concluded the cable with the observation: "I am convinced these men know what they are talking about."

Why would the Israelis launch a deliberate attack against a US vessel? Ennes, who was wounded in the attack, theorizes that Israel

Continued on next page

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James M. Ennes Jr. Research Papers

Continued from preceding page



Cleanup of some of the damage to the Liberty's hull

The US Navy convened a court of inquiry to investigate the incident, which found that ... [illegible] ... unmistakable evidence that the attack was conducted against a US ship." The board concluded that the ... [illegible] ... a mistake in identity. ... [illegible] ... apology.

But the board, ... [illegible] ... disputed. "[A] government representative ... claim that the ship was mistaken for the Egyptian freighter El Quseir, but failed to note that El Quseir was a steel-hull motor boat, then moored at Alexandria, is [illegible] ... incapable of being ... [illegible] ... for a Liberty," adds Kinsley.

[illegible] that the US government covered up the truth about the incident to avoid rupturing relations with Israel, including some turmoil top US officials share at least some of his doubts that the incident was an accident. In a note ... to Kissinger, George Christian ... [illegible] ... press secretary ... wrote "there was considerable skepticism at the White House that the attack was accidental." In later years, Christian says, he became convinced an "accident of this magnitude was too much to swallow."

Even now, many American officials are tight-lipped about the incident. A former senior US intelligence official says only, "This is one I really don't want to handle. This is a barn in every direction. You get on a crouch between the Israeli lobby and the rest of the world if you start commenting on the thing."

The incident undoubtedly provoked consternation at the highest levels of the US government, however. After the Liberty's plight was reported, a number of top officials were summoned to an emergency meeting in the White House Situation Room. One of them was Dean Rusk, the former US Secretary of State.

Last September, Mr. Rusk told Eisele he believed the assault on the ship "was not merely a genuine outrage." He said he still did not know "at what level" in the Israeli government it was launched. "But I am convinced that it was not trigger-happy local commanders." Still, Mr. Rusk says there was serious doubt "whether that episode should have been seen as a major confrontation between Israel and the United States."

"Those who carry the ultimate responsibility ... know that there are times when one has to pick up the pieces and not let everything fall apart because of an entrapment of the past," says Mr. Rusk.

For many ... analysts, the incident has faded into history. A Pentagon ... asked to comment on the Navy's version of the incident, said, "You're reaching me cold. ... The less we try to learning have to do with the Falklands crisis, and we're not really following back on the Liberty."

Still, the Navy learned important lessons from the Liberty episode. The Navy no longer uses small, essentially unarmed communications ships to do its spying. That practice halted after the Pueblo was captured by the North Koreans in 1968. This work now is done by destroyers, like the one that has been hovering off the coast of El Salvador and Nicaragua for the past five months ... ships with their own defenses.

Contributing to this report were former Monitor correspondent Stephen Weller, Pentagon correspondent Brad Knickerbocker, and State Department correspondent Daniel Southerland. The report was written by Gary Thatcher, the Monitor's America-at-large editor.

James M. Eisele, Jr. Research Papers

Seattle Post-Intelligencer
THE VOICE OF THE NORTHWEST SINCE 1863

EDITORIALS

A curious spy

Israel is an American ally with a first-class intelligence organization, so the press disclosure that a Navy counter-intelligence analyst has confessed to being an Israeli spy may strain credulity.

Jonathan Jay Pollard, 31, has been accused of passing military secrets to Israel. His wife has been arrested on charges of illegally possessing classified government documents.

This incident seems particularly strange since the Reagan administration several years back entered into a formal strategic accord with Israel, and the two nations' intelligence services have enjoyed close relations since the 1950s. The U.S. Navy's successful interception of the aircraft hijacking the hijackers of the cruise liner Achille Lauro last month has been credited, in part, to intelligence data provided by Israel.

Why would Israel jeopardize such an important agreement at risk over espionage against? One answer which seems plausible has emerged in recent days as journalists in Washington and Jerusalem have excavated the story: Pollard seems to have been recruited, by "persons or bodies outside the main branches of the Israeli intelligence community," as one Israeli newspaper put it — that is, by some sort of a back-channel network from the former Israeli government of Prime Minister Menachem Begin, not directly connected to the present government.

According to Thomas R. Pickering, the U.S. Ambassador to Israel, "Both of our governments appear in a good mood, determined to cooperate (in probing the Pollard affair), to investigate this particular matter, to exchange information and to share what they know about it."

In the real world, nations act on perceived self-interest and not on mutual expressions of common ground. Despite the 37-year relationship, U.S.-Israeli relations have also been strained many times (the Liberty incident, the Israeli invasion of Lebanon). And there have been numerous reports that from time to time Israel has sought U.S. data not provided under the intelligence-sharing accord, such as material on pro-American Arab nations. Meanwhile, an Israeli newspaper has claimed that the United States also has spied on Israel several times in recent years, seeking information on scientific research projects. So it should [illegible] a great surprise if the probers do substantiate [illegible] pure only allegations in the Pollard case.

Both the Reagan Administration and [illegible] government have the obligation to [illegible]

James M. Ennes Jr. Research Papers

ASSAULT ON THE LIBERTY

By LCDR James M. Ennes, Jr., USN, Ret.



A NAVAL INSTITUTE BOOK SELECTION

The book, which reads like a thriller, should be required reading for all government employees. The writing is first class. The relationships and conflicts of important shipboard personalities add suspense and human drama to the story.

--The Washington Post BOOK WORLD

I've never read a more graphic depiction of war and its effects at sea. ...an insider's book by an honest participant.

--Pulitzer Prizewinner Seymour Hersh

As Ennes fills in the critical details of the incident, he also succeeds in giving us the human face that has been so strangely absent. Ennes' Liberty is populated by a sturdy crew that went fairly bonkers upon learning it was heading for the simmering eastern Mediterranean. We see them rowdy and brawling on their last shore leave, finally compliant before their tough, rule-bending executive officer, then heroic, palsied, bewildered and crippled during the attack.

--The Washington Star

The book is remarkably enjoyable--a balance between "The Cruel Sea" and "Mister Roberts." ...the first book in decades that makes the reader take pride in American servicemen. ...a tribute to the Navy. ...one of the finest accounts of combat at sea. ...the most important book you'll read this year.

--The Hartford Courant

James M. Ennes, Jr. Research Papers

Ennes has done his homework well. His facts are well documented and his clarity of writing brings them together in a totally readable fashion. Ennes's treatment of the attack is awesome. ...an important book. Probably the most important naval book of 1980.
--U.S. Naval Institute Proceedings

The political cover-up rivals Watergate.
--Brigadier General Carl C. Cogswell USMC, Retired

Ennes has done a splendid job. The assault is vividly described as is the frustration of the crew who surely thought help was on the way.
--San Diego Union

You'll close this book angry as hell.
--The Retired Officer

A disquieting story of Navy bungling, government coverup and Israeli duplicity that is well worth reading. And remembering.
--The Atlanta Journal

A stirring recital of a tragic incident in our naval history. A movie script writer could make a tremendous film out of it.
--Milwaukee Sentinal

ASSAULT ON THE LIBERTY is enough to make your hair curl.
--Copley News Service

James M. Ennes Jr. Research Papers

ASSAULT ON THE LIBERTY is a thought-provoking, compelling and disturbing work. --Denver Post Roundup

Cover-up became a household word with Watergate, and the American public was driven to the brink of paranoia because of it. After reading Assault on the Liberty, one begins to wonder if the paranoia came soon enough.

--Charleston (S.C.) SUNDAY

Ennes has marshalled impressive resources for his book. It is disquieting reading. "Assault on the Liberty" is deserving of serious attention.

--The El Paso Times

The only people who looked good were the crew and officers of the Liberty. They kept their ship afloat. The U.S. Navy, the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the administration and Israel do not smell so well.

--Omaha World-Herald

...an enlightening account. --Publishers Weekly

...a haunting story. --Prizewinning author William Hallahan

Conclusions are documented. Appendixes offer a wealth of original sources. --Library Journal

James M. Ennes, Jr. Research Papers

Ennes is not guessing. He was there, on the bridge of the Liberty when the attack began. He has a writer's eye and ear for the small things that rivet the reader's attention. He brings life to the human beings who lived, and died, in this drama.
--San Jose Mercury News

...a vivid, harrowing account. --Cleveland Plain Dealer

Ennes is convinced the attack was no accident. The official explanations are otherwise, but Ennes makes a good case.
--St. Louis Post-Dispatch

Good Reading. --The Dallas Morning News

It's a good book, a public service in truth telling.
--The Seattle Post-Intelligencer

A detailed account of an incident which was not afforded the attention it deserved at the time. Well worth the reading.
--The Houston Post

Ennes makes a good case. His account of the attack is full of suspense, adventure and blood. --St. Louis Post-Dispatch

The book is extremely revealing of the incident and shows a tremendous amount of research and attention to detail. Ennes has performed an act of patriotism in writing the book...
--former U.S. Senator James Abourezk

James M. Ennes, Jr. Research Papers

When the assault happened I never before heard so much grumbling from people on Capitol Hill. BUT NONE WOULD SPEAK OUT! God bless Ennes for writing it.
--former U.S. Congressman Thomas G. Abernethy

I have long hoped that the Navy would unmuzzle some of the survivors. ...a very well documented report from first hand experience.
--former U.S. Congressman John R. Rarick

Ennes has put together a convincing argument that [illegible] was a deliberate attack, prompted by strategic intelligence considerations, an attack which the United States did not choose to defend against or openly condemn. The author's role as participant and career Navy man lends this well-written book an immediacy and force which make for fascinating reading.
--The Chapel Hill (N.C.) Newspaper

Ennes's book is in the best traditions of quiet investigative journalism.
--Saint Louis Jewish Light
--Jewis Post (Winnipeg)
--Jewish Western

Ennes's account of the Liberty affair is a provocative one, a story that has already drawn considerable discussion in professional naval journals. It isn't a pretty story, but it isn't one that a reader is likely to forget.
--Commercial Appeal (Memphis)

...a fascinating and detailed account that reveals a good many

James M. Ennes, Jr. Research Papers

facts previously hidden from the public.
--The Arab News

A detailed story, far different from the official version.
--The Seattle Times

...skillfully written. Ennes is a natural storyteller with a flair for figurative language and the knack of bringing characters alive on the page. His descriptions have poetic qualities. --The Everett (Washington) Herald

...an extraordinarily good production. And no library relating to the Six Day War can call itself complete without this volume on its shelves. It is an interesting book, fast paced and very readable. Even a person uninterested in the politics of the Liberty Affair will find it absorbing reading.
--Middle East Perspective

Ennes has painstakingly researched everything. This, and his unique eyewitness, minute-by-minute reconstruction of the attack, make the book doubly valuable. --Middle East International

...a graphic description of despair and bravery aboard the defenseless vessel. This is more than a detailed report: it is an inquest of cover-up in the area of inter-nation political intrigue. --Columbus (Ohio) Dispatch

His recollection of the horror of the attack is indelible.
--Inquiry

The full story is told in grim detail in this indignant volume.
--Erie (Penn.) Times-News

James M. Ennes, Jr. Research Papers

The pages of Ennes' handsome, bustling book ripple with disturbing excitement. The load of personal interviews he conducted to reconstruct the attack and the pinpoint factual documentation he has assembled are staggering.
Sunday FLORIDA Magazine (Orlando Sentinal Star)

This excellent book, its 64 page appendix filled with corroborating details and documents, leaves one angry, distressed and proud at the chicanery, stupidity and bravery that exist side by side in this great democracy. If only we could learn before it is too late.
SHIPMATE (U.S. Naval Academy Alumni Association Magazine)

"Assault on the Liberty" is well detailed, comprehensive, well illustrated and interesting. The book is a grand contribution to the American people; now we can learn what actually happened.
The McCormick (S.C.) Messenger

"Assault on the Liberty" is well written by a participant with an intensity that shows his commitment to bringing the facts into the open. Beyond that, it is a book detailing the day-to-day life aboard one of the many utility ships which also serve the nation.
The Fresno Bee

Ennes's disturbing, provocative book cries out for informed comment in Washington. If allowed to stand, it is one more indictment of official U.S. credibility at a time when that credibility is failing fast.
The Buffalo News

Ennes has produced a book worth reading; its documentation and research makes his version of what happened and why it happened sound much more credible than the "official" version.
Des Moines Sunday Register

I enjoyed the book tremendously. --Senator Barry Goldwater

Americans owe it to themselves to read "Assault on the Liberty."
--The (Boston) Pilot

This is a meticulous account, unemotional and detailed--not reckless or shrill. It will require answers.
--Military Review (The Professional Journal of the U.S. Army)

The author develops a strong case with many examples to support his contention of a coverup. The account and photographs of the attack and its aftermath are chilling and filled with examples of individual heroism. ...a painful but instructive reading exercise.
--Naval War College Review

James M. Ennes, Jr. Research Papers

PROMINENT AMERICANS COMMENT ON "ASSAULT ON THE LIBERTY"

This is a lively, thoroughly researched account of an Israeli attack that took the lives of 34 American seamen, wounded others, including the author, and nearly destroyed the U.S.S. Liberty. From all I can learn, the attack was deliberate, as Mr. Ennes demonstrates, and the facts, including the Navy's bungling before and during the attack, were covered up. If this book received more attention, U.S. policies in the Middle East might be better balanced and more successful. It is well worth reading.

Senator Adlai E. Stevenson

I enjoyed the book tremendously.

Senator Barry Goldwater

Mr. James M. Ennes, Jr., in his recent book "Assault on the Liberty," has made an important contribution to the history of our involvement in the Israeli-Arab conflict. Few Americans understand why the United States is so frustrated in its efforts to bring about a peaceful settlement of that 30 year war. This book reveals some of the reasons for that frustration and should be read by our policy makers and the public.

former senator J.W. Fulbright

"Assault on the Liberty," written by the officer of the deck of that unfortunate ship, provides a timely record of part of the recent history of the Middle East. This excellent book will help in assessing what the future of that area may be.

James M. Ennes, Jr. Research Papers

Admiral Arleigh Burke, USN, retired
former Chief of Naval Operations

The book is extremely revealing of the incident and shows a tremendous amount of research and attention to detail. Ennes has performed an act of patriotism in writing the book.

former senator James Abourezk

Every American should read Assault on the Liberty, which is told so well by James Ennes. Not only does his account set forth the bravery and dedication to duty of many fine young Americans caught in a most difficult position not of their own making, but it also tells a story of political intrigue and explains to a large degree why the facts in this very sad case have not been fully passed on to the American people.

The attack on the Liberty by Israeli aircraft and ships could not possibly have been a case of mistaken identity. The ship was savagely strafed and fired upon as well as torpedoed in good visibility while she was flying the American flag at a clear silhouette but could not possibly have been mistaken for a ship operated by the Egyptian forces. While it is too late to correct the suppression of this information insofar as its impact on the events of the time, nevertheless this book sets forth in clear terms the story of a very sad event in our history. Why did the press which has been so active in exploring other events in greatest detail give this matter such perfunctory attention? Read this book and make up your own mind.

Admiral Thomas H. Moorer, USN, retired
former Chief of Naval Operations and
former Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff

James M. Ennes, Jr. Research Papers

REMEMBER THE "LIBERTY"

Mr. STEVENSON. Mr. President, James M. Ennes has written a book about the Israeli attack on the U.S.S. *Liberty* which is worthy of the Members' attention. That attack killed 34 American seamen, wounded others and nearly destroyed the American ship. This book gives convincing evidence that the attack was deliberate and that the facts, including the Navy's bungling before and during the attack, were covered up. I urge the Members to read this book and invite their attention to a review of it in the Washington Post. Mr. President, I ask that this review be printed in the RECORD.

The review follows:

Remember the "Liberty"

(By L. M. Bruhn)

Tragedy, shoddy communications blunders and a classic government cover-up charged by the U.S. Navy are the main ingredients of the sensational book by James M. Ennes Jr., a wry-spoken specialist. Lieutenant Ennes was one of 207 men aboard the USS *Liberty* on June 8, 1967, when Israeli air and naval forces attacked and inflicted traumatic damage on the ship. Thirty-four Americans were killed; Ennes was one of the 171 others who were wounded.

Thank God the entire crew was not killed that day, the *Liberty* [illegible] to former targets, like the [illegible] surveillance aircraft shot down by North Korea in April 1969.

I believe that, if the [illegible] the *Liberty* had been known to be [illegible] and unmanned [illegible] U.S. Pacific Fleet, the sorry tragedy of that day would never have happened as it did. As the "Pueblo Incident," in which I was a central player, have many striking resemblances to the story of the *Liberty*. The two ships had almost identical electronic missions, although the *Liberty*'s equipment was more than 10 times that of the Pueblo and she was armed by more than twice the personnel. The similarities are a terrible condemnation of command and control, a lack of response to distress calls for assistance during attack and a cover-up for incompetency at the top. But *Liberty* was grounded many times more heavily than Pueblo was, with far more devastating results.

The *Liberty* tragedy began deep in the maze of the intelligence community in Washington when in 1967 Israeli-Egyptian relations began to deteriorate. Washington "experts" sensing an opportunity to reap high rewards of diplomatic intelligence, ordered *Liberty* from more private operations along the African continent to the waters contiguous to Israel and Egypt. The ship arrived just after hostilities erupted.

Liberty's captain, Commander William L. McGonagle, realized the great danger inherent in operating in a war zone and requested close support from the commander of the Sixth Fleet. As was later to be the case with Pueblo, close support was denied. McGonagle was promised, however, as I was on the Pueblo that help would be immediately in the event of trouble. Carrier air support was only 30 minutes away.

Later, those minutes after the first disturbing radar signals from Israeli jets, *Liberty* call for help was acknowledged by the senior [illegible] Saratoga, Independence and Forrestal squawk who ordered to help the stricken ship. But the fleet senior did not. U.S. military headquarters during the hour and 50 minutes of continuous air and torpedo boat attacks.

This debacle is presently explained by the senior officers of the Naval Court of Inquiry that looked into the affair ultimately failed to fix any blame for the terrible failure to aid unarmed, undergoing foreign attack. Men only two blame not fixed, the facts were covered up.

Now it is possible to maintain high morale in the Navy in the face of such inglorious performance by senior officers and [illegible] to ignore [illegible] Israeli attack on the *Liberty* [illegible] openly denounced [illegible] again that America's defense [illegible] [illegible] capabilities and performance [illegible] beyond the public's wildest dreams.

Ennes reminds that the [illegible] was accidental, not so according to the Israeli government [illegible] said it was [illegible] plausible and logical evidence [illegible] that Israeli aircraft made numerous low-level photographic and reconnaissance flights directly over *Liberty* in the hours immediately preceding the attack. It states unequivocally that the [illegible] the ship was flying [illegible] was not what during that reconnaissance [illegible] previous any claims of accidental [illegible]. He contends that Israeli intention of [illegible] against *Liberty* with devastating effect, and that Israeli [illegible] to [illegible] repeatedly [illegible] against *Liberty* before lifting the napalm from [illegible] and later denied her life rafts to the [illegible]. Our government, including President Johnson, negligently and with [illegible] dishonesty, allowed these events to occur, and then covered them up in order not to embarrass an ally.

Why would an ally attack one of our ships? Ennes [illegible] a possible explanation. The week before the *Liberty* incident, President Johnson had warned the Israeli government that the United States would not support them in any action in which they were the aggressor. Israel contended that the actions it undertook in subsequent days against Syria and Jordan were defensive. On the day of the attack on the *Liberty*, the Israelis had planned a strike into Syria. But, only hours before it was to begin, the *Liberty* moved into position to monitor and record it. Since Israel had no desire to appear to be the aggressor, Ennes suggests that Israel decided to put the *Liberty* out of action in order to conceal from the United States the role in the world the real intentions towards Syria. The fact that Israel did strike Syria the day after the *Liberty* incident gives credibility to Ennes' theory.

The book, which reads like a thriller, should be required for all government employees. The writing is forceful. The [illegible] and conduct of important [illegible] board personalities add suspense and human drama to the story.

Those personalities include Commander McGonagle, a salty-straight, courageous captain, affectionately called "Mac" or "the gun" by his officers and men. McGonagle remained on the bridge, though seriously wounded and bleeding heavily throughout the Israeli attacks. His survival can only be called miraculous. His great courage and unwavering loyalty undoubtedly were his [illegible] who ultimately awarded the Medal of Honor, but not at the White House as is normal. Our government, did not wish to draw attention to the incident.

McGonagle was well served by an equally [illegible] executive officer, Lieutenant [illegible] Philip Ward, remaining a fixed [illegible] [illegible] who was killed in the attack. He was the ship's navigator and was relieved by the [illegible] Ward should have gained [illegible] the captain. He played [illegible] regulations, often [illegible] [illegible] and the [illegible] [illegible] of ship and [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]

The San Diego Union
Editorials
PAGE B4 WEDNESDAY MORNING, DECEMBER 24, 1980

Why The Cover-Up?

On the afternoon of June 8, 1967, the U.S. electronics intelligence ship Liberty was repeatedly attacked by Israeli warplanes and torpedo boats while steaming in international waters in the Mediterranean off the coast of Sinai.

When the attacks ended, 34 American sailors lay dead or dying and 75 more were wounded. The defenseless, clearly-marked Liberty — strafed, bombed, and torpedoed — was a smoking, listing wreck.

The following day, the Israeli government apologized to the United States and explained that the attack was a "tragic mistake."

It was almost certainly nothing of the kind. The Liberty, which the Israelis said had been mistaken for an Egyptian supply vessel, carried extensive identification including a large American flag. Moreover, the Israeli air and sea attacks occurred in crystal-clear weather in mid-afternoon following a full seven hours of overflights by Israeli reconnaissance planes.

Yet, the Johnson administration accepted the Israeli explanation. The Navy established a court of inquiry which concluded that there was insufficient evidence to reach a judgment about the reasons for the Israeli attack. The surviving officers and crewmen of the Liberty were warned not to discuss the incident. Israel paid $6.7 million in claims filed by the families of the dead and wounded.

Now, 13 years later, the U.S. State Department has agreed to close its file on the Liberty in exchange for an additional Israeli payment of $6 million in damages. Presumably, this final payment is in consideration for a State Department finding that there was "no information to corroborate allegations of a deliberate attack."

The suspicion of a joint cover-up by U.S. and Israeli officials will not be dispelled by such a conclusion. It simply isn't possible to believe that skilled Israeli pilots flying repeated passes within a few hundred feet of the Liberty could identify it as anything other than what it was — a clearly marked U.S. Navy ship.

Why then was the Liberty attacked? The best guess is that the ship was monitoring Israeli and Egyptian communications at a time when the Six-Day War was raging at fever pitch.

We know now the Israelis were planning to storm the Syrian-held Golan Heights on June 9, the day after the Liberty was attacked. The Israelis undoubtedly knew that the Liberty was eavesdropping. They may well have decided to strike to preserve the secrecy of their impending attack and to preclude the possibility of U.S. diplomatic interference at a time when developments on the battlefield were clearly in Israel's favor.

Admitting as much, even now, would be deeply embarrassing for the Israelis. It is reasonable to assume that U.S. officials would be equally loath to discomfort a valuable ally and, in the process, indict their own past mishandling of the case.

Still, American officials in particular have a larger responsibility to the families of the Liberty's dead and to those who will bear the scars of this attack to their graves. They, and the American public, deserve more than the transparent cover-up that continues today more than a decade after the bloodiest peacetime attack on a U.S. Navy ship in this century.

James M. Ennes, Jr. Research Papers

PM-UPI-Airstrike, News Digest U.T. 12/19/81

Ex-Navy Head Says Truth Still Hidden on '67 Attack

WASHINGTON (UPI) — The State Department says the book is finally closed on the 1967 Israeli attack on the U.S. intelligence ship Liberty that killed 34 crewmen, but a former head of the U.S. Navy says the truth is not yet known and Congress should pursue it.

The U.S. government Thursday accepted $6 million as "final settlement" for the loss of the Liberty, which was so badly damaged in the attack by Israeli planes and ships on June 8, 1967, that it had to be scrapped.

The Israeli government, which had already accepted responsibility for what it termed a tragic accident in the heat of the Six Day War, had already paid $6.7 million to the families of the 34 dead crewmen and the 171 crew members who were injured in the attack.

Retired Adm. Thomas Moorer, who became chief of naval operations about one month after the Liberty incident, told United Press International, "I think the American people should finally get the truth. I think it should be pursued to conclusion and I would think that there would be a tremendous curiosity on the part of Congress to determine just exactly what happened."

Moorer and James Ennes, a retired naval officer who was wounded in the 1967 attack, do not believe that the Israeli attack was accidental. Ennes, who was officer of the deck on the American ship during the attack and author of a recent book, "Assault on the 'Liberty,'" thinks that the presence of the U.S. intelligence ship endangered Israeli secrecy for its plans to attack the Golan Heights.

He believes that was the reason for the attack.

The Israeli move on the Golan Heights occurred the following day, after the Liberty was put out of action.

A secret 1967 naval court of inquiry, according to an unclassified summary, found that the Israeli armed forces "had ample opportunity to identify the Liberty correctly," but the court drew no definitive conclusion about whether the attack was deliberate.

The report noted that it could not answer some of the questions because the court was not an international investigation with the power to call Israeli witnesses.

The Senate Intelligence Committee looked into the matter earlier this year, after the publication of Ennes' book, and decided, according to a staff member, "There was not enough new material to support a hearing."

One source said, "What that meant was that the committee decided that until somebody from the Israeli cabinet defected and told us the truth, the evidence would continue to be circumstantial."

Ennes, now living in Seattle, told UPI that the Israeli attack lasted 75 minutes in clear weather and the air attacks concluded with a mast - top dropping of napalm canisters. He described the result as "an absolute inferno."

The ship was finally hit by a torpedo from an Israeli jet, which caused the greatest loss of life and blew a 40 - foot gash in the hull.

U.S. air cover, which had promised the ship within 10 minutes of a call for help, did not arrive until more than an hour after the Israeli ships and planes had left, according to Ennes.

Ennes said, "The Liberty matter is not settled because Israel and the United States still deny things which were true."

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James M. Eames, Jr. Research Papers

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Detailed report on A2.

Vol. 145—No. 101

The Eve

BALTIMORE, FRIDAY,



Crew [illegible] in Mediterranean [illegible] when the Liberty was attacked.

Liberty survivors wo

'67 attack term

By Thomas Hac
Evening Sun Staff

The survivors of an Israeli attack on a U.S. Navy ship during the Six Day War in 196[illegible] are trying to prove that their government covered up the fact that the attack was intentional.

The survivors of the USS Liberty have formed an organization and are quietly approaching current and former high government officials in an effort to reopen the investigation of the attack in which 34 Americans were killed and 171 wounded.

The survivors have found at least one vocal high-level ally in retired Adm. Thomas H. Moorer, former chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

Moorer told The Evening Sun that the attack was "absolutely deliberate" and said any Israeli denial of such accusations was a "damn lie."

Whatever the outcome of the survivors' efforts, there is no question that the official American account, obtained by The Evening Sun under the Freedom of Information Act, differs substantially from the Israeli version, including an Israeli court document that was leaked to the survivors. They made it available to the The Evening Sun.

Israeli planes struck early on the afternoon of June 8, 1967, while some of the Liberty crew members were on deck sunbathing, unconcerned about the aerial reconnaissance that had been going on since early morning.

James M. Ennes, Jr. Research Papers

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AUGUST 13, 1982

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ed 'intentional'

The converted freighter had only four machine guns and was in international waters off Egypt.

According to the American account, the hour-long attack began with aircraft making "coordinated strafing, rocket and incendiary" runs, followed by torpedo boats that hit the Liberty with a torpedo, killing 26 men.

The attack was "well coordinated, accurate and determined," the U.S. Naval Court of Inquiry concluded.

Israel claimed the attack was a case of mistaken identity, the U.S. court agreed. "The calm conditions and slow ship speed may well have made the American flag difficult to identify," it concluded.

Israel expressed "deep regret" and paid $6.3 million for [illegible] and personal injury [illegible] Israel has yet to finish paying [illegible] million for damage to the ship.

For the survivors, the compensation was not [illegible]. They say the evidence, including the record of the Court of Inquiry, does not support the Israeli argument.

[illegible] quarrel, is with the U.S. [illegible], not with Israel, said [illegible] L. Blalock of Jessup, a leader in the effort.

While few former high government officials will talk publicly about the attack, Moorer, who was named Chief of Naval Operations during the

[Continued, Page A3, Col. 1]



DONALD BLALOCK
Leading the effort

James M. Ennes Jr. Research Papers

DALLAS TIMES HERALD
10 JUNE 1982

Philip Geyelin/

Remember the Liberty?

Every schoolboy knows what's meant by the 84-year-old Spanish-American War slogan, "Remember the Maine." But how many of us of any age remember more than dimly the fate of the U.S.S. Liberty, which was strafed, bombed, napalmed, torpedoed and reduced to a barely navigable hulk by Israeli jets and torpedo boats a mere 15 years ago?



A few more, perhaps, this week than last. Over the weekend some 60 survivors of the Liberty finally got together in Washington with their families and friends for their first reunion, and managed to generate a brief burst of publicity. But not nearly enough Americans "Remember the Liberty," for no other reason than that the truth about what happened 13 miles off the Egyptian meet at the height of the Six Day War between Israel and Egypt in June, 1967, was one of the war's most shameful casualties.

That, as much as the cause of shipmates who shared a bloody battle, brought the survivors of the Liberty to town. They came not in search of truth, for they alone know it. They came in the hope that at long last they might find some way to spread it around.

If that has the sound of a needless rehashing of old history, it strikes me as just the opposite: as a welcome invitation to reexamine a case of governmental duplicity and dissembling made all the more timely by the congruence of the Liberty reunion with a fresh outbreak of war in the Middle East.

No fine analogy is intended; the circumstances that set off the clash in southern Lebanon are no less controversial for being relatively easy to trace. The point is that the application of American policy be based, and be seen to be based, on a believable theory of the case.

That is the plain lesson of the Liberty. When truth is the first casualty of war, trust becomes the second. The attack on the Liberty killed 34 men and wounded 171 out of a total ship's complement of 294; you could call it a small engagement in the context of the then-raging Vietnam war. But it made its own contribution to the collapse of the U.S. government's credibility.

How? Because the administration of President Lyndon Johnson reflexively and unquestionably accepted Israel's apologies for an "innocent error" and mounted by direct order any testimony to the contrary before a naval Court of Inquiry by the only witnesses — the eye witnesses — who could argue otherwise.

The Liberty was a converted freighter, operating as a high-technology "ferret," conducting electronic surveillance. Relatively unarmed, it was steaming an easy five knots (top speed was 18 knots) in international waters, 13 miles offshore.

Israeli postmortems had it at a speed of 30 knots. In the heat of battle, it was "mistaken" for an "Egyptian" warship it in no way resembled. "Incidents of this kind do occur in wartime," says Israel's final report, delivered only a week or so ago.

There could be good reasons why a beleaguered Israel, on a hair-trigger by habit, might wish to conceal even from its most faithful supporter evidence of its war plans that might have been collected by an American spy ship — to the point of silencing the collector and engaging in a cover-up.

What the men of the Liberty find hardest to deal with is not their case against Israel, but the case against their own government. The men of the blood-soaked bridge know of repeated overflights, hours before the attack, by Israeli jets, of repeated close-up inspections by [illegible] "flying boxcars" with Israeli markings. They know the Liberty bore clear, U.S. Navy identification. They know the American flag was flying (and standing out in a breeze) until it was [illegible].

And they know that their government knows — even though much of the record has either been destroyed or locked up. A brilliant, unofficial history has been written in a book, "Assault on the Liberty," by a ship's officer, James M. Ennes, Jr. But its publication three years ago drew heavy fire from Israeli supporters in this country and sales were sluggish; it is curiously hard to find.

From Israel the Liberty's survivors, the next-of-kin and the U.S. government belatedly received reparations. Now the survivors are fighting for reparations of a different kind: simple recognition by their own government of the true nature of their ship's sacrifice.

A headstone in Arlington over the remains of six of their lost shipmates is inscribed: "Died in the Mediterranean . . ." Died of scurvy? Or old age? Why not "Killed in Action" as befits men lost in battle? The captain received the Congressional Medal of Honor — not from the President at the White House (the custom) but at the Navy Yard, from the secretary of the Navy.

The men of the Liberty would like all that put right. They organized last weekend, and laid plans to get Congress to reopen their case. Their rage is real, and rightly placed. They may be few in number, but they are owed their due — not only for the sake of a gallant crew, but in the interest of the truth that underpins public trust.

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James M. Ennes, Jr. Research Papers

James J. Kilpatrick

Fort Worth Star-Telegram

3 June 1978



Old virtues never die

As a convention city of growing importance, Washington constantly attracts gatherings and conferences large and small, but in this year's calendar of events few get-togethers will have the poignant meaning of a reunion set for this weekend. The reunion will mark the 15th anniversary of Israel's attack on the U.S. intelligence ship Liberty.

Before that brutally efficient assault had ended, 34 American sailors were dead or dying. Another 75 were wounded. The ship was a crippled hulk, stricken by a torpedo in her starboard side. The story of the Liberty's desperate, withdrawal, under the command of 42-year-old Cmdr. William L. McGonagle, ranks among the great sea stories of this century.

The reunion will bring together an estimated 130 former crewmen and members of their families. They will join in the traditional rituals of reunions the world over — a little beer drinking, a few speeches, a banquet — but the ship will make a memorial visit to Arlington National Cemetery where 25 of the dead are buried.

A Sunday morning business session will decide whether the survivors should form an organization to keep alive the heroism — and the bitterness — that marked the thirty hours 15 years ago. "Should an attempt to learn more about why we were attacked and why our government is so complacent about it all? Or should we hang it all up and forget it?"

It seems unlikely that many of Libery's crew will vote to forget. One of them who is determined to remember is James M. Ennes Jr., who was officer of the deck when the Israeli air and naval forces struck the ship. His superb first-hand account of the affair, *Assault on the Liberty*, was published by Random House in 1979. The book never received the critical acclaim or the best-seller status it deserved. For a gripping yarn of the sea, this can stand with any of the Hornblower tales that C.S. Forester ever wrote.

Forester's heroic British admiral was the creature of fiction. Cmdr. McGonagle, his officers and his men were real human beings. Their assignment that day in June 1967 was to patrol slowly in international waters west of the Gaza strip and north of El Arish.

Israel was about to embark upon the Six Days' War. Over the years a conviction has grown that Israel simply did not want an intelligence ship, flying the U.S. flag or any other flag, listening to battle orders. That is to say, a conviction has grown that the attack was deliberate.

Israel continues to deny the charge. The Israeli version is that when the ship was put under aerial surveillance by reconnaissance planes, the Liberty failed to identify herself. Fearful that the vessel might be Egyptian, Israel commanders then ordered the attack. When the mistake was discovered, Israeli patrol boats offered assistance. Eventually, Israel paid $12.7 million in reparations.

The evidence marshaled by Ennes in his book overwhelmingly refutes this explanation. The afternoon was clear and sunny. A light breeze ruffled a 5-by-8-foot American flag. The Liberty had been under surveillance for seven hours — abundant time for the flag to have been observed. A naval court of inquiry developed some of the facts.

In 1971 the House Committee on Armed Services undertook an investigation. Ennes regards the naval inquiry as "a sham," and he demonstrates that key classified information was withheld from the committee. Using the Freedom of Information Act, Ennes last year dug out some of the missing records. He sees them as proof of a coverup that has yet to be fully exposed.

At this late date, the recriminations might best be put aside. What remains is an inspiring story of heroism in the great tradition. The citation that accompanied McGonagle's Medal of Honor speaks in the old words of the old virtues. This was a medal for "conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity at the risk of his life, above and beyond the call of duty." To remember the assault on the Liberty is to remember that the old virtues never die.

James Kilpatrick writes for Universal Press Syndicate.

James M. Ennes, Jr. Research Papers

Were Israelis involved in 'attack'?

By Knut Royce
Hearst News Service

Balto. News-Am
Nov. 30, 1984

WASHINGTON — The Navy now believes that what it had described as a possible terrorist incident against two of its ships in the Mediterranean earlier this month might have involved Israelis instead.

The two ships, the guided missile cruiser U.S.S. Coontz and the ammunition ship U.S.S. Butte, fired several cannon rounds during the evening of Nov. 9 at a small boat that had been speeding directly toward the two ships and had come to within 600 to 800 yards.

An hour and a half earlier, the Coontz had fired luminescent flares in the sky when a fast-approaching unidentified aircraft didn't respond to friend-or-foe identification requests, either through radio or transponder.

"We haven't ruled out terrorism," a Navy spokesman said. "But the feeling now is that it could have been Israelis." He said the U.S. embassy in Israel last week asked the host government whether it had any ships in the area during the evening of the incidents. Israel reportedly replied that the unknown ships were Turkish narcotics smugglers.

A spokesman for the Israeli embassy here would not comment.

The Navy spokesman said he did not know why the Navy believed Israel might have been involved in the incidents. Navy sources said the Israelis might have been conducting a probe to check the ships' reactions to possible attack, or might have been involved in a cat-and-mouse "game" similar to those frequently involving Soviet and U.S. ships.

The Navy spokesman said the incidents occurred about 100 miles west of Beirut, 100 miles northeast of Israel and 50 miles south of Cyprus.

The Navy spokesman said the small boat, which had no navigational lights and did not respond to radio inquiries, initially had sped toward the Coontz, which first fired luminescent rounds. "It then turned and went directly toward the Butte," the spokesman said. "The Coontz then maneuvered to place itself between the craft and the Butte."

He said the craft continued toward the Coontz, which fired 18 rounds from its 5-inch guns. Four of those were warning rounds. The craft then "turned toward the Butte at high speed and it fired eight rounds" from its 3-inch guns, the spokesman said. At that point, he said, the boat was within 600 to 800 yards of the Navy vessels.

He said the boat sped away after the Butte fired its guns.

Commercial ships in the Mediterranean are warned to come no closer than 2 miles to U.S. Navy ships.

The spokesman said that entire episode, from the moment the luminescent rounds were fired at the boat until it disappeared, took 15 minutes.

He said a second boat, apparently a companion craft, had been spotted by the Coontz's radar some distance away. It reportedly followed the events but did not engage in them.

In the best known Israeli attack on a U.S. vessel, aircraft and torpedo boats attacked and destroyed a U.S. intelligence-gathering vessel, the U.S.S. Liberty, 14 miles from the Israel coast and within international waters. Thirty-four people died and more than 100 were wounded in the incident, which occurred during Israel's 1967 war with Egypt, Jordan, Iraq and Syria. Israel paid the United States $3 million as a settlement for families of those killed and injured in the attack.

James M. Barnes, Jr. Research Papers

The Survivors of the USS Liberty And the Memories of Friendly Fire

By Paul Hendrickson

They are survivors bonded by pain, linked by chains of reverie and sadness. After 15 years they came together in Washington this weekend to let some anger and tears and laughter out. They came from Orlando and Needham, Mass., and Winter Harbor, Maine. One of them has a plumbing company now. Somebody is the commissioner of the port of Spokane. Somebody else cuts Christmas trees in Vermont. But this past weekend they seemed as one, glazed with memory and regret.

This was the reunion of the men of the USS Liberty, where 34 went down and 171 took fire from a friendly nation.

So the survivors huddled under a leaky canvas awning at Arlington National Cemetery, before a mass grave, while someone blew taps and someone else tolled a hand bell and a Navy chaplain reminded them that greater love than this no man has than to lay down his life for his comrades and his country.

Somewhere below the long sodded-over plot lay a body bag, province of worms. In the bag were limbs and ears and other unidentified remains. The headstone, bearing six names, carried only the rudest information: Jerry Lee Goss, Indiana; Jack L. Raper, Georgia. There is a one-line inscription: "Died in the Eastern Mediterranean, June 8, 1967."

The friendly nation was Israel. For years the government of Israel, with U.S. tacit, if reluctant, concurrence, has officially and reflexively maintained that the ordeal of the USS Liberty was an accident, an "unfortunate error of warfare." Israel claims that the Liberty was mistaken for an Egyptian vessel at the height of the Six Day War. When the mistake was realized, the attack was called off.

"Jerry was in the compartment where the torpedo came," said a small, spare woman Saturday evening, back at her hotel. Her name is Ida Goss and her son is one of the six buried in the mass Arlington grave. Mrs. Goss had come for the weekend from North Vernon, Ind. Her retired husband, Harry, who spent his life on the railroad, and her other son, Joe, the one who didn't go to sea, sat beside her, [illegible] her pain. "My boy was just 26," Mrs. Goss said. Her eyes glistened, but she wasn't about to cry. She has come this far without public tears. "It looks like he died in vain. They keep hurting you in so many ways."

"I never cried about any of it for [illegible]," said a 37-year-old man named Virgil Brownfield. "And then crying was about all I could do." Brownfield runs a mail sorter in a

See LIBERTY, C9, Col. 1





USS Liberty survivor Don Blalock, top, leads reunion members to the mass grave in Arlington Cemetery, by Nabil Cronfal; above, in June 1967, a victim of the mistaken bombing is taken aboard the aircraft carrier USS America in the Mediterranean, by UPI

WASH POST 7 JUNE 1982

James M. Ennes, Jr. Research Papers

Florida just after dawn. With a cameraman on the cruiser took like Robert Redford. In 1967 he was a dapper 22-year-old captain's yeoman who had hardly ever been outside of Long. Brownfield was on the bridge of the Liberty that afternoon when a shell came through an open window and into the back of the head of his best friend, Petty Officer Francis Hughes. The best friend was at the wheel of the ship and the bullet tore his brains out. Brownfield, whom they called "Brownie," watched his friend fall at his feet. "I was right next to him. You hear this gunfire and everybody is screaming, 'Get down, get down.' And people don't die like they do on TV, you know. They sort of die . . . like chickens. And everybody is falling—the navigator and the executive officer and the officer of the deck—and you wonder if you should just get it over with, just stand up and let them hit you."

To the men of the Liberty—as well as to the former head of the joint chiefs of staff, Adm. Thomas H. Moorer, who spoke at their reunion banquet Saturday night—the attack was unprovoked and deliberate. Mistaken identity was not possible, they say. (The ship was plainly flying the American flag; her white lettering was 15 feet high and clearly visible in conditions which were unequally excellent. There are numerous [illegible] they have about a half-dozen more.) Some of them feel the attack was supervised [illegible] the Israeli Navy War Room by the most senior military officer overlooking then-visiting of defense Moshe Dayan.

Adlai Stevenson III attempted to open an official investigation before he left the Senate in 1980. Sen. Barry Goldwater tried briefly, but found support. Mostly, the incident died in oblivion, but not for the survivors.

Shortly afterward, the government of Israel officially apologized for the attack. It launched inquiries and paid prompt damages of $7 million for injury and death and, much later, material damages of $6 million. (The negotiations over money dragged on for more than a decade.) The press covered the story only sporadically. It is documented that the survivors and their families have suffered [illegible] divorces and [illegible] homes, have had [illegible]

U.S.-Navy boss the Israeli Navy. According to Nachmani Shai, spokesman for the Embassy of Israel, the case is officially concluded.

Though not to the men of the Liberty. They want "justice" done, they want appropriate commemoration of the attack, though they acknowledge they're not sure what that means or how to begin going about it. Coming together in Washington 15 years later to share their pain and bitterness was a start, they say. And maybe getting the inscription on the mass grave in Arlington changed would be another start, they say. They just didn't "die" in the Mediterranean.

Their bitterness is directed almost as much at the U.S. Navy and the American government as at Israel. They feel the U.S. government participated in what amounts to a "cover-up" so as to avoid diplomatic fallout.

The Nightmare

June 8, 1967. How many Americans even remember the name of the ship now, let alone what happened? This one wasn't the Pueblo, whose ever-shy ways to come just a few months later and rocket through the global village, making Cmdr. Lloyd Bucher the kind of celebrity no one would ever want to be.

No, it wasn't the Pueblo. This was the USS Liberty, technical research ship, sailing off the Sinai. The Liberty's mission, like the Pueblo's, was spying. The Liberty wasn't a war ship; she was a converted World War II freighter, ungainly but with heart, bristling with wires and antennae and millions of dollars of what is called "electromagnetic radiation." What she was doing that day was listening in on the Six Day War. She was in international waters and was all but weaponless.

And what happened for a nightmare of 75 minutes is this: Israeli military forces rocketed, strafed, torpedoed and set the American ship aflame with huge silvery canisters of napalm. Frantic calls for help were sent. No help came. (The four-ship communication could almost recall Pearl Harbor's.) No American F-4s came. Yet, more Israeli MiGs jets bringing death and destruction on a ship flying the colors of Israel's staunchest ally. Men panicked in the belief their end had arrived and cried out for their mothers. Sirens and Hail Marys

The Men of

Mess hall tables became hospital beds. Lieut. Cmdr. Phil Armstrong, executive officer, was on one of them. He had been hit in too many places to count. He began to cough, then vomit blood. "No, no, no," Armstrong cautioned. "Too okay. A little blood. No big deal. Now, look," he said, removing his wristwatch. "I want you to have this. It's mine. Keep it. And this," he [illegible] his wedding band. "So that Weetie gets this."

That scene, and others like it, are recounted in a moving book called "Assault on the Liberty," by James Ennes. Ennes is a Liberty survivor, and now, after 100,000 words, after a decade's writing, he cannot [illegible]

By the end of June 8, 1967, the USS Liberty was listing grotesquely to the starboard, most of her equipment destroyed, two thirds of her crew wounded, with more than two dozen dead and others dying, a quarter of the ship flooded, the rest of her blackened with smoke, oil, and blood. Old Glory, though, was still aflap.

To read about the incident now, to try to reach back into time with some attempt at historical objectivity, to wander on a weekend among survivors, among parents, among brothers and sisters, all of whose low still seems so near the surface, is to suffer one's own crazy quilt of feeling, one's own roller coaster of emotion. How could it happen? one asks in vain.

What comes are not answers, but anger, grief.

Imagine the following. It is an eyewitness account of a torpedo hit.

A man is standing in an open doorway in the third deck spaces below the waterline. This is the nerve center of the "spook" compartments, the highly secret Comint and Crypto areas. First there is a muffled roar, like rolling thunder. Suddenly the man's gaze is transfixed by an unbelievable sight: a pure steel bulkhead beginning to bulge toward him, as if somehow made of rubber. The steel turns to bright red and then to white. The paint on the walls of the compartment and the [illegible] dozens of Playboy pinups blister and [illegible] into a rainbow of flame. It all [illegible] flame in black and white. The water hits the walls and the [illegible]

James M. Ennes Jr. Research Papers

LIBERTY, (From 1)

Public pay office saw. With a mustache that he could look like Robert Redford. In 1967 he was a scared 23-year-old captain's yeoman who hadn't ever been outside of Iowa. Brownfield was on the bridge of the Liberty that afternoon when a shell came through an open window and took the back of the head of his best friend, Petty Officer Francis Hopps. The best friend was at the wheel of the ship and the bullet tore his brains out. Brownfield, whom they called "Brownie," watched his friend fall at his feet. "I was right next to him. You hear this gunfire and everybody is screaming, 'Get down, get down.' And people don't die like they do on TV, you know. They sort of die . . . like chickens. And everybody is falling—the navigator and, the executive officer and the officer of the deck—and you wonder if you should just get it over with, just stand up and let them hit you."

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Adlai Stevenson III attempted to open an official investigation before he left the Senate in 1981. Sen. Harris Fawcett tried briefly, but found no support. Mostly, the incident has lived in oblivion, but not for the survivors.

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James M. Ennes Jr. Research Papers

the Liberty

directly into a man's face, striking him blind. At the same instant his eardrums explode. His ears burst the way an overripe balloon will respond to the prick of a hypodermic needle. The man is now blind and deaf, his eyeballs glued with a lava-like molten ash. His face, tissues will write later, looked like a blotch of fresh asphalt paving. Because he is blind the man never sees the compartment around him dissolve into fragments and open out as a 1,000-pound monster torpedo comes crunching through.

Petty Officer Ronnie Campbell dies at his typewriter.

Lieut. Jim Pierce dies trying to burn code lists.

The teletype operator dies at his machine.

In an instant a torpedo has killed 25 men.

But the man whose face looked turned to stone, like a Medusa myth, will miraculously survive. Floating neck deep in water, unable to see or hear, someone pushes him toward a ladder. Eventually he is evacuated. His eyes are methodically washed. He gains his vision back. Something [illegible] veins [illegible] and legs [illegible] and [illegible] his ear drums and hearing [illegible] hearing.

And, 16 years later, Dave Lewis, survivor, is making grotesque monsters behind lobby, shaking hands, showing pictures, pushing up his thick glasses. With a New Englander's accent, he says this:

"I now suffer total amnesia about it. I remember nothing from the point when the skipper yelled that there were two fast-moving blips on the radar screen and that we should stand by for a torpedo attack."

Lewis pauses. "I was hoping this reunion would bring it back."

Lewis is retired now. This spring he pruned 1,000 Christmas trees on his Vermont farm; hopes to harvest as many as 3,000 in a couple of years. On Saturday he had on a droopy rain coat and talked of his farm as if there is a whole other life to live.

But the reunion wasn't all weekend mourning. There was much catching up and drinking of each other's scotch and sitting on each other's beds half the night while wives and children went to sleep. Old sailors went out in gangs to Washington restaurants—and caught hell at the prices. (Eight of them piled into Jean Pierre; the bill was $268 and change.) Crowds collected at one another's suites like kids leaving high school. Much talk of more reunions and individual get-togethers was heard. Winnebagos and the reunion and the price of dental work all got discussed.

But the dominant emotion was sadness, undercut with anger. "We've been forgotten by our military, we've been forgotten by our government . . . We were saved by the grace of God. We could never forget what happened," said Don Blalock, one of the organizers of the event. Blalock installs ice sinks now. His wife, Cecilia, says what happened on the Liberty changed his life.

And another vet, leading a prayer, said: "We do not fully understand why you saw us together this weekend, help us to know the purpose in our lives."

The Official Word

Conclusion of the new "final report" submitted to the U.S. Navy from the Israel Navy:

"An examination of the facts in the Liberty incident in their proper context prove beyond any doubt that the attack on the American intelligence ship came about as a result of innocent error by the forces which operated on the spot and the headquarters which supervised them. Though the attack on the armed forces of a friendly nation is a most regrettable and painful occurrence, incidents of this kind do occur in wartime."

James M. Ennes, Jr. Research Papers

ENCYCLOPÆDIA BRITANNICA, INC

THE ISRAELI ATTACK ON THE "U.S.S. LIBERTY",
JUNE 8, 1967

At 1403 on Thursday, 8 June 1967, the U.S. electronics intelligence ship *Liberty* (AGTR-5) was steaming at a leisurely five knots, 14 miles offshore from the Egyptian town of El Arish on the Mediterranean coast of Sinai, when she was attacked by Israeli fighter-bombers. The attack continued for seven minutes, leaving eight of the ship's crew dead or dying, more than 100 wounded, and the ship riddled and burning.

Fourteen minutes later, the *Liberty* was attacked by three Israeli torpedo boats which raked the ship with gunfire—killing another four men—and then launched torpedoes. One torpedo hit a communications compartment, multiplying the *Liberty*'s casualties to a total of 34. Within 30 minutes of the first air attack, two helicopters carrying armed troops appeared alongside, and two jet fighters screamed in the sky astern as if poised for strikes. As suddenly as it had started, everything stopped. Israel said it was a "mistake." Thus ended the Navy's bloodiest "peacetime" international incident of the 20th century.[1]

The *Liberty* was one of eight merchant-type ships which were modified between 1960 and 1966 to perform electronic intelligence missions.[2] Built in 1945 as the SS *Belocait Victory*, she was in mothballs off and on from 1948 to 1963 before being converted to naval service. She was commissioned 30 December 1964 at the Puget Sound Naval Shipyard, then proceeded the following spring to her new home port, Norfolk, Virginia. Though nominally under Service Squadron Eight, her operations were in fact directly controlled by the Joint Reconnaissance Command, part of the Joint Chiefs of Staff organization.

Classified as a "technical research ship," the world understood her mission as "research in communications and electromagnetic radiation."[3] This was a marvelous oversimplification of a vast spectrum of passive capabilities. The ship was usually manned by 20 officers and 300 enlisted men, about 100 of the latter were communications technicians. In the summer of 1966, the *Liberty* initiated a series of cruises along the west coast of Africa between Dakar and Capetown, showing the flag, making goodwill visits, and presumably studying the airwaves en route. On 1 May 1967, the *Liberty* took departure from Cape Henry under the command of Commander William L. McGonagle with 19 officers and 293 men on board. This was her fourth cruise to Africa.

Meanwhile, years of poison in the Middle East had heated up to a new boil. In May, Egypt evicted a United Nations peacekeeping force (which had been watching the Egyptian-Israeli border since 1957) and began an ominous military buildup in the Sinai peninsula. Israel refused to accept the U.N. force on its side of the frontier and gave indications of preparing for a preventive war. The Eastern Mediterranean suddenly became a logical place to deploy a ship of the *Liberty*'s unusual capabilities.

At 0545 on 24 May, the *Liberty* was in the port of Abidjan, Ivory Coast, when she received orders to get under way immediately for Rota, Spain, whence she was to proceed to the vicinity of Port Said, Egypt. The rest of her African cruise was cancelled.

James M. Ennes, Jr. Research Papers

On the morning of 1 June, the *Liberty* moored in Rota and took on 380,000 gallons of fuel, miscellaneous stores, and some vitally needed spare parts for her TRIDCOMS. The TRIDCOMS (technical research ship special communications system) was a radio device, experimental and quite exotic in 1967, which could transmit messages from most of the distant areas of the world to the United States by bouncing its signals off the moon. Otherwise, the ship's data collections had to be sent via select relay stations ashore, a process which consumed many hours instead of a very few minutes.

Within six hours of her arrival, the *Liberty* was ready to sail but was held at Rota until three civilian technicians from the National Security Agency could be flown in from the United States. When they were finally on board, she got under way on the afternoon of 2 June and during the next five days made her best speed (17 knots) for the Eastern Mediterranean. While the *Liberty* was steaming off the south coast of Sicily on the morning of 5 June, Israel launched preemptive air strikes against the air forces of Egypt, Jordan, and Syria and destroyed them on the ground. At the same time, Israeli ground forces invaded the Sinai and swept westward to occupy the east bank of the Suez Canal. This was the third Arab-Israeli War in 20 years. It lasted six days, ending in a cease-fire to which Israel agreed with great reluctance.

A vital part of Israel's war plan was preventing the rest of the world from knowing about its military victories until they could be presented together as a political *fait accompli*. After two or three days, this news blackout created great anxieties among the civilian population of Israel, but it was more important to keep foreign powers in the dark. [illegible] leaders feared superpower pressures for a cease-fire before they could seize the territory which they considered necessary for Israel's future security.[1] Any instrument which sought to penetrate this smoke screen so carefully thrown around the normal "fog of war" would have to be destroyed.

At about 0500 on [illegible] the fourth day of the war, the *Liberty* arrived on her designated station which was [illegible]ded by 31° and 34° East longitude, by the 32n[illegible] and to the north. As for the southern boundary, Egypt claimed a territorial sea of 12 miles, Israel only 6 miles, so the *Liberty* had orders to approach no closer to shore than 12.5 and 6.5 miles respectively. From the center of this cruising station an arc of 250 miles encompasses Damascus, most of Jordan and the Sinai peninsula, all of the Nile delta including Cairo, and all of Israel. In her first hours on station, the *Liberty* was moving inshore toward the coastal town of El Arish to obtain visual bearings which would allow her to retire with accuracy to a more discreet distance.

In their blitzkrieg of 5 June, the Israelis had used "dibber" bombs to crater the paved runways of Arab air bases and thus render them unusable. The runways at El Arish were spared because the Israelis planned to overrun the base and use it themselves. By the time the *Liberty* arrived, the former Egyptian airfield, which is inland from the sea, was functioning as an advanced Israeli air base.[2]

Shortly after daybreak on 8 June, the *Liberty*'s combat information center reported a slow-moving air contact on radar to Ensign John D. Scott, the officer of the deck. Around 0515, he watched the airplane circle the *Liberty* three times and fly away toward Tel Aviv. The airplane was a French-built Nord 2501 Noratlas transport. Until President Charles de Gaulle imposed a Middle East arms embargo on the eve of the Six-Day War, France was Israel's principal supplier of military hardware. The Israeli Air Force operated a dozen Noratlases. A twin-engine cargo plane with its tail group carried on twin booms similar to an American C-119 "flying boxcar," it was distinctive to the eye even at great distances. In the Six-Day War, the Israelis employed their Noratlases not only in troop carrying and battlefield resupply but also in maritime reconnaissance.[3]

Meanwhile, the engine room called for permission to blow soot from the boiler tubes. Ensign Scott went out on a wing of the bridge to look at the flag on the yardarm to determine the wind's direction and force. The flag, a standard ensign of 5 by 8 feet, was flying from one of the starboard halyards of the huge stem stripod mast which towered like an oil driller's derrick almost 100 feet above the flying bridge. At 0553, Scott changed course to 190° and gave permission to blow tubes.

At the moment of the *Liberty*'s course change, it was 0553 Zulu (Greenwich Mean Time) in U.S. military command posts the world over and 2353 Eastern Daylight Time on 7 June in Washington, D.C., where the position of the *Liberty* had been of some concern for at least five hours. At 2350Z (1950 EDT), more than five hours before the *Liberty* arrived off El Arish, an officer of the Joint Reconnaissance Center in Washington phoned the headquarters of the Commander in Chief, U.S. Naval Forces Europe (CinCUSNavEur) in London with an oral order to have the *Liberty* stay clear of the coasts of Egypt, Israel, and Syria by 100 miles. The telephone order was followed up by a message from the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

There was nothing extraordinary in this, because earlier on 7 June, Commander Sixth Fleet, acting upon orders from the Joint Chiefs of Staff, ordered that all of his units should stay clear of belligerent territory by 100 miles. This order was a political reaction to the Egyptian accusation that Sixth Fleet

USS Liberty Memorial, Inc. Research Papers

aircraft had participated in the Israeli air strikes of 5 June. Because the *Liberty* might be understood—or misunderstood—to be an exception to this order, it was felt necessary to be certain she was included. Although the ship might prove to be a minor political embarrassment, no one imagined she was in danger.

At 0800, the watch changed. At 0850, a jet fighter circled the ship and headed off toward shore. At 1030, two jet fighters circled the ship twice and flew off toward the south. The jet planes were flying high enough that their national markings could not be seen, but ever since the morning of 5 June the skies over Sinai had been the exclusive property of Israel. At 1056, the Noratlas appeared again and flew four slow circles around the *Liberty*. It reappeared overhead at 1126 and again at 1220. Lieutenant James G. Ennes, officer of the deck, noted that on each overflight it circled for about ten minutes and did not make any attempt to signal the *Liberty*.

Meanwhile, at 1117, Commander Sixth Fleet, acting upon the orders of CinCUSNavEur and the JCS, had prepared the message for the *Liberty* which directed her to move 100 miles offshore.

During the lunch hour, most of the off-watch officers and crew spread themselves around the decks to soak up a bit of sun. Lieutenant George H. Golden, the chief engineer, was lying in a deck chair from which he watched the Noratlas fly directly overhead. Assuming that the crewmen of the Israeli aircraft were looking down at the *Liberty* in these moments, what they saw was a large merchant ship, its decks littered with a hundred or more half-naked [illegible] staring sightlessly at the sky. It was not a scene that suggested menace. The chief engineer's eye also inspected his stack for smoke and caught sight of the flag flying from the bridge mast. At lunch Golden had remarked to Lieutenant (junior grade) Malcolm Watson that he wished they were flying their 7 by 13-foot holiday ensign which provided twice the area for identification.

The *Liberty* carried more conspicuous identification than her national flag. Victory-type hulls festooned with antennae were rare commodities, limited to the *Liberty* and her sister USS *Belmont* (AGTR-4). And the big "5" painted on her bows and the sides of her stern was unique among the world's ships. Very few of the world's navies paint the "pennant" numbers of their ships on bows and stern, usually with white paint backed up by black shading to accentuate the white.[4] The numeral "5" on the *Liberty*'s bows was almost 10 feet tall, freshly painted only a few weeks before and quite distinctive at distances between one or two miles in good visibility. And on this day off El Arish the visibility was excellent.

Lieutenant Golden's mind turned to the general quarters drill the captain had planned for after the lunch hour. Commander McGonagle was well aware that his ship's assignment to the Eastern Mediterranean posed significantly greater hazards than the cruising conditions off tomodeer West Africa. The *Liberty*'s "armament" was only a token of the expression. It consisted of four .50-caliber machine guns, two on the forecastle and two aft of the deckhouse. They were on open mounts which did not even have splinter shields.

The *Liberty*'s only real defense was effective damage control. On 5 June, the day the Arab-Israeli [illegible] began, the captain circulated a memorandum to his bridge and combat information center personnel which emphasized that ". . . maximum effort must be made to minimize personnel and material damage, safeguard the watertight integrity of the ship, and continue performance of primary mission." And he added, ". . . it is better to set GQ [general quarters] in doubtful cases than to be taken by surprise, take immediate action as may be required by the situation, then advise me of what steps have been taken."

At 1310 the *Liberty*'s general announcing system sounded: "This is a drill! This is a drill! General Quarters! All hands man your battle stations . . ." This was the *Liberty*'s third GQ drill within four days. All aspects of the drill went well except that it took four minutes and 45 seconds to set Condition Zebra, the ship's maximum condition of watertightness. Commander McGonagle regarded this as excessive and gave his crew members a brief lecture over the announcing system. He called their attention to a great tower of oily black smoke boiling up into the brilliantly blue sky about 20 miles west of El Arish. It was grim evidence that their ship was in a potentially dangerous location. He insisted that they had to be a team of "heads-up ball players."

The GQ drill was secured at 1350. The captain checked the ship's position by radar. She was heading 285°, a shade north of due west, as she had been since 1132. The *Liberty* was 14 miles off the shoreline. At 1400, lookouts reported jet aircraft to the north, and the captain went out on the starboard wing for a look with his binoculars. There was a single jet fighter about 5 miles off the starboard quarter at 5,000 feet and paralleling the track of the ship.

The airplane did not appear menacing, but the captain was uneasy. He called to Lieutenant (junior grade) Lloyd C. Painter, the officer of the deck, "You'd better call the forward gun mounts." The guns were not fully manned, but lookouts were being kept at the stations. Meanwhile, Ensign Malcolm O'Malley, the junior officer of the deck, was searching the fringes of the radar screen for a distinct

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bearing on the low and almost featureless shoreline when fast-moving contacts rushed onto the screen at 082°. He reported, "Lloyd, I think I have three contacts here . . ." But Painter was looking through one of the forward portholes on the bridge and cranking a telephone, trying to alert men on the forecastle gun mounts. Because of peculiarities in the telephone circuit, this exercise was always frustrating.

In this same moment, Commander Sixth Fleet's message ordering the *Liberty* to move offshore by 100 miles had just arrived at the U.S. Defense Communications System's radio station near Asmara, Ethiopia, and was about to be retransmitted to the Naval Communications Station in Greece for relay to the ship. It was a message that did not arrive aboard the *Liberty* until 10 June, when it was hand-delivered to the captain at Malta.[9]

On board the *Liberty*, most attention was focused on the "decoy" jet fighter cruising to starboard. Painter was still trying to "crank up" the gun stations. O'Malley was watching the three fast surface contacts when he saw additional high-speed "targets" rush onto the screen, pass over the original contacts, and speed toward the center of his radar display. The new blips which seized O'Malley's eyes were jet planes moving at almost 9 miles per minute, dashing in at masthead height from astern.

Before O'Malley could utter a word, a terrific explosion shook the port side of the bridge from amidships. Painter was looking directly at the starboard gun mount when it erupted in a flash and disappeared in a cloud of smoke. In the same instant, everything on the bridge seemed to dissolve into a series of boom-boom-boom-boom-boom as dozens of rockets ripped through the deckhouse. Commander McGonagle ran in from the wing of the bridge, hit the general quarters alarm, and called the crew to battle stations over the general announcing system. Then he lunged across the wheelhouse to jangle the engine order telegraph to full ahead, then flank speed.

The air attack began its way through the ship from 1403 to 1410. The planes crisscrossed the ship about every 45 seconds, first with rockets and napalm, then with 30-mm. One napalm container hit the port side. Two others were seen to miss the ship and fall into the sea, and it may be presumed that others were dropped and missed. The airplanes were French-built Dassault Super-Mystère B.2 fighter-bombers, which possessed a supersonic dash capability and were similar in performance to the U.S. Air Force F-100. Armed for a low-level attack mission, each could carry about two dozen large-caliber unguided rockets. When the rockets were expended, each plane had two 30-mm. cannon to bring to bear. Trained to attack small, maneuverable targets such as tanks and armored vehicles, it was with the greatest ease that the Israeli pilots butchered the large, slow-moving, and defenseless *Liberty*.

The Israeli aircraft ordnance, designed to penetrate the armor of tanks, punched right through the *Liberty*'s 22-year-old shell plating. Ripping through two or three bulkheads and into the heart of the ship's living spaces, the projectiles exploded in compartments and passageways with devastating effects upon human flesh. When examined in a shipyard, the *Liberty* was found to have 821 holes large enough for a man's fist, and 164 of these were in the vicinity of the bridge. Besides these holes there was [illegible] damage which exceeded reasonable combat.

The seven-minute air attack left eight men dead or dying and more than 100 wounded, 50 of them seriously enough that they were completely out of action. And the ship was afire at [illegible] different points. In the first 60 seconds, the ship's executive officer and operations officer were killed, and all of the senior deck officers were put out of action. The helmsman on watch was seriously wounded, and the man who replaced him was killed. The third helmsman, severely wounded, managed to remain at his station until the end of the attacks.

The [illegible] was shot away, and comber information center was useless. Most of the ship's radio transmitting equipment was badly shot up or put in temporary disarray. The antenna systems were badly damaged. The interior communications room was a shambles. The only internal communications working were the sound-powered telephones, and not all of those circuits were undamaged. Worst of all, the gyro compass was shot away, leaving only a jittery magnetic compass, and the rudder angle indicator mechanism was out of commission. The helmsmen could have no idea of how much rudder he was applying. The only instrument on the bridge that still worked was the fathometer. This was fortunate because there was shoal water only a few miles off the port bow.

In those same 60 seconds, Commander McGonagle received an ugly shrapnel wound in his right leg. It spurted blood which transformed the leg of his trousers into a crimson wick which trailed blood across the deck as he rushed from one wing of the bridge to the other, directing firefighting parties through his phone talker, taking photographs of the attacking planes for the record, calling orders to the guns as long as they were manned—and coming his ship.

Ensign David G. Lucas was alarmed by the captain's blood-soaked trouser leg, so he whipped off his belt and applied it as a tourniquet. This took only a minute, and then the captain was up and around again, but with increasing pain and increasing hazard to his well-being. In spite of this grievous wound,

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Commander McGonagle didn't leave his bridge until after 0700 on 9 June.

The *Liberty* was still fighting fires when, at 1424, three more torpedo boats were sighted five miles off the starboard quarter. When they were the contacts Ensign O'Malley spotted at 1401. Commander McGonagle noticed . . . the Israeli air attacks had shot away the U.S. flag. Signalman [illegible] O. Davis rigged a new halyard and run up the big 7 by 13-foot holiday ensign.

At 1428, one of the motor torpedo boats flashed a message to the *Liberty*, but it could not be read because of all the smoke from fires burning on the lower weather decks. In any case, the *Liberty* had no means of reply because the air attacks had destroyed her 24-inch searchlights. There was a 6-inch Aldis lamp on the bridge, but the air attacks had damaged feeders and receptacles on the bridge. Moreover, circuit breakers supplying the bridge had opened, and repair parties had been too busy fighting fires to reset them.

The French-built torpedo boats were of the Israeli *Ayah* class, 62-tonners capable of 42 knots. They bore in on the *Liberty* at high speed and raked her decks with 20-mm. and 40-mm. guns. Four more Americans died in this hail of steel.

At 1431, the captain passed the word over the announcing system: *"Stand by for torpedo attack, starboard side!"* One torpedo was seen to pass 75 yards astern. But at 1435, another torpedo hit the ship in Number 3 hold which was immediately forward of the machinery spaces and enclosed the *Liberty*'s special communications compartments.

Twenty-two Americans died in those communications spaces.

The concussion of the torpedo's explosion knocked open the main circuit breakers in the engine room, and all power was lost. The air attacks had knocked out the emergency diesel generator. The *Liberty* was dead in the water. Below decks, scores of men in damage control parties worked in a stifling darkness to re-establish flooding boundaries, shore up weakened decks and bulkheads, plug holes and cracks, and assist a new parade of bloodied men with broken bones, collapsed lungs, and blown-out eardrums to the battle stations on the upper decks. And in the engine room machinist's mates and boilermen labored by flashlight to make their plant come alive again.

Meanwhile, the torpedo boats broke off from attack and retreated astern of the *Liberty* as if waiting for the curtain to go up on a third act of the attack. At this moment, the curtain had indeed gone up on a new act. During the attacks, the *Liberty*'s radio operators had labored at great hazard to their lives to get off a message report of the ship's ordeal. The ship's own radio communications were wholly separate from the complex of "mission-oriented" systems below decks. The *Liberty*'s radiomen worked in a radio central which had one of the biggest fires on the ship burning on the weather deck outside, and one bulkhead of their compartment was untouchably hot. The air attacks had damaged their main transmitter. An auxiliary had to be cut in and tuned. An antennae had to be repaired. Meanwhile, rockets and 30-mm. shells were bursting around the radiomen.

When transmissions became possible, they were sent against intense jamming.[10] In spite of this, by 1420 the *Liberty*'s operators had gotten off an attack message to the Sixth Fleet. By 1420, there was enough of a surge in the fleet's radio traffic to suggest to anyone monitoring those frequencies that something unusual had happened. The carrier *America* (CVA-66) launched four A-4 Skyhawks armed with Bullpup missiles, the *Saratoga* (CVA-60) launched four attack planes with a fighter cover, and both carriers launched a cloud of F-4B Phantoms to cover the fleet in case. The pilots flying to the *Liberty*'s assistance were "authorized to use force including destruction as necessary."

At the time that the alarm was ringing through the Sixth Fleet, the Israelis hurried into diplomatic channels to announce their mistake. The Sixth Fleet's airplanes were recalled. At 1503, one of the Israeli motor torpedo boats came abeam of the *Liberty* and signaled in English: "Do you need assistance?" The printed record says the *Liberty* replied "negative" or "no thank you." Other sources say that Commander McGonagle leaned over the wing of his bridge and shouted *"Go to Hell!"*[11]

Within four minutes of this exchange, two French-built Sud 321 Super-Frelon troop-carrying helicopters appeared alongside the *Liberty*, straddling the ship to port and starboard, one forward and the other aft. And two jet fighters were seen loitering astern of the ship, as if on call for a second strike. The helicopters hovered as if they did not know what to do next—as if they had missed their cue. They were not there for rescue service; they were carrying armed troops. Neither machine attempted to signal the *Liberty*. And as ominously as they had appeared, they mysteriously departed.

The men of the *Liberty* did not know it yet, but the torpedo assault of 1435 was the last attack. Power was regained by 1453, and the *Liberty* limped off to the north at eight knots. She had a 10° list from the tons of water in her flooded communications spaces. Steering had to be done from the emergency station aft and by magnetic compass, both of which were awkward. For more than an hour, the torpedo boats buzzed around the ship, occasionally making threatening high-speed runs on the *Liberty*.

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From time to time, unidentified jet fighters circled the ship. . . .

[1]Except as noted, all data herein are taken from the Liberty's court of inquiry, the testimony, appendices, and exhibits of which run to 600-some pages, and the deck logs of the Liberty, America (CVA-66), Lexington (CVA-62), Leeds [illegible] (CLG-4), Davis (DD-937), Massey (DD-778), and Papago (ATF-160).

[2]See J.A. Culver, "A Time for Victories," United States Naval Institute Proceedings, February 1977, pp. 30-36, and especially the extended comment by H.L. Hoffman, September 1977, pp. 87-89.

[3]Raymond V.B. Blackman, editor, Jane's Fighting Ships 1967-68 (Green Miscellaneous, Bulks., England: Sampson Low, Marston & Co., Ltd., 1963), p. 394.

[4]Dave Schiff, A History of the Israeli Army (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1974), pp. 159-160.

[5]"Starred Arab MiGs Clutter Base in Sinai," Aviation Week & Space Technology, 14 August 1967, pp. 93-95.

[6]Except as noted, all times cited herein are Bravo, i.e. local time off El Arish.

[7]"Hawthorne Flew Patrol, Supply Mission," Aviation Week & Space Technology, 17 July 1967, pp. 89-91, 95, 96.

[8]Australia and Chile are two nations whose never use systems virtually identical to that of the U.S. Navy, including large black numerals on both bow and stern. It was, however, unlikely that any Australian or Chilean warships would be in the Mediterranean that day.

[9]The American news media subsequently made much about messages to the Liberty being "misrouted," etc., but these accounts are terribly garbled and produce a substantial perversion of the truth. Given the [illegible] basis in which everything occurred, there is no way in which the "[illegible] off" message could have reached the Liberty before the attack [illegible] way of high-precedence "flash," but there was no reason to [illegible] precedence until after 1403 Bravo.

[10]One of the most remarkable aspects of the Israelis' [illegible] that they jammed U.S. Navy communications frequencies [illegible] they thought they were attacking an Egyptian ship.

[11]Michael Lisner, "Israeli Navy Man Describes Attack on the Liberty," The New York Times, 7 July 1967, p. 3.

--Smith, R. K., "The Violation of the 'Liberty,'" U.S. Naval Institute Proceedings, June 1978, page 62+.

". . . A group of American veterans are commemorating one of the most distressful incidents in American naval history.

The incident is the sinking of the USS Liberty, which took place on June 8, 1967. The event, still somewhat shrouded in secrecy, raised the question of whether the state of Israel willfully sank a United States military vessel.

From the incident, US military planners learned some unpleasant lessons about the shortcomings of the American military communications system. They also learned the tragically unpredictable consequences of hostilities in the Middle East – specifically, how a conflict in that volatile region can quickly involve the United States.

Survivors of the US electronic intelligence-gathering ship – which Israel attacked with torpedoes, napalm, rockets, cannon, and machine-gun fire during the "six-day war" between Israel and Egypt – are determined to see that the lessons aren't lost on the US. Many of of those who were aboard the USS Liberty are expected at a Washington reunion . . . The gathering will doubtless rekindle the controversy that surrounded the sinking of the Liberty a decade and a half ago.

"There's been very little contact among the crew for almost 15 years," says reunion organizer James M. Ennes Jr.

Mr. Ennes, who was a lieutenant and cryptography specialist aboard the vessel, has been one of the chief critics of the US government's handling of the incident. He claimed in a 1979 book "Assault on the Liberty" that the attack on the ship was a premeditated act, rather than a case of mistaken identity – as the Israelis have claimed.

Israel maintains that its assault on the Liberty was a tragic error, for which it rapidly and effusively apologized. It paid a total of $4,222,500 to the families of those killed and $3,462,375 to those who were injured. To compensate for the damage to the Liberty, which never returned to duty, Israel agreed to pay three annual installments of $2 million, the last of which is due on Jan. 15, 1983.

Calling the attack "an honest mistake in the heat of war," one Israeli source here claims it resulted from a "breakdown in communications" between the Israeli reconnaissance and fighter aircraft. "Nothing was worth sinking a US ship," says the source, who says that Ennes has failed to show convincingly why the destruction of the Liberty would have been to Israel's advantage.

Moreover, Israeli sources claim that right-wing elements have seized upon the incident to whip up anti-Israeli sentiment in the US. As recently as this year, the Anti-Defamation League was giving space in its newsletter, "Insight," to rebut criticism of Israel's role in the incident.

Still, interest in the sinking of the Liberty is periodically revived – notably, by Ennes and other survivors, who insist that the complete story has yet to be told. They have won a number of converts over the years. Retired Adm. Thomas H. Moorer, who became Chief of Naval Operations some three weeks after the Liberty was attacked and who served as chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) from 1970-74, is to be the keynote speaker at the reunion banquet. He has long insisted the attack "could not possibly have been a case of

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mistaken identity."

"The ship was savagely strafed and fired upon as well as torpedoed in good visibility while she was flying the American flag," he has declared. Altogether, 34 men were killed and 171 wounded in the Israeli attack.

The USS Liberty arrived on station off the Gaza Strip on June 8, 1967, after 16 days' steaming from Abidjan, the capital of Ivory Coast and a port call at Rota, Spain. She had been ordered to the eastern Mediterranean by the JCS to perform what Ennes has described as "a general listening mission."

Here, by monitoring the myriad radio signals, the ship was presumably able, initially at least, to track the course of the furious fighting onshore. But the vessel also attracted the attention of Israel's military commanders.

Ennes recounts that Israel kept the Liberty under surveillance for six hours. Photo-reconnaissance aircraft buzzed the vessel 13 times, he claims, and says that Mirage jets then rocketed and machine-gunned it. Slower Mystère aircraft then napalmed the Liberty's funnel, gun mounts, bridge, and superstructure, he claims. Finally, he says, three motor torpedo boats raced in to deliver the final blow to the blazing vessel.

Two torpedoes missed, but a third smacked into the Liberty amidships, tearing a 40-foot hole in her side.

The Israeli government says it never has knowingly attacked any ship of an ally, especially one flying the American flag. It claims that the first time it realized the enormity of the mistake was when survivors were picked up in Bisbeats and informed the Israeli crew that they had torpedoed an American ship.

In a 40-page report submitted to Vice Thomas Hayward, US Chief of Naval Operations, the commander in chief of the Israeli Navy, Rear Adm. Zeev Almog, states that after thorough investigation, there could be no doubt that the attack on the Liberty came about as a result of "[illegible] error" by the forces that operated in the spot and by the headquarters that supervised them.

"Incidents of this kind do occur in wartime," said Rear Admiral Almog.

An Israeli Embassy official in Washington pointed out that in past Middle East wars, Israeli ground, tank, and air force units had, on a number of occasions, as a result of communications problems, accidentally attacked their own men, tanks, and planes. The official also stated that the Liberty was operating, prior to the 1967 attack, in an area considered a battle zone and at a time when Egyptian vessels were shelling the El-Arish coast.

But many survivors doubt the Israeli version of events. What particularly rankles them is the Israeli's private [illegible] — repeated in the pages of Insight — that the Liberty refused to identify itself to the Israeli torpedo boats. The Insight account suggested that this refusal to identify (through the use of light signals) "contributed to the torpedoing of the ship."

Recently, Ennes obtained, through a Freedom of Information Act request, a copy of a secret Navy cable that casts doubt on that assertion. In it, Navy Rear Admiral Isaac C. Kidd states that the commanding officer and signalman on the Liberty flatly deny they ever received a request for identification from the Israeli torpedo boats. They were adamant in denying that they ever refused to identify the Liberty. Rear Admiral Kidd concluded the cable with the observation, "I am convinced these men know what they are talking about."

Why would the Israelis launch a deliberate attack against a US vessel? Ennes, who was wounded in the attack, theorizes that Israel attacked the electronic intelligence-collection vessel because it was in a position to detect the invasion of Syria. The Israeli government was acutely aware of President Johnson's warning to Foreign Minister Abba Eban "that he would support Israel only in self-defense, not in attacks against her neighbors," he writes. "Could Israel put troops in Syria without being seen as an aggressor? Probably not. Not with USS Liberty so close to shore and presumably listening. Liberty would have to go." He suggests that the late Brig. Gen. David Elazar waited until the Liberty was "dispatched" before he seized the Golan Heights.

That conclusion is, of course, debatable. But the Liberty attack, whatever the motivations, pointed up major shortcomings in the US military communications system. Apparently, several attempts were made to pull the Liberty out of Israel's way before disaster struck. But the Pentagon was apparently unable to communicate with the ship.

A priority message from the JCS ordering the vessel back 20 miles from the Egyptian coast was delayed and misrouted, according to a 1971 report of the House Armed Services Investigating Subcommittee. Subsequent follow-up messages were also mishandled, according to the report.

Ennes himself acknowledges that one of the key foul-ups in the communications breakdown came on the Liberty itself. The ship sent a message to the Sixth Fleet commander immediately after the attack began, then followed up quickly with another message expressing greater urgency. Somewhere in the communications chain, this second message was given a higher priority and actually reached allied command headquarters first. But by this time, the Liberty crew already had destroyed its "authenticator" charts, which meant that it could not prove to fleet headquarters that the message in fact was coming from the Liberty. Ennes acknowledges that these crucial communications charts should be the last thing a ship's crew destroys before being sunk or captured, and that because of this mistake air cover and other help from the fleet probably was delayed. "In the panic of a time like that," he says, "every possible goof up that could have occurred, happened that day.

Still, to this day former chief petty officer Stan White is bitter about the recall order. "I've never been able to understand why they didn't come down and fly over anyway and see if we still existed," he says. "If they were in the air, a pass over would have done a lot for morale."

In the subcommittee's view, "The circumstances surrounding the misrouting, loss and delays of those messages constitute one of the most incredible failures of communications in the history of the Department of Defense."

Dean Rusk, who was secretary of state at the time of the Liberty attack, has written, "I hope that a great deal has been done to straighten such problems out . . . effective communication would probably have prevented the attack on the Liberty in the first place."

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Today, the Navy seems acutely aware of the need to communicate with the far-flung American fleet. A sophisticated command, communications, and control system (dubbed, in military lingo, "C cubed") is one of the big-ticket items in the Pentagon's planned multibillion dollar defense buildup.

Questions have also been raised about the Navy's response once the vessel was hit. Two US aircraft carriers -- the Saratoga and the America -- were some 400 miles away. But they were slow to dispatch planes to aid the Liberty, and some of the aircraft were recalled before reaching the stricken vessel. Some critics suggest that the recall was ordered to avoid a confrontation with Israeli fighter jets. Others attribute the slow and indefinite response to the general confusion that existed in the wake of the attack. . . .

The US Navy convened a court of inquiry to investigate the incident, which found that "there are no available indications that the attack was intended against a US ship." The board concluded that the incident had stemmed from "a mistake in identity." The US accepted Tel Aviv's apology.

But the board's findings are hotly disputed. "Our government repeated Israel's claim that the ship was mistaken for the Egyptian freighter El Quesir, but failed to note that El Quesir was a 40-year-old cattle boat, then moored at Alexandria, in poor shape, soon to be sold for scrap, probably incapable of leaving her pier, and a most improbable candidate for a Liberty look-alike," says Ennes.

He insists that the US government covered up the truth about the incident to avoid rupturing relations with Israel. Others, including some former top US officials, share at least some of his doubts that the incident was an accident. In a 1978 letter to Ennes, George Christian -- President Johnson's former press secretary -- wrote "there was considerable skepticism in the White House that the attack was accidental." In later years, Christian says, he became convinced an "accident of this magnitude was too much to swallow."

Even now, many American officials are tight-lipped about the incident. A former senior US intelligence official says only, "This is one I really don't want to handle. This is a loser in every direction. You get in a crunch between the Israeli lobby and the rest of the world if you start commenting on this thing."

The incident undoubtedly provoked consternation at the highest levels of the US government, however. After the Liberty's plight was learned, a number of top officials were summoned to an emergency meeting in the White House Situation Room. One of them was Dean Rusk, former US Secretary of State.

Last September, Mr. Rusk told Ennes he considered the assault on the ship "was and remains an outrage." He said he still did not know "at what level in the Israeli government it was launched, "but I am convinced that it was not trigger-happy local commanders." Still, Mr. Rusk says there was serious doubt "whether this episode should have blown into a major confrontation between Israel and the United States."

"Those who carry the ultimate responsibility '.. know that there are times when one has to pick up the pieces and not let everything fall apart because of an occurrence of this sort," says Mr. Rusk. . . ."

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Was Ship Hit During 1967 War?

U.S. Survivors of Israeli Attack Still Seek Answers

By BRYCE HOLMES, Times Staff Writer

WASHINGTON—On [illegible], that morning April 8, 1967, the Israeli jet fighter pilots believed to [illegible] in the Six-Day War.

[illegible] after all, Israel's [illegible] Thirty minutes [illegible] Liberty [illegible] operating [illegible] Sinai Peninsula.

[illegible] Israeli [illegible] Liberty [illegible] Israeli [illegible] Liberty [illegible] Israeli [illegible] Liberty [

...ed from Page 1

...ed months for their long ordeal, had only praise ...ained their detention of the Israeli explanation and ...anger at what they termed participation by the ...government in a cover-up of the facts.

"On June 8, 1967, we were attacked by an Israeli force ...ch deliberately ran," Radish said. He fallow survi... "Since that time, we've been forgotten by our mili... we've been forgotten by our government. We ...never been known by the American people. We ...served only by the grace of God. We must never ...."

...ting to their bitterness is their knowledge that not ...did U.S. planes fail to come to their rescue, but air... dispatched from the 6th Fleet were actually called ... to their carrier before they reached the burning ...

...e survivors say they were told by U.S. Navy offi... told to discuss what happened to the Liberty. Those ...who have left the Navy, however, say they now feel ...to talk.

"The reason we waited so long to talk is that we were ...ordered," said former Petty Officer Glenn L. Bonham.

'Don't Answer Questions'

As the Liberty's wounded were taken onto U.S. ships ...on the day after the attack, they were told to keep quiet ...according to the survivors.

"Don't answer any questions," former Lt. James M. ...Russo Jr. said he was told by a naval intelligence officer ...who boarded after he stretcher while he was ...en onto ... Senior Admiral. "Don't talk to the press ... don't you understand it's all right."

...ussa didn't understand it at that time, but after... said, he published a book, "Assault on the Liberty," ...while the official inquiry into the controversy ...over the attack, Russo and his fellow survivors are just ...as perturbed about inaction by the U.S. Navy as they ...are about the Israeli attack.

"Five minutes after the attack began, the Liberty got a ...message to the U.S. 6th Fleet, operating 450 miles away ...near Crete, but U.S. planes ever came to the aid. ...Eventually, U.S. helicopter and patrol boats that arrived after ...the jet rafts had left, put out the fire, and the Israelis 'blue' ...fered assistance, which the Liberty refused. The next ...offer of assistance, which the Liberty also declined, ...came from Soviet patrol vessels destroyed about 12 ...hours after the attack. No U.S. surface ships were ...the vicinity, said the Liberty's sailors saw none until ...up with two U.S. destroyers at 7 a.m. the ...

...whole damn thing doesn't ...

'Sure the attack could have been deliberate. They (the Israelis) had sightings beforehand of the ship.'

Arleigh A. Burke, chief of U.S. naval operations from 1955 to 1961 and now retired, said recently, "If you were writing this as a movie, it would be unbelievable."

Several of the top U.S. government figures in office during that period share the crew's doubts. Adm. Thomas H. ..., who chaired of naval operations from 1967 to 1970 and ... chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, told the survivors that he thought their ordeal was the result ...tional attack on a U.S. ship.

...Rusk, secretary of state at the time of the attack, said in a recent interview, "Sure the attack could have been deliberate. They (the Israelis) had sightings beforehand of the ship."

Rusk stopped short of labeling the attack a deliberate assault, but he said, "It was an outrageous affair. I don't buy the Israeli explanation. We were never able to get to the heart of what happened."

Survivors of the Liberty allege that the cover-up of their experience means that the nation will be more likely to blunder into similar incidents in the future.

Lloyd M. Bucher, captain of the Pueblo, the intelligence ship that was captured by the North Koreans on Jan. 23, 1968, told the Liberty survivors at the reunion here that his ship would have been less likely to have gotten into trouble if he had been adequately informed of what had happened seven months earlier to the Liberty.

...Clear-cut answers to the question of what happened to the Liberty have been buried in layers of military ...classification.

The Israeli government convened a court of inquiry, but its record has not been made public. A U.S. naval ...court of inquiry convened itself with U.S. Navy actions ...focused on Israeli wrongdoing. The U.S. Navy and the ...Pentagon have recently issued formal statements ...in response to Times inquiries about the incident, but ...have declined to provide documents.

(over)

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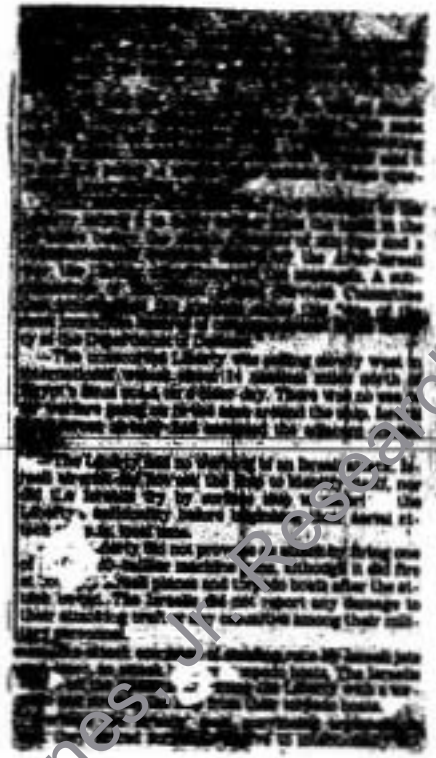

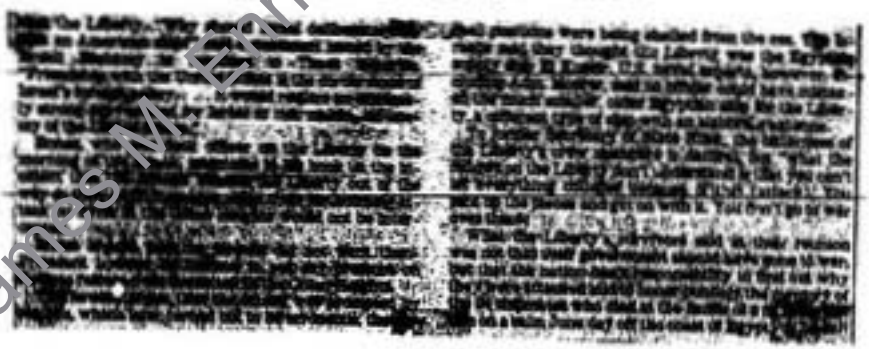

L.A. Times Page

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ABC News

June 18, 1982

Ms. Bernadette Whitehead
185 Knollwood Drive
San Rafael, California 94901

Dear Mrs. Whitehead:

Thank you for your card of May 31st. You will be gratified to know that we covered the LIBERTY reunion and prepared to do a complete show on the history and circumstances of the loss of the ship.

The very evening the program was to air, the crisis in Lebanon broke out, and you know the result. I cannot now say just when we will be able to air this program, but it is still our intention to do so.

Thank you again for taking the time to write. I hope that you will continue to enjoy NIGHTLINE.

Sincerely,

Ted Koppel

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"During the course of my researching and writing my book The Presidency of Lyndon B. Johnson I read Assault on the Liberty with great care. This memoir, which also conveys documentary evidence rare in such volumes, contains an abundance of facts and insights on this distressing episode of 1967 which make it compulsory reading for all--especially historians--who hope to understand what happened."

Vaughn Davis Bornet, Ph.D.
Emeritus Professor of History
Southern Oregon State College

(Permission to quote is hereby given.)

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The Oregonian

Editorials

Founded Dec. 4, 1850. Established as a daily Feb. 4, 1861. Sunday Oregonian established Dec. [illegible]
Sunday by the Oregonian Publishing Co., Oregonian Bldg., 1320 SW Broadway, Portland

FRED A. STOKEL, President and Publisher

WILLIAM A. HILLIARD, Executive Editor/News ROBERT [illegible]

ALBERT L. McCREADY, Managing Editor RICHARD K. MILLIGAN, Advertising [illegible]

FRIDAY, JUNE 4, 19[illegible]

Should not Portland honor USS Liberty?

The 15th anniversary of the Israeli attack on the USS Liberty, an intelligence-gathering ship outfitted in Portland, is cause for boosting one of the nation's most hidden heroic events. Unlike other gallant naval episodes heralded wide and far, the attack on the Liberty and its successful survival fight, was one of the more despicable government cover-ups.

The fact that the electronic spy ship was attacked by Israel, an ally, was embarrassment enough, but major efforts to veil the event developed because the strickes were [illegible] allowed to suffer while a U.S. naval carrier task force was within fighter range. It [illegible] word but unaccountably failed to rescue the Liberty.

There were 34 Americans killed who will be honored at Arlington this weekend. Of the former crewmen, 150 will gather in Washington to mark the June day in 1967 when their ship was riddled with shot and shell but refused to sink. It was during the Six Day War when the Liberty was brought under attack in international waters off the Gaza Strip. Israel paid reparations but gave unsatisfactory explanations.

James M. Ennes Jr., officer of the deck that day, wrote a superb book, "Assault on the Liberty." James J. Kilpatrick, the columnist writing Thursday's Forum page, ranked the 1979 book with with C.S. Forester's Horsblower sea stories. But it was gripping fact, not fiction.

Ennes, who later had classified documents released under the Freedom of Information Act, believes the North Koreans observed the failure of the U.S. fleet to protect the Liberty and were thus encouraged to attack the USS Pueblo, also an intelligence-gathering vessel.

It would be fitting if Portland honored some, or all, of the crew members who took part in one of the nation's more handsome displays of unselfish courage.

June 7, 1982
The Washington Times

"In my own mind it wasn't a mistake, but I don't hate those guys."

Chuck Knox, crew member on the USS Liberty, attacked by Israeli jet fighters in 1967. (3A)

James M. Ennes, Jr. Research Papers

BARRY GOLDWATER
ARIZONA

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20510

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August 14, 1980

Mr. James M. Ennes, Jr.
[redacted]

Dear Jim:

I enjoyed the book tremendously. I've already turned it over to a member of the staff to read and before I get through with it, it will be shop worn but thoroughly read.

Sincerely,

Barry

Barry Goldwater

James M. Ennes, Jr. Research Papers

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January 28, 1980

Mr. James M. Ennes, Jr.
[redacted]

Dear Mr. Ennes:

I just returned from a trip to Saudi Arabia and found your letter of January 21 waiting for me. I did read 'Assault on the Liberty' during a recent vacation in the early part of this month. Because I had to make the trip to Saudi Arabia immediately upon my return, I was not able to write to you about it and I apologize.

What I want to say now, and should have said earlier, is that the book is extremely revealing of the incident and shows a tremendous amount of research and attention to detail. My immediate reaction upon reading it was that you have performed an act of patriotism in writing the book which equals or exceeds that of your behaviour during the time you were under fire. I read through the sanitized copy of the transcript of the Board of Inquiries' hearings and reached virtually the same conclusion - that it was a terrible whitewash. Even the facts that came out during the Board of Inquiry did not support the conclusion that was appended to it by the Navy.

I hope that something comes of this as a result of your book and I also hope that it becomes a best seller. If there is anything I can do to help in that regard, please let me know.

Best of luck to you.

With warmest personal regards, I remain,

Sincerely,

James Abourezk

James M. Ennes, Jr. Research Papers

UNITED STATES NAVAL INSTITUTE
ANNAPOLIS MARYLAND 21402

15 January 1981

Mr. James M. Ennes, Jr.
c/o Random House, Inc.
201 E. 50th Street
New York, N. Y. 10022

Dear Mr. Ennes:

Each year the U. S. Naval Institute's Proceedings' staff selects 15 to 20 "Notable Naval Books."

Seventeen books make up this year's listing.

We are pleased to inform you that Assault on the Liberty: The True Story of the Israeli Attack on An American Intelligence Ship has been included in the Proceedings' "Notable Naval Books of 1980," the complete listing of which appears in our January 1981 issue. Congratulations.

A copy of the January Proceedings is being mailed to you under separate cover.

Best wishes for 1981.

Sincerely yours,

C. K. Barrow, Jr.
Editor-in-Chief
Proceedings

James M. Ennes, Jr. Research Papers

Unprovoked attacks

Houston Post 10 June 82

Israel's invasion of Lebanon came at an ironic time

By Georgie Anne Geyer

It was one of those eerie quirks of history that the first creation of the crew of the U.S.S. Liberty, victims of an unprovoked 1967 Israeli attack on their ship, was held on the very eve of the newest Israeli invasion in the Middle East.

Able in retirement to speak out for the first time about the attack by supposedly "friendly forces," retired Adm. Thomas H. Moorer, former chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, said clearly, "I have never been willing to accept the Israeli explanation as a case of mistaken identity."

The Israeli attack killed 34 Americans and was most probably designed to destroy the whole ship and crew in the Mediterranean. In a ballroom of the Washington Hotel, Moorer told several hundred still-somber and still-angry survivors and their wives: "There was a deliberate effort by the U.S. government that no one hear about the U.S.S. Liberty. We were involved with the Vietnam War, and we didn't need more problems."

As he paused, many in the audience who had felt forgotten and humiliated for so long were in tears, most of them certain that the Israelis deliberately attacked their American "allies" in order to stop the Americans from monitoring — and thus stopping — the ensuing Israeli attacks on Syria.

Within hours, across those same seas a new Israeli attack had started. The attack on Lebanon followed days of brutal bombings in which at least 300 died in ostensible retaliation for the terrible shooting of the Israeli ambassador in London. (Three hundred eyes for an eye?)

In both the attack on the Liberty and the attack on Lebanon, the underlying situations were much the same: 1) The reasons given were not even remotely the real ones, and 2) the United States is again acquiescing supinely in the destruction of its own policy and its own diplomatic interests.

Let us be blunt. Old Israeli terrorists Prime Minister Menachem Begin and Defense Minister Ariel Sharon, the latter a fanatic Israeli expansionist, have been spoiling to take southern Lebanon for months. Highly placed American officials last week told me wearily that the Reagan "policy" had been successful because we had stopped planned invasions three times this winter.

Each time, we paid a price — more airplanes, more shuttle diplomacy, more and — and each time the Israeli leaders only put off the invasion. Even the raid on the Iraqi nuclear plant that disrupted last year's Oslo talks came after the invasion, when it finally could be carried out in total contempt of President Reagan's European trip.

But the more important question is whether there was any break in the 11-month cease-fire to justify an Israeli invasion of the ill-fated Lebanon



Menachem Begin

at this time. There is no question that there was not.

A State Department official close to Haig told me only last week that the Palestine Liberation Organization had not once broken the American-arranged cease-fire. Indeed, before last week, Israeli planes bombed Lebanon on April 21 and on May 9, but there was no PLO response at all until the massive Israeli bombing of last week.

Israel's excuse for the invasion, the tragic assassination attempt in London, is too transparent and inexact to be taken seriously.

What does all this point to? It points to the dark confusion in the Middle East that can be instigated or used by anyone — and there is always something to use. This is not in any way to diminish the tragedy of the London shooting, but only to say that Begin and Sharon have been searching for months for a reason to take much of south Lebanon as part of Sharon's plan for expansion in the area.

But the blame for this cynically calculated and totally unnecessary carnage, with hundreds dead and less security than ever for Israel, lies not only with Begin and Sharon. In his new book, *The Past Has Another Pattern*, American statesman George Ball writes that the United States, with similarly weak actions, made the Shah of Iran what he became because "we nurtured his love for grandiose geopolitical schemes and we supplied him the hardware to indulge his fantasies."

Menachem Begin is creating a doomed Israel that is not the old beleaguered Warsaw ghetto but a new fortified ghetto striking out at everyone. But as long as the United States does nothing to restrain Begin's grandiose and cruel schemes, it as well as Israel will pay.

James M. Rhodes, Jr. Research Papers

Sad accident

To the Editor: Accustomed as we are to the usually well-thought-out editorial comments in The Oregonian, it was saddening and discouraging to read, "Should not Portland honor USS Liberty?" (June 4).

Anyone who dies in the service of his country should, of course, be honored. But the thrust of your editorial is quite different.

When James M. Ennes Jr. or any other member of the unfortunate crew of that ship strikes out in the aftermath of horror and fear, he may be forgiven. Others have the obligation to be more thoughtful.

Israel had everything to lose by antagonizing the United States by an assault on one of our ships, and it would have been madness for her to launch one.

Shooting at a wrong target — even at one's own units — is a recurrent vicissitude of war. Remember the large-scale bombing raid, with numerous casualties that our air force carried out against our own army on the Anzio beachhead, when we presumably were well-informed on the positions of our own forces.

I was a member of a convoy during World War II when four ships were sent to destruction by a foul-up in orders.

The shooting of Stonewall Jackson by his own men is another case in point.

Of course the Israelis gave no satisfactory explanation (for attacking the USS Liberty). There never is one. There was no cover-up of the attack. I remember well not only the reporting of the incident but its wide discussion in the journals.

Let us by all means honor our dead. But let us not be seduced into needless further antagonisms by sometimes mistakes, sometimes deliberate, misinterpretations.

SHELDON A. JACOBSON
7413 Buena Vista Drive
Vancouver, Wash.

Oregonian
6/10/82

Shared grief

To the Editor: This responds to James J. Kilpatrick's column (June 2) on the most unfortunate attack on the USS Liberty, a surveillance ship, in 1967.

Government inquiries by both the United States and the state of Israel concurred that the incident was a terrible error. Anyone who understands the special relationship between these two democratic allies has no difficulty accepting the facts of the case.

In the heat of war, deadly mistakes occur. We all shared in the grief felt by the loved ones of those men who were lost. No good purpose is served by the attempt to paint the Liberty incident as an intentional breach of friendship by America's most special Middle East ally.

DAVID F. STAHL,
Regional Director,
Anti-Defamation League
of B'nai B'rith,
918 Securities Bldg.,
Seattle, Wash.

Oregonian
6-14-82

Crew wants details

Crew members of the USS Liberty concluded their first reunion in Washington with a call for the U.S. government to release more details about the 1967 Israeli attack on their ship, which they said was deliberate.

"We hope that by getting out more information about the attack, we will help reduce the likelihood of something like this happening to U.S. servicemen in the future," said Don Blaylock of Severna Park, who was elected vice president of the USS Liberty Veterans Association during the weekend reunion.

The Liberty, an electronic intelligence ship, was attacked June 8, 1967, by Israeli jets and torpedo boats as it cruised in international waters 15 miles north of the Sinai Peninsula at the outbreak of what became known as the Six Day Mideast War.

Among the 287 men aboard, 34 crew members were killed and another 171 were wounded.

Israel later apologized, claiming the attack was a mistake and offered to pay $6 million in compensation. A Navy court of inquiry later concluded there was insufficient information to make a judgment about the reasons for the attack.

But Blaylock and other officers say the attack was no a mistake.

Attack no error

To the Editor: Complaints by Sheldon Jacobson (June 10) and David Stahl (June 13) about James Kilpatrick's discussion of the Israeli attack on the USS Liberty (June 2) are ill-informed.

I was Liberty's officer-of-the-deck and am author of the award-winning book, "Assault on the Liberty."

The attack on our ship was preceded by 16 hours of intense, low-level reconnaissance by aircraft which were overheard reporting the sighting of our



American flag. The attack started with high-speed jets using rockets and cannon and was followed by slower jets with napalm.

Torpedo boats fired five torpedoes and machine-gunned our life rafts in the water. Israeli troops arrived in helicopters for the coup de grace. And all this was coordinated from the Israeli war room where senior officers kept a running plot of the progress.

To pretend now that the attack was a battlefield error is ludicrous and easily disproven. Admiral Thomas Moorer, who became chief of naval operations a few days after the attack, scoffs at any possibility of such an error and adds that "even a raging navy could not make such a mistake." Adm. Arleigh Burke, another former chief of naval operations, agrees. So does Admiral Stevenson. So does every leading military journal, including those of the U.S. Naval Institute and the Naval War College.

Anyone still unconvinced after reviewing the documented story in my book need only read the official Navy Court of Inquiry report, which is now available from the Navy for about $70. Even diehard Zionists come away stunned by the evidence in that report.

If Israeli spokesmen truly believe that the attack was an accident, why do they so heatedly resist calls for a reopened investigation? Liberty crewmen recently assembled in Washington, D.C., for a reunion. They invited the Israeli press and the Israeli ambassador to ask questions and to review our evidence. None came. I have invited Israeli spokesmen such as David Stahl to public debate. None will accept. Why not?

JAMES M. ENNES JR.,
19009 194th Ave., N.E.,
Woodinville, Wash.

James M. Ennes Jr. Research Papers

HOUSTON CHRONICLE 8 June 82

Survivors of spy ship Liberty ask details of Israeli attack

WASHINGTON (UPI) — Survivors of Israel's attack on the U.S. spy ship Liberty during the 1967 Middle East war have urged the government to disclose more information about the strike that killed 33 crew members.

Nearly 80 survivors of the June 8, 1967, attack adjourned their first reunion with a statement that making public more details would "help reduce the likelihood of something like this happening to U.S. servicemen in the future."

The survivors met with the commander of the USS Pueblo, a spy ship seized by the North Koreans, also in 1967.

Retired Cmdr. Lloyd Bucher, skipper of the Pueblo, seized by a North Korean naval force just months after the USS Liberty attack, told the group "accurate information" was withheld from the public about the North Korean attack.

"The administration, the State Department and military establishment, namely (Defense) Secretary Robert McNamara, effectively kept accurate information and the degree of destruction that occurred from reaching the American people," said Bucher, who was held prisoner with his crew by the North Koreans for a year.

He said the government's actions on the Liberty were an effort "to avoid open argument with a close ally."

Israel said it thought the Liberty was an Egyptian ship and apologized for the torpedo and rocket attack that also wounded 171 Americans.

The ship, which carried 294 men, was positioned in international waters off the coast of the northern Sinai coast before the outbreak of the war. Its stated mission was to evacuate Americans in Israel and Egypt, although the ship was actually eavesdropping on the two countries.

The Israelis fired rockets, dropped napalm and fired torpedoes at the ship, which was flying the U.S. flag. Later Israel paid $6.7 million to the wounded and the families of those killed, and $6 million for the loss of the ship, which was later scrapped.

"Though the Liberty's surveillance mission was sensitive, we feel that now the United States government can move forth with appropriate recognition for the captain and others," said Dan Blalock, of Savage, Md.

Blalock, 39, was elected vice president of the survivors group, the USS Liberty Veterans Association.

June 10, 1982

THE WASHINGTON POST

Personalities

On June 4, 1967, Israel attacked the USS Liberty on patrol in the Mediterranean, and 34 men were lost. The shroud of secrecy surrounding the incident has slowly been lifting. Now, 15 years after the event, a group of survivors met here in Washington, and what started out as a social gathering has turned political.

The men, who contend that the attack on the Liberty was deliberate rather than accidental, formed the USS Liberty Veterans Association. They say their aims are to find other members of the crew with whom they have lost contact; gain recognition for the sacrifices and deeds of the crew; and obtain a Navy Judge Advocate review of the testimony from the original inquiry into the incident.

Most important to the group is that the ship's commander, retired Capt. William L. McGonagle, who was awarded the Medal of Honor for his actions during the incident, receive recognition commensurate with the award. He was presented the medal during ceremonies the group says were "hushed up."

—*Michael Goldfarb*

Friday, June 4, 1982 MILWAUKEE SENTINEL Part 1, Page 9

Survivors of '67 attack gather

Washington, D.C. —AP— Crew members of the USS Liberty gathered for their first reunion Thursday to compare memories of the Israeli attack on the spy ship at the outbreak of the 1967 Mideast war.

"There's a tremendous amount of anger directed at both the 6th Fleet and the Israelis," said Dan Blalock, a former officer and one of the organizers of the three-day session, which is expected to draw more than 150 former crew members.

June 8, 1967, the Liberty, an electronic intelligence ship, was attacked by Israeli jets and torpedo boats as it cruised in international waters 15 miles north of the Sinai Peninsula. Thirty-four crew members were killed and another 171 were wounded among the 287 men aboard.

Israel later apologized, saying the attack was a mistake. A Navy court of inquiry later concluded that there was insufficient information to make a judgment about the reasons for the attack.

But Blalock and other officers do not buy the Israeli explanation.

James Ennes, a former officer who wrote a book about the incident, said he discovered information that showed the Israelis knew it was a US ship.

"There is no question that they knew who we were," Ennes said. He suggested that Israel "was trying to protect the secrecy of its plans to take the Golan Heights."

Israel was then in the midst of what came to be known as the Six Day War. A day after the strike against the Liberty, Israeli forces attacked Syrian positions on the Golan Heights.

Ennes also was critical of the US 6th Fleet, which was cruising off Crete about 400 miles away. The Liberty, which essentially was unarmed, had been promised air cover "in 10 minutes if we needed it," Ennes said.

But one group of planes launched by the carrier USS Saratoga was recalled because US officials were unable to confirm the authenticity of the Liberty's appeal for help, Ennes said. Authentication codes had been destroyed by the ship's crew as part of their procedure to abandon ship, he explained.

A second group was recalled after Israel apologized and said the attack had ended, Ennes said.

James M. Ennes, Jr. Research Papers

NATION

Marker will be changed for victims of 'tragic' error

By William J. Small
United Press International

WASHINGTON — Six men, including one who may deserve a hero's honors, are buried in a mass grave in Arlington National Cemetery with a headstone that doesn't even indicate how they died.

But according to a survivor of the attack that killed the men during the Six-Day War in the Middle East, that will be changed.

The victims include one Marine and five Navy crewmembers of the intelligence ship USS Liberty, attacked by Israeli warplanes and torpedoed in the Mediterranean June 8, 1967.

Although the attack on the Liberty is an issue of continuing controversy, Israel maintains the incident was a tragic mistake.

The attack killed 34 men and wounded 171. Of the 34 men killed, 25 died when the torpedo struck the ship. Donald Blalock, of Savage, Md., was a civilian assigned to the Liberty and one of a handful of men in the compartment where the torpedo struck who survived.

There are nine families where Liberty crewmembers are buried in Arlington, each of which is the mass grave. Blalock, 38, said the headstone for the six men has read "Died in the Eastern Mediterranean" for the first 15 years.

But that was not good enough for retired Navy Cmdr. Ward Boeder Tansill, of Chevy Chase, Md., Blalock said, and through his insistence officials have agreed to change the marker this fall.

Tansill, now in his 80s, was "affronted" by the vague inscription, Blalock said, and "through his persistence and dedication, that headstone is going to be changed to read, 'Killed on board the USS Liberty, June 8, 1967'.

"They're going to get some recognition. They're deserving of a great deal more. But it's starting."

Blalock says there may also be special recognition coming for the Marine buried in that mass grave, Sgt. Jack L. Raper, one of two Marines killed in the attack.

"The first I learned of the attack was seeing (Raper) bandaging one of the sailors after a stray armor-piercing slug had gone through his leg," Blalock said.

"After the torpedo attack ... I was told that Jack had been seen going back down into that flooded area a couple of times, looking for those who were trapped, survivors, bodies, whatever. And the last time, he didn't come back up."

In preparing for a reunion next weekend of survivors of the attack on the Liberty, Blalock found another crew member who had seen Raper's actions and later found Raper's body in the compartment.

He has asked in a newsletter for Liberty crewmembers for any eyewitnesses to Raper's heroism.

Blalock contacted the Marine Corps and told them what he'd found.

"We need one more eyewitness to ascertain that Jack did, in fact, go down a couple of times and did, in fact, die trying to help others," Blalock said.

"This reunion is the first time we're getting together in 15 years," he said. "Perhaps Jack Raper is going to get the recognition that he deserves."

NATION

- A newspaper contends many CIA-trained Cuban exiles have turned to drug smuggling.
- Crawfish rustling is getting downright serious in Louisiana.

The report is continued on B-8.

James W. Ennes Jr. Research Papers

Why Israel Attacked Our Ship

By George Weller

"Assault on The Liberty," by Ennes James M. Jones USN (ret). Random House. $15.95.

Begin's technique of sending Israeli war planes outside her legal space was not originated with raids into Lebanon and Iraq.

As far as the US is concerned, Israel struck on June 8, 1967, fourth day of the Six Day War. In clear weather at midday, with American soldiers sunbathing on the decks, navy and air force directed by Gen. Moshe Dayan, minister of defense, having just knocked Nasser out of the war, attacked the US intelligence ship *Liberty*. Eleven thousand tons of acute radio listening gear were loafing along at Washington's orders in international waters 13.6 miles off the Egyptian, not the Israeli coast. Then came the impossible blow.

The attack occurred under political conditions that uncannily resemble those today. Israel had subtracted Egypt from the Arab alliance, first by bombs, then by Camp David. Dayan's next target was Syria, as it is Begin's today.

Syria, advised by Russia, had stubbornly refused to enter the war and help the fallen, bleeding Nasser. Israel's problem was to bring Syria in also, shatter her by a secondary attack, and then pretend that isolated Syria had attacked first. Then the Golan Heights could be taken, placing Israel's artillery in range of Syria's capital, Damascus.

But how to prevent the *Liberty*'s far-ranging antennae from registering the battle commands of the Israel tanks as they launched their attack on Syria's defended heights? The only way to plug the ears of the Americans was to knock out the *Liberty*. So Dayan did it.

And he did it, according to this book — heavily footnoted and supported by the official Naval Institute — without his or any of the Israeli commands being subjected to court martial or civil investigation. History's finger has not touched Dayan.

This is the fullest account of how 34 American sailors of a crew of 315 died and over 100 were wounded. Ennes, a trained cryptologist, very precise. He was doubling at the wheel and was gravely wounded, like the skipper, Commander William McGonagle. How degraded US official accounts have been may be measured by the fact that President Johnson's memoirs, "The Vantage Point" (1971), declared that "ten men were killed." He called the helpless old freighter a "communications ship" and suppressed the fact that a US submarine photographed the attack after planes bombed and put the *Liberty* afire and a PT boat torpedoed her. (And that the submarine stayed submerged.)

Wearing naval paint and huge numbers, her name large on the stern, flying a 5x8 ft ensign, *Liberty* was actually a lame and tardy effort to overtake the long head of the Soviets in snooping, ammo-studded "fishing trawlers." Israel's attack, together with the similar attack by the North Koreans on the *Pueblo* and capture of its crew, completed the retreat of America's Navy from this bold, successful Soviet technique.

Attack "without warning?" Far from it. On May 26 Israel's foreign minister, Abba Eban, gave Johnson an explicit warning that Israel was planning an offensive. Johnson ordered the *Liberty* to come up from the African coast to a front seat.

Publication of the *Liberty*'s story is timely because of public pledges by Israel that they will attack the AWACs radar warning planes sold by Saudi Arabia and manned by American crews. The question is: will Reagan obey rules of surveillance determined by Israel in air and sea?

And the Sixth Hour. Well, the *Liberty*, attacked at 2 p.m. in sunny weather, with two-thirds of her men dead or wounded, was first given succor by a Soviet destroyer at dawn the next day, just before noon, Israel invaded Syria.

The struggle was largely the work of the almighty Joint Chiefs of Staff in Washington, which had taken responsibility away from the Sixth Fleet. Secretary of Defense Robert S. McNamara called off not one but two air strikes that were ordered to fly from carriers to help the *Liberty*. The reason for his second wipeoff was "Israel admitted the error."

When an official investigation began, tightly tethered to Malta as protection against news leaks, this gallant ship produced its first authentic hero of intelligence, a wise-cracking Jewish chief engineer, Lt. George H. Golden. When his captain collapsed, and his number two was killed, Golden took command.

The world would never have got an inkling of what went on had Golden not ignored the blackout imposed by George J. Feldman, the American ambassador in Malta, and spilled the story to Colin Frost of the AP, a Briton . . . anonymously. Say a prayer for British integrity.

PLACEMENT

Able journalist stationed in Madrid, thoroughly informed on Spanish and Latin American affairs, wants to become a stringer for American magazines and periodicals, to cover the politics, economics and "the new Spain entering NATO and the EEC." Please send replies to **Alvaro Pineda**, Pso Velador 3, 9-A, Madrid 30, Spain. Phone 275 6944.

Overseas reporter **Shirley Kendrick Barker** has relocated from Fiji to Brisbane, Australia, and is available for assignments. Reach her at GPO Box 93, Brisbane, Queensland 4001. Telephone (07) 2251126. She was the VOA correspondent in Fiji.

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OPC BULLETIN

Published throughout the year by the Overseas Press Club of America, Inc., Associated to members overseas, mailed 1st class to others.

Irwin S. Tuchman, Editor; Helen Alpert, Rosalind Massow, Charles J. Schreider, Lawrence Stessin, Associate Editors.

James M. Ennes, Jr. Research Papers

OVERSEAS PRESS CLUB BULLETIN

Letters

NEW YORK — It was disappointing to read **George Weller's** book review entitled "Why Israel Attacked Our Ship" in your Feb. 15 issue. A book review is supposed to objectively evaluate a work. This one, dealing with the attack by an Israeli plane on an American ship during the 1967 war, accepts at face value all of the extreme, one-sided views of the book's author. Furthermore, Weller uses the review as a take-off point for an attack on the present Israeli government's policies; in fact, the "review" actually begins with such an attack. One expects a more professional job in a newsletter directed at journalists. There is no mention of any credentials the reviewer may have.

— **Dr. Stephen Karetzky**

George Weller, now in his 70's, is one of the country's most distinguished foreign correspondents. He covered Greece and the Balkans for The New York Times *1932-36. For the* Chicago Daily News *he reported from the Balkans, the Belgian Congo, Abyssinia, Singapore, Japan, New Guinea, the Solomons, the Central Pacific and China. Now resident in Rome, he continues to cover developments in the Mediterranean and the Middle East. He won the Pulitzer Prize in 1943 and the Polk Award in 1955. He was the first correspondent trained as a paratrooper in the Pacific.)*

OPC BULLETIN JUNE 1, 1982

MODESTO, CAL. — **George Weller's** review of "Assault on *The Liberty*" by James Ennes brings a breath of fresh air to a subject too long ignored by the nation's media, apparently for fear of offending pro-Israeli advertisers. I was aboard the ship and was wounded in the attack by Israeli forces. We who survived can testify that Ennes' account is accurate and that Israeli forces attacked us deliberately after extensive reconnaissance and after informing their headquarters by radio that we were American. The attack was well planned, well organized, and it was no mistake.

The real question is, why has the media never probed past the shallow Israeli disclaimers and the easily disproven official American version of what happened to our ship? Is the *Liberty* story still too sensitive for American journalism? Scores of my shipmates would love to help set the record straight, but few reporters have the courage to ask any questions.

— Ronald F. Grantski

Letters

Berli was president of the Foreign Press Association for three terms. In the recent election he was chosen dead of the board of governors.

— **Max Gendel**

VERMILLION, S.D. — Philip Hochstein, presumably an otherwise objective journalist, should read James Ennes's award winning "Assault on the *Liberty*" before declaring that the book and George Weller's review of it both "reek with a hatred that is blind to facts." Had he read it, he would know that the ship did not sink, and he might be forced to admit that it is a balanced and documented first hand account by an officer who was on the bridge.

I, too, survived the attack, and I still wonder why the *Liberty* is a "hands off" subject for the press.

— Stan White
Publisher, *USS Liberty Newsletter*

Editor's Note: With this, we bring the Liberty *discussion to a close. Letters were also received from Norman F. Dacey, Portacarron, Ireland, author of a history of the Palestine confrontation, who supports* George Weller's *review; from Donald L. Blalock, Jessup, Md., who served aboard the* Liberty *and confirms* Weller; *from William E. Casper, Forest City, Pa., who has seen the* Liberty's *remains in a Boston scrapyard. Also, another letter from* Phil Hochstein. Liberty *survivors were to meet in June in Washington.)*

James M. Ennes, Jr. Research Papers

How Will We Know Who Fired First?

(This is a follow on George Weller's review of the book "Assault On The Liberty" by Ensign James M. Ennes, the cryptographer who took command of the ship after its skipper had been wounded. It appeared in the Bulletin last February 13. The book, George writes, "has never been reviewed in the U.S. by a national news magazine nor a N.Y. newspaper," but the Bulletin's review "put the book into New York bookstore windows for the first time."

By George Weller

ROME — On the shores of Lebanon, where the question of who shoots first is more delicate than in 1967, where even the costly U.S. investment in Camp David's long dragged-out peace is at stake, there is so far no intelligence ship on station.

It is by no means certain that the Israelis will be the only aggressors again. The Palestinians appear to realize that provocation, repeated insistently enough, can push the Israelis into such massive bombing as they inflicted on Beirut last July. With provocation enough, at the right time, the Arabs may upon the Israeli master plan - if there is one - and set prematurely another huge overkill.

Dayan's victory over the helpless *Liberty* and the subsequent humiliation of her sister the *Pueblo* in North Korean waters, has had the unfortunate result of driving this type of intelligence ship off the Navy list.

The Soviets continue to operate them with success. They even placed a snooper off the Connecticut shore to watch the launching of the latest *Trident* submarine. But the *Liberty's* agony revealed such a total confusion of naval communications that this kind of fine-tuned, [illegible] operation seems out of reach.

Yet a similar U.S. intelligence ship was neatly removed from the patrol ships of the Greek navy. And even now a destroyer, her mid-decks crowded with listening devices, is watching the seas between Nicaragua and El Salvador for arms smuggling.

The State Department, which might be expected to be eager to accumulate the legal material on the aggressor-to-be in Lebanon — having lost everything on the *Liberty* — is not egging the Navy for action. Fact-seekers who ask State for background get a handout titled "The book is now closed on the *Liberty*."

Whoever fires the decisive opening shot, whether it be the Israelis who smite Lebanon first, or whether it be the PLO who deliberately provoke them into attacking, the absence of any American monitor to reveal which side starts the hypothetical new Mideast battle is likely to require an explanation to satisfy a discontented public.

James M. Ennes Jr. Research Papers

SYDESONS PRESS CLUB BULLETIN
15 MARCH '82

Washington Ticker

By Jessie Stearns

The first woman president of the 74-year old National Press Club, Vivian Vohlberg, was inaugurated before 300 members and guests in the Club ballroom, and was sworn in by President Reagan and the First Lady. Oklahoma Governor George Nigh declared a Vivian Vohlberg Day in Oklahoma.

From the papers Vivian writes for were her editors: Jack Zimmerman and wife; James Standard and wife; Oklahoma Sen. David Boren, Sen. Don Nickles and wife, and one of the owners, a former president of the Women's National Press Club, Edith Gaylord Harper, and Washington Bureau Chief Allan Cromley, a former NPC president and wife.

Representing the White House in addition to the President were Chief Deputy Press Secretary Larry Speakes and wife, Communications Chief David Gergen, and the President's chief speech writer, Aram Bakshiani, Jr., and deputy press secretary Peter Roussel.

Oklahoma Congressmen present were: Mickey Edwards, Glenn English and wife, David McCurdy, and Mike Synar. Also secretary of Labor Raymond J. Donovan and wife. 17

• **John Adams** is promoting a new anti-pollution device for diesel automobiles.

The first bill introduced by Senate Majority Leader Howard Baker (R-Tenn.) in 1981 and considered when the second session of the 97th Congress convened on Jan. 25, provided for television and radio coverage of Senate proceedings. Baker asked network executives to urge facilities back home to lobby their senators.

Among those opposing the bill is Sen. Russell Long (D-La.), who says "televising the Senate would turn the body into a circus, with at least 99 prima donnas vying for TV time." He is expected to filibuster it.

Sen. Jennings Randolph (D- W. Va.), fearful of the confusion during a roll call vote, has introduced two amendments: each senator must vote from his assigned desk, and must declare if he wants to change or withdraw his vote. Many senators are for radio coverage only.

The Washington Press Club annual Congressional dinner drew 1400 members and guests at the Sheraton-Washington, and honored Presidential Press Secretary Jim Brady at his first public appearance since he was [illegible] the head on March 30.

Among the congressmen and senators on the program was tall, lanky, [illegible]

Letters

NEW YORK — One-sixth of the space in the *Bulletin* of Feb. 15 was devoted to **George Weller's** review of the book, "Assault on the Liberty," by Ensign James M. Ennes. May I ask for a few inches to put the matter into perspective?

The review says, probably based on the book, that Israel struck at the *Liberty* in order to find a pretext for bringing Syria into the 1967 war. The fact is that Syria had been firing artillery across the Israeli border throughout May and into June of 1967. Syria was in the war long before Israel scaled the Golan Heights to stop Syrian bombardment. Israel could not counter-attack Syria until she had finished off Egypt and Jordan. Husbanding her limited forces, Israel refrained from defending herself against Syrian bombardment until June 9. Israel was not in need of any pretext.

The tragic sinking of the *Liberty* was due to failure in communication, the fault of both the U.S. Navy and the Israelis. The book and the review reek with a hatred that is blind to facts.

Philip Hochstein
Editor, *The Jewish Week*

OPC BULLETIN
MAY 1, 1982

Letters

WOODINVILLE, WA. — The attacks by Stephen Karetzky and Philip Hochstein on **George Weller's** review of my Random House book, *Assault on The Liberty*, are wrong-headed and ill-informed. My book, based on my personal experiences on the ship's bridge and supported by twelve years of additional research, has been widely hailed as "in the best tradition of quiet investigative journalism" (*St. Louis Jewish Light*), "documented" (*Library Journal*), and "first class" (*Washington Post*). It was honored as a "Notable Naval Book" by the U.S. Naval Institute at Annapolis, and was called "the most important book" of the year by the *Hartford Courant*.

Unfortunately, the book is widely and blindly attacked by apologists for Israel, such as Karetzky and Hochstein, who obviously have not read it and clearly know not of what they speak, and those attacks have helped make it difficult to find, despite the fact that it is in a 4th printing and *is* available.

— James M. Ennes, Jr.

James M. Ennes, Jr. Research Papers

JAMES M. ENNES, JR.
[redacted]
Woodinville
Washington [redacted]

10 April 1982

Letter to the Editor
Overseas Press Club Bulletin
52 East 41 Street
New York, NY 10017

Editor:

The attacks by Stephen Karetzky and Philip Hochstein on George Weller's review of my Random House book, ASSAULT ON THE LIBERTY, are wrong-headed and ill-informed. My book, based on my personal experiences on the ship's bridge and supported by twelve years of additional research, has been widely hailed as in the best tradition of quiet investigative journalism" (St. Louis Jewish Light), "documented" (Library Journal), and "first class" (Washington Post). It was honored as a "Notable Naval Book" by the U.S. Naval Institute at Annapolis, and was called "the most important book" of the year by the Hartford Courant.

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Sincerely,

James M. Ennes, Jr. Research Papers

26 April 1982

Donald L. Blalock
9206 Vollmerhausen
Jessup, MD 20794
301 776-0858

Editor Irvin S. Taubkin
Overseas Press Club Bulletin
52 East 41 Street
New York, NY 10017

Letter to the Editor:

Stephen Karetzky has attacked George Weller for his review of "Assault on the Liberty," and has attacked the book itself for what he calls "extreme, one-sided views." I served aboard the ship and I can tell you that Ennes's book and Weller's review are objective and accurate. Karetzky's critique is another matter.

If Karetzky is a journalist, he should go back to journalism school. He has in that one letter violated two vital principles of his trade: know your subject and be objective.

If Karetzky had read the book or knew anything about the attack he would know that the Liberty was not attacked by "an Israeli plane." It was attacked by about ten Israeli Mirage jets, by up to a dozen Israeli Mystere jets carrying napalm, and by three Israeli torpedo boats which fired five torpedoes. Karetzky, however, does not know that because he did not read the book. How can he possibly presume to tell his colleagues that the author's views are extreme and one-sided?

Turn in your typewriter, Dr. Karetzky. You are producing propaganda, not journalism.

Sincerely,yours,

James M. Ennes, Jr. Research Papers

11 April 1982

Irvin S. Taubkin, Editor
OPC Bulletin
52 East 41st Street
New York, NY 10017

Dear Mr. Taubkin:

George Weller's review of ASSAULT ON THE LIBERTY by James Ennes brings a breath of fresh air to a subject too long ignored by the nation's media, apparently for fear of offending pro-Israeli advertisers. I was aboard the ship and was wounded in the attack by Israeli forces. We who survived can testify that Ennes's account is accurate and that Israeli forces attacked us deliberately after extensive reconnaissance and after informing their headquarters by radio that we were American. The attack was well planned, well organized, and it was no mistake.

The real question is, why has the media never probed past the shallow Israeli disclaimers and the easily disproven official American version of what happened to our ship? Is the Liberty story still too sensitive for American journalism? Scores of my shipmates would love to help set the record straight, but few reporters have the courage to ask any questions.

Sincerely,

Ronald F. Grantski
1017 Markles Way
Modesto, California 95355

James M. Ennes, Jr. Research Papers

Stan White
Publisher, USS LIBERTY NEWSLETTER
Route 2, Box 30
Vermillion, South Dakota 57069

April 14, 1983

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Ervin S. Taubkin, Editor
CPC Bulletin
53 East 41 Street
New York, New York 10017

Dear Mr. Taubkin:

Philip Hochstein, presumably an otherwise objective journalist, should read James Ennes's award winning ASSAULT ON THE LIBERTY before declaring that the book and George Weller's review of it both "[illegible] with a hatred that is blind to facts." Had he read it, he would know that the ship did not sink, and he might be forced to admit that it is a balanced and documented first hand account by an officer who was on the bridge.

I, too, survived the attack, and I still [illegible] why the LIBERTY is a "hands off" subject for the press. LIBERTY survivors will hold a reunion June 3 & 4 at The Hotel Washington in Washington, D.C. The reunion will include a press conference. I challenge Philip Hochstein to attend, to ask hard questions, and to publish what he learns. And if he really believes the attack was a mistake of war, he should prepare himself for a great shock.

Yours very truly,

James M. Ennes, Jr. Research Papers

D10

The Oregonian

Editorials

Founded Dec. 4, 1850. Established as a daily Feb. 4, 1861. Sunday Oregonian established Dec. 4, 1881
Sunday by the Oregonian Publishing Co., Oregonian Bldg., 1320 SW Broadway, Portland, O

FRED A. STICKEL, President and Publisher

WILLIAM A. HILLIARD, Executive Editor/News ROBERT M. LANDAUER

ALBERT L. McCREADY, Managing Editor RICHARD K. MILLIKEN, Advertising Director

FRIDAY, JUNE 4, 1982

Should not Portland honor USS Liberty?

The 15th anniversary of the Israeli attack on the USS Liberty, an intelligence-gathering ship outfitted in Portland, is cause for honoring one of the nation's most hidden heroic events. Unlike other gallant naval episodes heralded wide and far, the attack on the Liberty and its successful survival fight, was one of the more despicable government cover-ups.

The fact that the electronic spy ship was attacked by Israeli jet, jet, true embarrassment enough, but earlier efforts to veil the episode developed because the stricken vessel was allowed to suffer while a U.S. naval carrier task force was within fighter range. It got the word but unaccountably failed to rescue the Liberty.

There were 34 Americans killed who will be honored at Arlington this weekend. Of the survivors, 150 will gather in Washington to mark the June day in 1967 when the ship was riddled with shot and shell but refused to sink. It was during the Six Day War when the Liberty was brought under attack by international waters off the Gaza Strip. Israel said operations but gave unsatisfactory explanations.

James M. Ennes Jr., author of the book that day, wrote in an article, "Assault on the Liberty," [illegible], the torpedo attacks on Thursday's [illegible] page, reprint [illegible] book with U.S. Forster's [illegible] his stories. [illegible] was gripping fact, not fiction.

Efforts to later had classified documents released under the Freedom of Information Act, believe the North Koreans observed the failure of the U.S. fleet to protect the Liberty and thus encouraged to attack the USS Pueblo, [illegible] an intelligence-gathering vessel.

It would be fitting if Portland honored some, or all, of the crew members who took part in one of the nation's more heroic displays of unselfish courage.

June 7 1982

The Washington Times

"In my own mind it wasn't a mistake, but I don't hate those guys."

—Chuck Kiser, crew member on the USS Liberty, attacked by Israeli jet fighters in 1967. (AA)

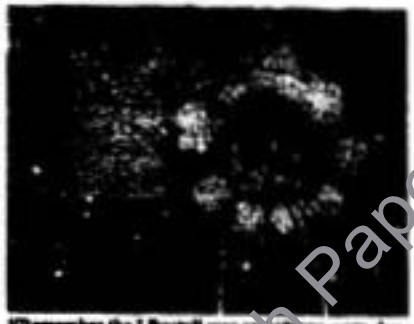
James M. Ennes, Jr. Research Papers

Liberty Cover-Up Assailed

Admiral Thomas H. Moorer, former chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, said the survivors of the U.S.S. Liberty, an intelligence ship sunk in the Eastern Mediterranean on June 8, 1967, that ... simply could not accept the Israeli claim that the ship was attacked by mistake. Adm. Moorer addressed a reunion dinner of the survivors of the ill-fated ship at a dinner at the Washington Hotel on June 5.

He said it was ridiculous for the Israelis to say that a ship with the unusual superstructure of the Liberty, flying a 5x8 foot American flag, with its name clearly displayed could be mistaken for an Egyptian or Syrian vessel as Israel claimed. Moorer said that the Israelis, who are among the most professional fighters in the world, "knew damn well" that neither the Syrians nor Egyptians had a vessel like the Liberty.

Adm. Moorer said that the Liberty, which was equipped with sophisticated electronic intelligence equipment, was in international waters, 24 miles off the coast in the Eastern Mediterranean. It was first strafed and bombed by Israeli warplanes. An hour later, Israeli torpedo boats attacked the ship. James Ennes, author of the book, *Assault on the Liberty*, said that the ship did not sink because by lucky chance a torpedo struck an I beam, which saved it and permitted the survivors to tell their story.



"Remember the Liberty" was on the caps worn during a wreath-laying ceremony held at the mass grave of six men slain in the Israeli attack on the *U.S.S. Liberty*.

Their story, however, did not get widely reported to the American people. The survivors were ordered by

Continued on page 3

Washington Inquirer June 11, 1982

James M. Ennes, Jr. Research Papers

Liberty Cover-Up Assailed

Continued from page 1

the Navy not even to tell their families what had happened, even though 34 Americans were killed and 171 were wounded. Six of the men killed were buried in a joint grave in Arlington National Cemetery. Their tombstone says simply, "Died in the Eastern Mediterranean." That is now to be changed as a result of pressure brought by the survivors.

Last Saturday, the survivors gathered at the cemetery in the rain to lay a wreath at the grave. James Ennes, who had been the ship's communications officer, spoke, saying that the major lesson to be learned was that the press accepted the Pentagon's press release and failed to try to find out anything on what had really happened. The news release had said that the ship was the victim of an accidental attack. Bender Tarrill, who also spoke, pointed out that Philip Goulding, press officer for the Department of Defense under Secretary Robert McNamara, admitted in his memoirs, *Confirm or Deny*, that the attack was deliberate.

Tarrill and Ennes charged that the Johnson Administration had engaged in a massive cover-up to protect Israel. Ennes said, "The story was hushed up because it was a political embarrassment." He said the facts contradicted the official account beyond a shadow of a doubt. A press release issued by the survivors at the reunion stated, "Recently disclosed Israeli military reports document the fact that the U.S.S. Liberty was clearly identified through Israeli intelligence several hours prior to the attack."

Ennes said that it appeared that two separate flights of air support for the Liberty were put into the air during the assault but were then called back. He said that the Liberty had been promised air support in ten minutes at the outset of its mission, but it never materialized. Ennes claimed that Israel seems to have postponed its attack on the Golan Heights by 24 hours in order to knock out the Liberty. The rationale for the attack appears to lie in the fact that Lyndon Johnson had warned the Israelis not to launch any attacks on their neighbors. They realized that the Liberty would discover their planned attack on Syria and that this information would be conveyed to Johnson. They decided to take out the ship.

Admiral Moorer, who had been named Chief of Naval Operations but had not yet assumed the post at the time of the attack, blamed the failure of the Johnson Administration to react on its obsession with the Vietnam War. He compared the reaction to the failure to retaliate against North Korea when the intelligence ship, the Pueblo was seized. He said the attitude of Johnson and McNamara was that they had enough on their hands in Vietnam without getting involved in any other quarrels.

Ship's Survivors Told U.S. Withheld Data

Combined News Services

Washington — More than 80 of the 200 survivors of Israel's attack on the American spy ship Liberty during the Six-Day War wound up a three-day reunion yesterday — their first since the incident — and were told that the United States government withheld "accurate information" from the public.

Lloyd Painter, a retired Navy commander who was skipper of the spy ship Pueblo, seized by the North Koreans in 1967 just months after the Liberty attack, told the group, "The administration, the State Department and military establishment, namely (Defense) Secretary Robert McNamara, effectively kept accurate information and the degree of destruction that occurred from reaching the American people." He said the government's actions were an effort "to avoid open argument with a close ally."

Adm. Thomas Moorer, chief of naval operations at the time, told the survivors that the government made sure the public did not hear about the Liberty; he added that he was not willing to accept the Israeli explanation that the attack was the result of mistaken identity.

The Liberty was severely damaged by a torpedo, napalm, rockets, cannon, and machine-gun fire during the Six-Day War between Israel and Egypt. In all, 34 men were killed and 171 wounded.

Israel maintains that its assault was a tragic error, for which it rapidly apologized. It paid nearly $7 million to the families of those killed and to those injured. To compensate for the damage to the Liberty, which never returned to duty, Israel agreed to pay three annual installments of $2 million.

But James M. Ennes Jr., who was a lieutenant and cryptography specialist aboard the vessel and organized the reunion, argued in the 1979 book "Assault on the Liberty" that the attack on the ship was a premeditated act.

The Liberty arrived on station off the Gaza Strip on June 8, 1967, after 16 days' steaming from Abidjan, the capital of Ivory Coast and a port call at Rota, Spain. It had been ordered to the eastern Mediterranean by the Joint Chiefs of Staff to perform what Ennes has described as "a general listening mission."

By monitoring the myriad radio signals, the ship was presumably able, initially at least, to track the course of the furious fighting ashore. But the vessel also attracted the attention of Israel's military commanders.

In his book, Ennes gives this account of the attack: Israel kept the Liberty under surveillance for six hours. Photo-reconnaissance aircraft buzzed the vessel 13 times and Mirage jets then rocketed and machine-gunned it. Eleven Mystere aircraft then napalmed the Liberty's funnel, gun mounts, bridge, and superstructure. Finally, three motor torpedo boats raced in to deliver the final blow to the blazing vessel. Two torpedoes were launched, but a third smashed into the Liberty midships, tearing a 40-foot hole in its side.

The Israeli government says it never has knowingly attacked any ship of an ally. It says the first time it realized the enormity of the mistake was when survivors were picked up and informed the Israeli crew that it had torpedoed a U.S. ship.

Ennes, who was wounded in the attack, theorizes that Israel attacked the Liberty because it was in a position to detect the invasion of Syria. The Israeli government was acutely aware of then-President Lyndon B. Johnson's warning to Foreign Minister Abba Eban "that he would support Israel only in self-defense, not in attacks against her neighbors," Ennes writes.

The Navy convened a board of inquiry to investigate the incident and it found, Ennes writes, "there are no available indications that the attack was intended against a U.S. ship." The "...cluded that the ... spied Tel Aviv's agency.

But a... weighing points up, the board's findings ... hotly disputed 15 years later.



The U.S. spy ship Liberty in the Mediterranean on June 9, 1967, the day after the Israeli raid

AP Photo

NEWSDAY, Monday, June 7, 1982

James M. Ennes, Jr. Research Papers



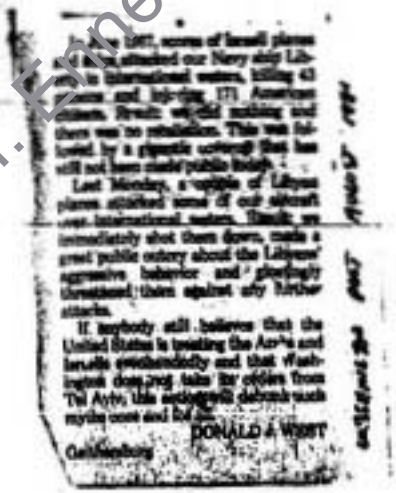
Deliberate Attack

Martin Canale (Jan. 6) has attacked the Globe without first arming himself with facts. Mr. Canale complains that the Globe's editorial charges of a cover-up in the case of the June 1967 attack on the USS Liberty is based on unsubstantiated innuendo and is an error of judgment. He is wrong. There is an abundance of evidence that the attack was deliberate and the facts covered up.

Mr. Canale had drawn his argument from a four-page script prepared by the Israeli government. Its same arguments appear with dreary repetition in letters to editors everywhere, and they ignore the real issue. The real point of the Liberty affair is not that Israel attacked the Liberty, but that the ship's pleas for help were ignored by our own government for over two hours while men died. Until recently, the matter was never investigated and nothing was done about it precisely because the facts embarrassing to Israel.

I was Liberty's officer-of-the-deck on the day of the attack and was present on the bridge during much of the carnage. My Random House book, "Assault on the Liberty," has been endorsed by four United States Senators, two retired chiefs of naval operations (Admirals Arleigh Burke and Thomas Moorer), and dozens of my shipmates, and has been very favorably reviewed.

JAMES M. ENNES, JR.
Woodsville, Wash.



James M. Ennes, Jr. Research Papers

Liberty crew doubts '67 Israel attack an error

OFF THE GAZA STRIP COASTLINE — It is nearly 2 p.m., June 8, 1967. Although unidentified aircraft have been flying overhead all morning, the crew members of the USS Liberty electronic intelligence ship continue their duties unconcerned. Suddenly Mirage fighter jets swoop down and begin strafing the ship at masthead level. A signalman replaces the shot-down American flag with "holiday colors:" an "Old Glory"

By David Pelton
WASHINGTON TIMES STAFF

JUNE 7 1982

Over the weekend 110 USS Liberty survivors of the 1967 Israeli attack on their ship in the Mediterranean packed a Hotel Washington suite for their first reunion ever. After 15 years of officially mandated silence about the incident, what emerged from the get-together was a shared frustration over their unresolved suspicions that the Israeli attack was "deliberate."

The reunion was the first time they could share their experience with anyone they felt "free to talk to."

"We haven't had a chance in 15 years to get together, put your heads together and find out why it all happened," said survivor Ron Gaitaki, 35, a construction company owner from Modesto, Calif. "I drove to get here, and I wasn't going to miss it for nothing. If my car had blown up, I would have taken a plane."

Some former crewmen could not afford the trip. Others had more tragic reasons for not attending.

"Some said it was just too much," explained former signalman Joe Meadors, 33, now working as an oil drilling and accounting supervisor for Aramco in Saudi Arabia. "They didn't think they wanted to live through it again."

When asked to recount their experiences prior to and during the attack, a moment of pained silence fell upon one group of "old friends" gathered in the hotel suite.

Their belief that the U.S. government is "not telling the whole truth" about investigations into the incident and their, until now, largely ignored charges that the government failed to give both the deceased and the

three times normal size which billows out in a 12-knot wind. Several more strafing runs occur.

Before the attack is through, the ship is rocketed, napalmed and torpedoed over a two-hour period by what are identified later as Israeli air and naval forces. They originally were believed to be Egyptian.

In what one crew member describes as "a miracle," the ship refuses to sink. Yet the attack leaves 34 killed. Of a crew of 294, 171 are wounded. The skipper, Capt. William A. McGonagle, seriously injured, refuses medical attention and remains on the bridge to guide the crippled Liberty to Malta. He later was awarded the Medal of Honor.

The survivors are told of Israeli's apology for "a tragic mistake," and that U.S. air cover did not arrive because the attack lasted only five minutes and would have arrived too late anyway. For the next 18 days they are kept busy with medical duties, duties until medical assistance arrives. Crewmen are re-assigned "all over the ship" orders not to discuss what happened with the press or their families.

Naval intelligence "communi... ...ations" — known among "sailis" as "ELI" — by law could not discuss their work or the incident for 10 years.



Among those attending the reunion 15 years after the Israeli attack on their ship, the U.S.S. Liberty, are (l to r) crewmen Bob Schnell, Gene Kirk, Chuck Jones and Joe Meadors.

we're trying to condemn the Israelis, and were not.

James M. Ennes, who was the chief electronics officer on board, and author of the book "Assault on the Liberty," takes exception to Israeli accounts of the events. A majority of the former crewmen agree. Specifically, they claim:

• The Liberty's commanding officer and signalman never received or refused a request by Israeli PT boats to identify themselves.

He claims the planned attack of the Golan Heights was delayed one day by the late Brig. Gen. David Elazar so the Liberty could be disabled.

Donald Blalock, of Savage, Md., a civilian assigned to the Liberty and one of a handful of survivors in the compartment where the torpedo struck, spoke for everyone when he declared, "the only way we'll ever know is if the Israelis come out and say so," something not expected very soon.

sibility how the former crew members benefited from attending.

"I got a call from a guy who had heard about the reunion from a Memorial Day recording on the radio," he said. "He knew nothing about the organization. He called my wife and said it was great to hear about it, and him all the information, but he couldn't locate it down. But he was close enough so I called him. I said, 'Gee, you're only a few hours away, why aren't you going to make

James M. Ennes, Jr. Research Papers

This "pain" was one they could speak about at length. The deeper, unspoken pain, that of having witnessed the death of many of their comrades in action, needed no description. Although Israel eventually paid $100,000 to each of the families of those killed and an average of just under $20,000 to each of the wounded, all contend Israel "could never do enough."

"At one point I got mad — madder than hell," said Chuck Jones, 43, a former CT now involved in recreational vehicle sales in Columbiana, Ohio. "I wanted to kill somebody then, but got over that 'cause there were too many things to do. In my own mind, it wasn't a mistake, but I don't hate those guys."

"They were just doing what they were told," said Gene Kirk, 36, another former CT and now a research foreman in Minneapolis. "Or they might not have known. It's not from the top who blew us up — it's not his fault at all," he claimed.

"The Israelis had some people in charge at that particular time ... who should be held responsible," agreed Grantski. "We're not hating the Israeli people. Every newspaper article I've ever read makes it try to look like

fixation for the Israelis to go ahead with an attack.

2. Both an extra-large U.S. flag blowing in 12-knot winds and U.S. Navy hull numbers all clearly identified the ship as American.

3. Israeli documents show recorded communications between Israeli reconnaissance aircraft over the Liberty and Tel Aviv headquarters command identifying the ship to be American hours before the attack.

Ennes, who was wounded in the attack, uses these findings as the basis of his belief that the attack was deliberate.

"Certainly Israeli forces and their 'war room' knew who we were," he said. He theorized that Israel attacked the vessel because it was in a position to detect Israeli military communications, which could reveal the imminent invasion of Syria's Golan Heights.

Aware of President Lyndon B. Johnson's warning that the United States would give Israel decisive American support "only in self-defense, and not in attacks against her neighbors," Ennes says in his book that Israel could not have got troops into Syria without being seen as the aggressor, especially with the USS Liberty listening. Liberty was "there to go."

of accepting their apology but like that, added Kirk. As a critic of how the U.S. government reacted to the attack, he is in high-level company with the likes of former U.S. Secretary of Defense and State, Robert McNamara, Dean Rusk, and retired Joint Chiefs of Staff chairman Adm. Thomas H. Moorer.

Long insisting the attack "was a mistake," Moorer has said: "The ship was identified and fired upon as well as torpedoed by [illegible] ... I'm sure that's the case."

Meadors asked "how [illegible] Russian (intelligence) trawlers knew [illegible] tripod mast? You know if one of those guys sunk, they'd go to war over that."

Most of the survivors preferred not to address the "politics" of the incident at all.

"I want to make it crystal clear that, from my standpoint, I'm not here because of anybody's politics," said Jones. "I'm here strictly for the guys. After 13 years, and it doesn't matter who it is; we get here to the hotel, you walk down the hall and here comes Grantski! It's just like you saw him yesterday!"

Stalock, who set up the reunion program, related one story which seemed to best encom-

[illegible] explained that he had been under psychiatric care since the attack. Stalock said: "He told me since he'd heard about the reunion, he started jumping again. I told him they don't want to mess anybody up, because when we first thought of this we realized it's going to bring up a lot of memories, some damn good and funny ones, and some very painful.

"Chet he had a meeting with his doctor the next day. He called me the next night and said, 'The doctor told me it would probably be good for me to go and to get this out of me.' There are a lot of guys like that."

Bob Schnell, 39, of La Grande, Ore., nicknamed "Buddha" by former shipmates said the group he hoped "the truth coming out" would help others to respect the sacrifices the military makes for the country and to avoid an experience one crewman had when he returned home after the attack.

"His neighbor asked how he was, and told him she was glad he was well and finally back home," Buddha said. "Then she asked him 'Is it true you were over there spying?'

"When he told her he wasn't free to say, she replied, 'Well, if you guys were, you got just exactly what you deserved.'"

James M. Ennes, Jr. Research Papers

The Virginian-Pilot

Established 1865

Perry Morgan, Publisher — Carl W. Morgan, President

Frank Batten, Chairman

Frank Caperton, Executive Editor — J. Harvie Wilkinson III, Editor — William O. Connolly, Managing Editor — Richard F. Barry III, President

Page A14 — Friday, June 12, 1981

Letters to the Editor

'Difficult to Buy'

Editor, Virginian-Pilot:

George Sexton (Letter, May 31) struck a familiar chord with his detailed report of frustration and failure in trying to order copies of my 1980 Random House book, Assault on the Liberty. Few books are as widely hailed and yet as difficult to buy as this one.

Assault on the Liberty, the true story of the Israeli attack on the USS Liberty, is written from my perspective as the ship's officer of the deck and supported by years of research. The book has been favorably reviewed by two retired chiefs of naval operations, many senior military leaders, four U.S. senators, every military journal including the prestigious *Naval War College Review*, and by scores of radio and print reviewers.

Assault on the Liberty is a story of heroism and adventure, coverup and chicanery. It is a story of the men of the USS Liberty, of what happened to them, and of why it happened. The Hartford Courant calls this book "a tribute to the Navy" and "the first book in decades to make the reader take pride in American servicemen."

Several major newspapers, including The Virginian-Pilot, have supported the book editorially. Key reviewers call it "important," "well written," and "the most important book of the year," while the U.S. Naval Institute honored it as a "notable naval book." But because this book proves to the satisfaction of most readers that the attack was planned in advance against a known American naval vessel, the story is anathema to Israel and her supporters in this country.

As a result, this book is almost impossible to buy despite the fact that dealers who display it often find it to be their best-selling title. No New York City store will stock or order this book, and no New York City or national reviewer will mention it. Stores that accept orders often find that the orders vanish somewhere in the book-distribution system. Reviewers frequently are besieged with angry letters and telephone calls.

American book sellers typically tell would-be buyers that *Assault on the Liberty* is out of print. The truth is, Assault on the Liberty has never been out of print. In fact, enough orders have trickled through the boycott that a fourth printing is now on hand and selling well.

JAMES M. ENNES JR.
Woodville, Washington

James M. Ennes, Jr. Research Papers

The Virginian-Pilot

Established 1865

Published by Landmark Communications, Inc.

Perry Morgan, Publisher — Carl W. Mangum, President

Frank Batten, Chairman

Frank Caperton, Executive Editor — J. Harvie Wilkinson III, Editor — William O. Connolly, Managing Editor

Richard F. [illegible], President

C4 — Sunday, May 31, 1981

Letters to the Editor

Remembering the Liberty

Editor, Virginian-Pilot:

Your editorial of December 22, "The Liberty Legacy," was [illegible] on to me. In the New York [illegible] I saw no editorials. The New York Times on December 19 [illegible] page coverage with [illegible] settlement in the Liberty [illegible]. However, on December 21, in [illegible]'s Week in Review, nothing [illegible] reported. Nowadays, another important paper, briefly mentioned the USS Liberty, but buried the story.

A day after release of the story, I attempted to purchase Assault on the Liberty by James Ennes Jr., about the Israeli attack on that unarmed U.S. Navy vessel. I soon found the book to be unobtainable in a New York retail store. I contacted S. Dalton, Barnes & Noble, Waldenbooks, and others without success. Waldenbooks helps customers obtain out-of-print books. But in the case of Assault on the Liberty, published in 1980, it does not stock the book.

Enlightenment from official sources is lacking. That brings me to the subject of a person in Washington representing Virginia. John Warner served as Navy undersecretary and Navy secretary, although not at the time of the incident. It would seem to me that he had access to an enormous amount of information that can now be made public. Virginians and others must look to Senator Warner for enlightenment.

The book contains much factual information. However, as it is well known that the book is difficult to acquire, it is left to newspapers and others to publicize the Liberty tragedy. And it seems to me that Norfolk ought to erect a monument to the Liberty's men—those who were killed and those who survived—will be remembered.

The December 22 editorial was an exercise in duty and responsibility.

GEORGE L. SEXTON
Bellmore, Long Island, N.Y.

James M. Ennes, Jr. Research Papers

Letters

WOODINVILLE, WA. — The attacks by Stephen Karetzky and Philip Hochstein on George Weller's review of my Random House book, *Assault on The Liberty*, are wrong-headed and ill-informed. My book is based on my personal experiences on the ship's bridge and supported by twelve years of additional research, has been widely hailed as "...best tradition of quiet investigative journalism" (*St. Louis Jewish Light*), "documented" (*Library Journal*), and "first class" (*Washington Post*). It was honored as a "Notable Naval Book" by the U.S. Naval Institute at Annapolis, and was cited as one most important book" of the year by the *Hartford Courant*.

Unfortunately, the book is widely and blindly attacked by apologists for Israel, such as Karetzky and Hochstein, who obviously have not read it and clearly know not of what they speak, and those attacks have helped make it difficult to find, despite the fact that it is in a 4th printing and *is* available.

— James M. Ennes, Jr.

James M. Ennes Jr. Research Papers

CAPTAIN J. M. TULLY JR. USN (Ret)
ROUTE 3, BOX 539
CARMEL, CA. 93923

Rural Rte #3, Box 539
Carmel, Ca. 93923
15 July 1982

Editorial Office
Attn: Letters to the Editor
Florida Times Union
Box 1949-F
Jacksonville, Fla. 32231

Dear Sirs:

An ex shipmates's son who lives in Gaines, Fla has sent me Max Morris's column appearing in your paper on Israel and the LIBERTY, plus the attached letters attacking the facts as given by Max Morris.

I was Max Morris's Commanding Officer in USS SARATOGA at the time of the Israeli attack and can attest to the facts as he gave them.

I have no idea as to the degree of military expertise of the two writers, but their rebuttals appear more emotional than factual!

Indeed Mr. Feigelstein mentions that the Israelies did not use heavy bombers! Israel had no "heavy bombers then" and has none now! They did use weapons against the USS LIBERTY that one might expect their forces to use, but why did they machine gun the life-rafts, plainly marked in International Orange. Even German U-Boats did not do that in WW-II!

Many other statements by both writers are equally incorrect, and I believe it important that these misleading statements by the two writers be made known.

It appears to me that it puts some other claims regarding the need for the UNITED STATES to support ISRAEL in question, if not jeopardy. If mislead once, then one treads carefully and lightly the next time.

Very Respectfully,

J.M. Tully Jr.

15 July

Dear Jim

Enclosed is a copy of a letter I wrote at RADM Max Morris's request. Apparently he got the same mail you do, after an editorial appearing in 8 East Coast newspapers.

It's easy to see what Pres. Reagan is up against under the present situation! — I was aboard ship (C oral Sea) in the '56 incident, Forrestal in the '58 incident (both ops.) either as XO or CO of VAH-3, and CO of SARATOGA in the June '67 incident!

Hope all goes well in Oregon, Gene, Washington!

One thought. You no doubt have a roster of LIBERTY personnel, both officer & enlisted. How about checking it for some Jewish names, there has to be some, among the CT's particularly disbursing, and storek-eper personnel also. You might get some support out of them!!

Regards,

Jim

James M. Ennes, Jr. Research Papers

Israelis deliberately attacked USS Liberty, former officer says

By RICK KUSHMAN
Bureau of the Union

Israeli war planes and torpedo boats attacked the USS Liberty during the 1967 Six-Day War to silence the American intelligence ship, a former officer on the Liberty said Monday.

James M. Ennes, a retired naval officer, told the Comstock Club the attack, called a mistake by American and Israeli officials, was mad[e] to destroy the ship to prevent American interfer[ence] with an Israeli assault on the Golan Heights.

"To prevent us from reporting their plans, they took the very drastic action of trying to sink our ship," Ennes said.

Ennes, who has written a book called "Attack on the Liberty," was in the hospital for a year after the fight. He returned to active duty, retiring from the Navy in 1978.

The attack, in which jets fired cannon, rockets and napalm at the ship, then boats launched torpedoes and a hail of machine gun fire, killed 34 U.S. sailors and wounded another 171.

American officials, including [illegible] House aides, were involved in a [illegible] incident, Ennes said. They stood by [illegible] at the time that the Israelis mistook [illegible] for an Egyptian freighter, Ennes said.

Official reports said Israeli pilots could not tell they were attacking an American ship, he said, because the flag hung limp on a windless day and planes flew only within three to five miles of the Liberty.

"I saw 13 orbits of the ship by airplanes that came in at about 500 feet directly overhead," Ennes said. "I could see the pilots. I could see the rivets that held the planes together ... and I was very aware of the flag. The wind was blowing at 12 knots and the flag was clearly displayed in a square."

Also, the ship's radio operators heard the pilots say they were attacking an American ship.

"This was all reported to the Naval Board of Inquiry and all dismissed," Ennes said.

The board's report, he said, concluded the Israelis had mistaken the ship for Egyptian. But the 700-page report omitted "what looks like 300 to 500 pages" of information, including weather and deck logs, radio operators' reports and testimony from key crew members, Ennes said.

"I was officer of the deck that morning," he said. "A naval lawyer came and interviewed me in the hospital and read that report to the court, but the account of my report has dropped out of the court record."

The "obviously planned and carefully coordinated attack," Ennes said, began with "high speed jets firing cannon and rockets."

After 30 minutes torpedo boats moved in, one torpedo "blowing a 40-foot hole in the side and killing 25 men," he said.

The boats circled for about 40 minutes "shooting machine guns into the fire crews ... then firing at and sinking life rafts," Ennes said.

The Israelis withdrew, he said, when they heard by radio that U.S. planes were coming to help the Liberty.

U.S. officials, Ennes said, not only quietly confirmed the Israeli version of the story, they "very strongly ordered the crew to talk to no one."

James M. Ennes, Jr. Research Papers

SACRAMENTO BEE 4 MAY 1982

Israeli 'Mistake' Doubted

By Marian Dermated
Bee Staff Writer

It was almost 15 years ago that the USS Liberty, an intelligence ship, was sunk by Israeli aircraft fire and torpedoes off the Gaza Strip.

Israel said at that time, and still maintains, that the incident was a mistake and the ship could not be readily identified as American.

An officer who was on the Liberty, however, takes exception to this.

Retired Lt. Cmdr. James M. Ennes Jr., then a lieutenant, said that "pressure from the Israeli lobby in Washington, D.C., caused the U.S. government to soft-pedal this incident."

Ennes, who spoke before the Comstock Club Monday, said in a pre-speech interview that he would like to see a Senate investigation of the circumstances surrounding the attack. But he added "it is highly unlikely to happen."

Ennes said he would "at least like to see the government admit the original account it offered of the sinking of the Liberty was wrong and improper," but he conceded that that is unlikely as well.

He did not speculate as to why the incident occurred.

Ennes wrote a book, "Assault On The Liberty," published two years ago. He frankly told he is in Sacramento to promote the book and to try to locate crewmen who may have been on the Liberty when it was sunk.

"Those of us who were on the Liberty at the time of the shooting are having a reunion," said Ennes. "It will be June 3 and 4 at the Hotel Washington in Washington, D.C."

He said half of the personnel on the ship at the time of the sinking have been contacted. "We expect," he said, "at least 100 persons who were on that ship at the reunion." Many of these men, according to Ennes, were heroes — cryptologic specialists on an intelligence ship. "We would have more at our reunion," said Ennes, "but 34 of those men were killed during the assault and more than 100 were injured."

Ennes, who retired from the Navy in 1978 and now lives near Seattle, said he recently received a message from Dean Rusk, then secretary of state, who has read his book. He said Rusk agreed "the attack was a genuine outrage. But so many things were going on at that time the Israelis' excuse was not challenged."

It is ironic, said Ennes, that the government chooses to believe the statements by some ship personnel that the Israelis could not see the U.S. colors because the flag was "limp."

This is not true, he asserted. "I was on the bridge, there was a good wind and the American flag was flying straight out for all to see."



Bee photo by Richa. d Gilmore

James Ennes Jr., who was a lieutenant aboard the USS Liberty when the intelligence ship was sunk by Israelis, believes the incident was no mistake.

James M. Ennes, Jr. Research Papers

Letters to the editor

Times-Union 7-9-82 Jacksonville, Fla.

Attack by Israeli forces on USS Liberty no mistake

In his July 2 reply to Adm. Max Morris' column questioning ever constant U.S. support of Israel, Scott M. Feigelstein stated that the attack on the USS Liberty in the 1967 Middle East War consisted solely of strafing runs by two Mirage jets hastily diverted from a ground support mission. He states further that the planes did not recognize the ship as American until after the attack had begun.

This information is somewhat at variance to an account of the attack in the book *The Assault on the USS Liberty* by Lt. Cmdr. James Ennes, a ship's officer at the time of the attack. According to Ennes:

1. The Liberty, an electronic-surveillance vessel, had arrived on her station off the coast of Gaza "after 16 days of hard steaming" when the war was already four-days old (and) "the ship had been reconnoitered throughout the night [before the attack] by Israeli military aircraft."

2. That an "Israeli Nord 2501 Noratlas reconnaissance aircraft had circled the ship at sunrise." This was followed at 9 a.m. by an Israeli jet and at 10 a.m. the Liberty "was circled three times . . . by two armed Israeli Mirage jets, each carrying 18 rockets under each wing. One of the pilots was heard reporting by [illegible] to Israeli headquarters that we [illegible] an American flag."

3. When the Mirages attacked (about 7 p.m.), in addition to [illegible] with their guns, they also fired rockets and in addition "slower Israeli [illegible] jets . . . plastered the stack, gun mounts, open bridge, and superstructure with an inferno of napalm."

It stretches credibility to attribute 34 killed and [illegible] wounded to two Mirages making a couple of strafing runs then saying, "Oops, hold it. That's an American vessel."

Feigelstein does not mention it, but the Liberty was also attacked by Israeli motor torpedoboats, which scored one torpedo hit, and raked the vessel with gunfire at close range. (At about 4:30 p.m. the torpedo boats returned and asked the Liberty, "Do you need help?")

One can only assume that they had been called off because by this time President Lyndon Johnson had gotten through on the hot line to Tel Aviv and asked Prime Minister Levi Eshkol what the (expletive deleted) he was doing.

At the time of the attack on the Liberty, on the fourth day of the so-called Six Day War, Israel had secured control of the Sinai Peninsula from Egypt and the West Bank from Jordan, and the war had virtually come to a halt.

It later became apparent, however, that Israel, having secured her other fronts, decided to use this opportunity — that is, a situation in which a state of war still existed — to seize the Golan Heights from Syria. In his book, Ennes conjectures that the Israelis wanted the Liberty destroyed so that she could not learn, through monitoring the inevitably increased radio transmissions, that military operations were about to start on the Syrian front. Ennes believed that the Israelis feared possible U.S. diplomatic interference.

Feigelstein says the above explanations for the attack on the Liberty is not valid because the Israelis were not fearful of any negative U.S. reaction to their cranking up the war again. Whatever the reason, the attack was obviously made not from mistaken identity but with the full knowledge that the Liberty was a U.S. Navy ship.

Cmdr. R.K. AWTREY,
U.S. Navy (Retired),
Fernandina Beach

James M. Ennes, Jr. Research Papers

Fire something at them!

Dallas Times Herald
TODAY
THURSDAY, JULY 8, 1982

Weather

The high Wednesday was 81 with a low temperature of 69. Partly cloudy and warm today with a 30 percent chance of thunderstorms. Highs in the lower 90s and lows in the lower 70s. Winds southerly at 10 mph. Continued partly cloudy and warm on Friday with highs in the lower 90s. Page 2-E

National

The CIA has established a "screening arrangement" to keep tabs on Director William J. Casey's stock transactions and prevent him from taking official steps that would enhance his holdings. But the new system still allows Casey to buy and sell stocks at his discretion. Page 6-A



Casey

Democrats express outrage over a Republican television commercial that credits President Reagan for a Social Security benefit increase in accordance with longstanding law. Page 5-A

International

More than three weeks after Argentine forces surrendered on the Falkland Islands, Britain is holding 600 prisoners on the aboard ships in the South Atlantic and says it intends to keep them until Argentina gives "positive indications" that it won't resume hostilities. Page 17-A

Vietnam said Wednesday that it will pull a significant number of its troops out of Cambodia this month and will withdraw more if Thailand helps Khmer Rouge guerrillas from using its ter-

Attack on I

Survivors doubt Israel's claim of 1967 'mistake'

By BRYCE NELSON

Los Angeles Times

WASHINGTON — On land that sunny June 6, 1967, the Israelis and Arabs were locked in deadly combat in the Fifth War.

At sea, just 14 miles off Egypt's final coast, it was another story. Sixteen aboard the U.S. intelligence ship [illegible] killed on the deck, occasionally waving to Israeli reconnaissance pilots as they flew overhead. All was peaceful.

Suddenly, [illegible] technician Donald Blalock recalls, "World War III seemed to break out." Without warning, the Liberty — which flew a large U.S. flag and had other [illegible] markings — was hit repeatedly by rockets, cannon fire, napalm and a torpedo from Israeli jet fighters and torpedo boats.

The casualties among the crew of 294: 34 Americans dead and 171 wounded.

The Israelis said at the time, and still do 15 years later, that the attack was a case of mistaken identity. Blalock and other survivors say it was a calculated attack on a U.S. ship by a government that perhaps wanted to stop the United States from listening to its wartime radio communications.

The Israelis called off their attack before sinking the Liberty and apologized to the U.S. government within [illegible] hours. Later, the Israelis paid more than 20 million in damages to the wounded and to the families of the dead. While expressing [illegible]



The 1967 [illegible]

James M. Ennes Jr. Research Papers

Liberty still a mystery



attack by Israeli jets left a torpedo hole in the USS Liberty's hull at the waterline.

James M. Ennes, Jr. Research Papers

Metro

Trucks carrying explosive loads regularly violate city codes by using downtown expressways where hazardous materials are prohibited, and the city plans an enforcement crackdown, Dallas fire officials said Wednesday. Page 1-E

Molly Ivins: Life in the late 20th century presents us, it seems to me, with problems of ethics and manners that are new not in kind, but in form. Like cousins. Page 1-E

Sports

The Los Angeles Coliseum Commission, despite objections from the University of Southern California and UCLA, Wednesday approved a 10-year agreement for the Oakland Raiders to play at the Coliseum starting this summer, a move that all but guarantees that the NFL team will play in Los Angeles this season. The commission voted 7-1 to approve the contract, which calls for a 10-year lease and free, three-year renewal options. Page 1-F

Living



[illegible] attack.

But not the Liberty's survivors. About 80 of them met in Washington last month for their first reunion. They publicly expressed disbelief of the Israeli explanation and anger at what they termed participation by the U.S. government in covering up the facts.

"On June 8, 1967, we were attacked by an Israeli force bent on destroying us," Blalock told fellow survivors. "Since that time, we've been forgotten by our military; we've been forgotten by our government. We have never been known by the American people. We were saved only by the grace of God. We must never forget."

Adding to the survivors' bitterness is their knowledge that not only [illegible] U.S. planes fail to come to their [illegible], but aircraft dispatched from the [illegible] fleet were called back to their [illegible] before they reached the burning [illegible].

The survivors say they were told by U.S. Navy officers not to discuss what happened to the Liberty. Those who have left the Navy, however, say they now feel freer to [illegible].

"[illegible] we waited so long to talk is that we were scared," said former Petty Officer Glenn Bloxham.

As the Liberty's wounded were taken from U.S. ships the day after the attack, they were told to keep quiet, according to the survivors.

"Don't answer any questions," former Lt. James Ennes Jr. said he was told by a naval intelligence officer. "Don't talk to the press or anyone else until you're told it's all right."

Ennes didn't talk while he was in the Navy, but afterward he published a book, "Assault on the Liberty," which has sparked much of the renewed controversy over the attack. Ennes and other survivors are just as perturbed about treatise by the U.S. Navy as they are about the Israeli attack.

Nine minutes after the attack began, the

Liberty [illegible] Fleet, 400 [illegible] U.S. planes [illegible] ly, the Israe[illegible] after the [illegible] the Israelis [illegible] the Liberty [illegible] distance, [illegible] came [illegible] U.S. carriers [illegible] the Lib[illegible] [illegible] met two [illegible] next day.

"The who[illegible] gether," re[illegible] chief of U.S. [illegible] 1981, said re[illegible] this as a nov[illegible]

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The Israe[illegible] court of inq[illegible] been made [illegible] court of inqu[illegible] Navy actio[illegible] witnesses.

But based [illegible] statements, [illegible] ficials and [illegible] the Liberty [illegible] dispute.

[illegible] Israel [illegible] United State[illegible] [illegible] ship in [illegible] ing in the [illegible] ficials said it [illegible] [illegible] of [illegible] [illegible]

James M. Ennes, Jr. Research Papers

a message to the U.S. 6th
ies away near Crete, but no
ver came to its aid. Eventual-
torpedo boats that attacked
raids halted their fire, and
ter offered assistance, which
efused. The next offer of as-
h the Liberty also declined.
Soviet guided-missile de-
10 hours after the attack. No
ships were near the Liberty,
rty's sailors saw none until
U.S. destroyers at 7 a.m. the

damn thing doesn't tie to-
ved Adm. Arleigh Burke,
naval operations from 1955 to
ently. "If you were writing
, it would be unbelievable."
he top U.S. government fig-
during that period share the
Adm. Thomas Moorer, chief
tions from 1967 to 1970 and
of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.
ers he thought their ordeal
of an intentional attack.
re to the question of what
he Liberty have been buried
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ry, but its record has not
ublic. An American naval
y concerned itself with U.S.
s and heard no Israeli

n U.S. documents, Israeli
moirs of U.S. and Israeli of-
erviews, here are parts of
ry that are least open to

t not been warned by the
that the Liberty, which one
d "the most sophisticated
e world," would be operat-
ern Mediterranean. U.S. of-
not policy to inform other
s operating in international

✓ U.S. military authorities sent five messages to the Liberty telling it to move farther from the coast in the 18 hours before the attack. Because of mix-ups and a communications overload caused by the Arab-Israeli war, the Liberty never received the messages. A subcommittee of the House Armed Services Committee that investigated the incident called this "one of the most incredible failures of communications in the history of the Department of Defense."

✓ The unescorted Liberty was sailing slowly west in international waters about 14 nautical miles north of Egypt's Sinai coast on a clear day. There was no sea or air warfare going on in the area around the ship. Israeli land forces already had occupied the adjacent coastal region.

✓ The Liberty had no warning of an Israeli attack. Israeli aircraft did not ask the ship to identify itself, nor did the Israelis try by surface ship to ascertain the Liberty's nationality before beginning their aerial attack.

✓ The Liberty did not provoke an attack by firing one of its four 50-caliber machine guns, though it did fire at both the Israeli planes and torpedo boats after the attack began. The Israelis did not report any damage to their attacking craft or any casualties.

Perhaps the Israelis' most convincing argument is that they lacked sufficient motive to intentionally attack the Liberty. "Why should Israel deliberately attack an American ship?" said a statement issued by the Israeli Embassy in response to inquiries. "Friendship with the United States is the cornerstone of Israel's foreign policy . . . It would require an extremely strong provocation for Israel to risk making an enemy of the United States."

Ennes, who was deck officer on the mountain of the attack, maintains in his book that the Israelis wanted the Liberty out of the way so radio messages about their forthcoming attack on Syria in the Golan Heights would not be intercepted.

The Israeli Embassy called Ennes' thesis "very weak" and said: "The only fear that Israel had about the Golan attack was Soviet intervention . . . What the United States knew or did not know made little difference."

One possible and little-noticed explanation of the Israeli attack was proposed in a message sent by Cmdr. Ernest Carl Castle, then the naval attache at the U.S. Embassy in Israel, on the day after the incident. He suggested that the "erroneous attack" by the Israeli navy stemmed from a trigger-happy eagerness to gain some portion of the great victory being [illegible] by the Israeli army and air force and which navy was not sharing."

Castle, who flew over the Liberty in an Israeli helicopter after the attack, would not elaborate on the message in a recent conversation.

The Israelis argue that the attack was prompted by reports, which later turned out to be erroneous, that Israeli positions were being shelled from the sea. The Israelis say they thought the Liberty was the Egyptian supply ship El Kussir. U.S. naval experts, however, including Moorer, said no officer could have mistaken the much smaller, older Egyptian ship for the Liberty, a different type of ship with an elaborate antenna array.

Whatever the reasons, the Liberty survivors are bitter because no U.S. planes came to help them. As their ship was being strafed, crew members were crying: "Come in, jets! Now, Phantoms! Right now. Come in here and get those bastards before they get us," according to Ennes.

To former Secretary of State Dean Rusk, the bitterness of the Liberty's crew members is natural, but "what the fellows on the Liberty don't understand is that you can't let everything collapse because of this (attack). You pick up the pieces and get on with it. You don't go to war over this."

James M. Barnes Jr. Research Papers

Lessons from the 1967 Israeli attack on the USS Liberty

Questions still surround the event, which led the Navy to alter its listening techniques

By staff correspondents of
The Christian Science Monitor
Washington

A new chapter in naval warfare is being written as Britain and Argentina spar over control of the Falkland Islands. But this weekend, in Washington, a group of American veterans are commemorating one of the most distressful incidents in American naval history.

The incident is the sinking of the USS Liberty, which took place on June 8, 1967. The event, still somewhat shrouded in secrecy, raised the question of whether the state of Israel willfully sank a United States military vessel.

From the incident, US military planners learned some unpleasant lessons about the shortcomings of the American military communications system. They also learned the tragically unpredictable consequences of hostilities in the Middle East — specifically, how a conflict in that volatile region can quickly involve the United States.

Survivors of the US electronic intelligence-gathering ship — which Israel attacked with torpedoes, napalm, rockets, cannon, and machine-gun fire during the "six-day war" between Israel and Egypt — are determined to see that the lessons aren't lost on the US. Many of of those who were aboard the USS Liberty are expected at a Washington reunion this weekend (June 5-6). The gathering will doubtless rekindle the controversy that surrounded the sinking of the Liberty a decade and a half ago.

"There's been very little contact among the crew for almost 15 years," says reunion organizer James M. Ennes Jr.

Mr. Ennes, who was a lieutenant and cryptography specialist aboard the vessel, has been one of the chief critics of the US government's handling of the incident. He claimed in a 1979 book "Assault on the Liberty" that the attack on the ship was a premeditated act, rather than a case of mistaken identity — as the Israelis have claimed.

Israel maintains that its assault on the Gaza Strip on June 8, 1967, after 16 days' steaming from Abidjan, the capital of Ivory Coast and a port in the Rio Muni, Spain. She had been ordered to the eastern Mediterranean by the JCS to perform what Ennes has described as "a general listening mission."

Here, by monitoring the myriad radio signals, the ship was presumably able, initially at least, to track the course of the various fighting sectors. But the vessel also attracted the attention of Israel's military commanders.

Ennes recounts that Israel kept the Liberty under surveillance for six hours. Photo-

A former Navy pilot recalls the Liberty incident

By Brad Knickerbocker
Staff correspondent of
The Christian Science Monitor
Washington

In his military classic titled "On War," Prussian strategist Karl von Clausewitz uses the word friction to describe the elements of battle that separate the theoretical from the real.

"Everything is very simple in war, but the simplest thing is difficult," he wrote. "These difficulties accumulate and produce a friction which no man can imagine exactly who has not seen war."

Von Clausewitz included bad weather, fear, confusion, equipment breaking down, plans fouling up.

If anything seemed to characterize the USS Liberty episode, it was this friction generated by the heat of conflict. The men on the Liberty certainly experienced this. So did many of us aboard the USS Saratoga, one of the two US aircraft carriers in the Mediterranean when the Liberty was attacked.

I was a young naval aviator at the time, flying A-4 Skyhawks with the "Black Diamonds" of Attack Squadron 136. I was a relatively lowly spear-carrier in a drama whose principal players were admirals, diplomats, and heads of state. But the dominant feeling for an agonizingly long time after the attack began was one of confusion.

Aircraft were hurriedly [illegible] with bombs, rockets, and air-[illegible] cannon.



USS Liberty in the aftermath of [illegible] June 8, 1967, Israeli attack — US Navy photo

Flight-deck crewmen in brightly colored jerseys scrambled as the Saratoga turned into the wind, the catapults [illegible] for launch. The first flight of Skyhawks and F-4 Phantoms hurled off [illegible], rendezvoused, and headed for the [illegible].

Those of us [illegible] to the second launch began our [illegible] with reports from [illegible] intelligence officers. There [illegible] to be more questions than answers. Who was attacking the Liberty and why — had to be unanswered at this point.

Bristers used large maps of Egypt, pointing out surface-to-air missile sites, antiaircraft emplacements, port facilities, and other military locations. It was well known that the Soviet Union was providing Egypt with military advisers and massive amounts of hardware, including advanced MIG fighters.

The battle in the Mideast was between Israel and its Arab opponents, but this seemed to increase the likelihood of a superpower confrontation — especially if the Liberty had come under Arab attack and the Soviet Union was at least indirectly involved.

Within a couple of hours, however, the confusion was reduced considerably. Israel said it had mistakenly attacked the US ship. The first flight of aircraft from the Saratoga was recalled without engaging in combat, and my flight did not launch. My combat initiation would have to wait for Vietnam.

It's not for me to say how badly the Navy's communications system operated that day, or whether there was a subsequent "cover-up," as some Liberty survivors allege. But I did learn quickly and clearly how right von Clausewitz was about "friction."

[illegible] Liberty refused to identify itself to the Israeli torpedo boats. The Insight account suggested that this refusal to identify (through the use of light signals) "contributed to the torpedoing of the ship."

Recently, Ennes obtained, through a Freedom of Information Act request, a copy of a secret Navy cable that casts doubt on that assertion. In it, Navy Rear Admiral Isaac C. Kidd states that the commanding officer and signalman on the Liberty flatly deny they ever received a request for identification from the Israeli torpedo boats. They were adamant in denying that they ever refused to identify the Liberty. Rear Admiral Kidd concluded the cable with the observation, "I am convinced these men know what they are talking about."

Why would the Israelis launch a deliberate attack against a US vessel? Ennes, who was wounded in the attack, theorizes that Israel

Continued on next page

James M. Ennes, Jr. Research Papers



James M. Eames, Jr. Research Papers

...ued from preceding page

...rael the electronic intelligence-collection vessel because ...s in a position to detect the invasion of Syria. The Israeli ...vernment was acutely aware of President Johnson's warn... to Foreign Minister Abba Eban "that he would support ...el only in self-defense, not in attacks against her neigh...," he writes. "Could Israel put troops in Syria without ...ing seen as an aggressor? Probably not. Not with USS Li... so close to shore and presumably listening. Liberty ...d have to go." He suggests that the late Brig. Gen. David ...ar waited until the Liberty was "dispatched" before he ...ed the Golan Heights.

"That conclusion is, of course, debatable. But the Liberty ...ck, whatever the motivations, pointed up major ...ncerns in the US military communications system. ...ecently, several attempts were made to pull the Liberty ...of Navon's way before disaster struck. But the Pentagon ...apparently unable to communicate with the ship.

...priority message from the JCS ordering the vessel back ...ay from the Egyptian coast was delayed and misrouted, ...ording to a 1971 report of the House Armed Services In...stigating Subcommittee. Subsequent follow-up messages ...re also mishandled, according to the report.

...Moore himself acknowledges that one of the key foul-ups ...in communications breakdowns came on the Liberty itself.

...ship sent a message to the Sixth Fleet commander im...diately after the attack began, then followed up quickly ...h another message expressing greater urgency. Some...ere in the communications chain, this second message ...s given a higher priority and actually reached allied com...nd headquarters first. But by this time, the Liberty crew ...ually had destroyed its "authenticator" charts, which ...ans that it could not prove to fleet headquarters that the ...ssage in fact was coming from the Liberty. Errors ac...owledges that these crucial communications charts should ...e the last thing a ship's crew destroys before being sunk or ...ptured, and that because of this mistake air cover and ...her help from the fleet probably was delayed. "In the panic ...f a time like that," he says, "every possible goof up that ...ould have occurred, happened that day."

...Still, to this day former chief petty officer Stan White is ...ear about the recall order. "I've never been able to under...and why they didn't come down and fly over anyway and ...ow we still existed," he says. "If they were in the air, a ...ew over would have done a lot for morale."

...In the subcommittee's view, "The circumstances sur...ounding the misrouting, loss and delays of those messages ...onstitute one of the most incredible failures of communica...



Closeup of some of the damage to the Liberty's hull

...tions in the history of the Department of Defense."

Dean Rusk, who was secretary of state at the time of the Liberty attack, has written, "I hope that a great deal has been done to straighten such problems out . . . effective communication would probably have prevented the attack on the Liberty in the first place."

Today, the Navy seems acutely aware of the need to communicate with the fleet. American fleet. A sophisticated command, communications, and control system (dubbed, in military lingo, "C3I") is one of the big-ticket items in the Pentagon's planned multibillion dollar defense buildup.

Questions have also been raised about the Navy's response after the vessel was hit. Two US aircraft carriers – the Saratoga and the America – were some 400 miles away, but they were slow to dispatch planes to aid the Liberty, and some of the aircraft were recalled before reaching the American vessel. Some critics suggest that the recall was ordered to avoid a confrontation with Israeli fighter jets. Others attribute the slow and indecisive response to the general confusion that existed in the wake of the attack. (See accompanying story.)

The US Navy convened a court of inquiry to investigate the incident, which found that "there are no available indications that the attack was intended against a US ship." The board concluded that the incident had stemmed from "a mistake in identity." The US accepted Tel Aviv's apology.

But the board's findings are hotly disputed. "Our government repeated Israel's claim that the ship was mistaken for the Egyptian freighter El Quesir, not failed to note that El Quesir was a 40-year-old cattle boat, then moored at Alexandria, in poor shape, soon to be sold for scrap, probably incapable of leaving her pier, and a most improbable candidate for a Liberty look-alike," says Errors.

He insists that the US government covered up the truth about the incident to avoid harming relations with Israel. Others, including some former top US officials, share at least some of his doubts that the Israeli attack was an accident. In a 1978 letter to Errors, [illegible] Christian – President Johnson's former press secretary – wrote "there was considerable skepticism in the White House that the attack was accidental." In later years, Christian says, he became convinced an "accident of the magnitude was too much to swallow."

Even now, many American officials are tight-lipped about the incident. A former senior US intelligence official says curtly, "This is one I really don't want to handle. This is a loser in every direction. You get in a crunch between the Israelis and Congress and the rest of the world if you start commenting on this thing."

The incident undoubtedly provoked consternation at the highest levels of the US government, however. After the Liberty's plight was learned, a number of top officials were summoned to an emergency meeting in the White House Situation Room. One of them was Dean Rusk, the former US Secretary of State.

Last September, Mr. Rusk told Errors he believed the assault on the ship "was and remains a genuine outrage." He said he still did not know "at what level" in the Israeli government it was launched, "but I am convinced that it was not trigger-happy local commanders." Still, Mr. Rusk says there was serious doubt "whether that episode should have blown into a major confrontation between Israel and the United States."

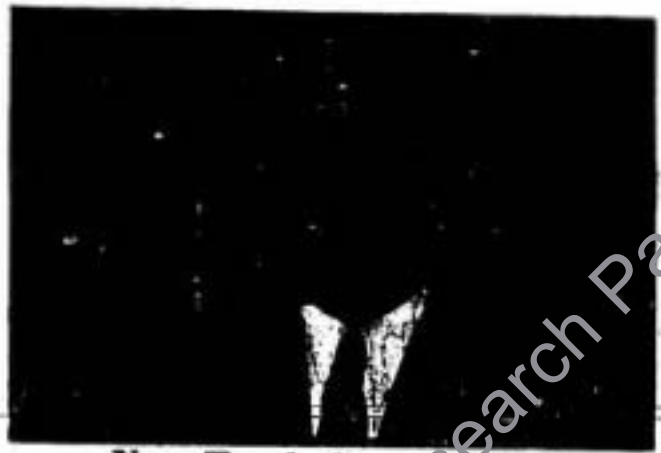
"Those who carry the ultimate responsibility . . . know that there are times when one has to pick up the pieces and not let everything fall apart because of an occurrence of this sort," says Mr. Rusk.

For many officials, the incident has faded into history. A Pentagon admiral, asked to comment on the Navy's version of the incident, said, "You're catching me cold. . . . The lessons we're learning have to do with the Falklands crisis, and we're not really focusing back on the Liberty."

Still, the Navy learned important lessons from the Liberty episode. The Navy no longer uses small, essentially unarmed communications ships to do its spying. That practice halted after the Pueblo was captured by the North Koreans in 1968. This work now is done by destroyers, like the one that has been keeping off the coast of El Salvador and Nicaragua for the past few months – ships with their own defenses.

Contributing to this report were former Monitor correspondent Stephen Webbe, Pentagon correspondent Brad Knickerbocker, and State Department correspondent Daniel Southerland. The report was written by Gary Thatcher, the Monitor's American news editor.

James M. Errors, Jr. Research Papers



Now Truth Can Be Told

Retired Adm. Thomas H. Moorer said that he has had his First Amendment rights restored because he retired from active duty in the Navy, and he can now tell the truth about the unprovoked Israeli attack on the "USS Liberty." Survivors of the attack met for the first time during the weekend of June 4-6. (See editorial on page 15, and story on pages 16-17.)

James M. Ennes, Jr. Research Papers

'Liberty' Survivors Want You

Fifteen years ago, Israeli sea and air forces attacked an unarmed American intelligence-gathering ship in international waters. On April 26, 1976, The SPOTLIGHT carried the first national coverage of the incident. During the weekend of June 4-6, 1982, the survivors of that attack met for the first time, to "let the truth be known." And the Establishment media is finally permitting a little of the truth to come out.

By The SPOTLIGHT Staff

"I was never willing to accept the Israeli explanation as a case of 'mistaken identity'," Adm. Thomas H. Moorer (retired) told survivors of the "USS Liberty" on June 5.

"The Israelis are the most proficient fighting men in the world today," Moorer said in the banquet speech. "They're fighting all the time; they just bombed Beirut yesterday." (The following day, Israel launched its ground invasion of Lebanon).

Moorer told 70 of the survivors, brought together 15 years after Israel attacked their ship, killing 34 crewmen and wounding 171 during the Six-Day War of 1967, why he now dared speak out:

"I am no longer trying to get promoted, appointed or elected—once again. I inherit the rights guaranteed in the First Amendment."

Every survivor interviewed said he believed the Israeli attack was deliberate and, this [illegible]

See Related Editorial On Page 15



Navy chaplain (left) conducts a prayer service at Arlington (Virginia) National Cemetery honoring the members of the "USS Liberty" who died in an unprovoked attack by Israeli sea and air forces. Looking on are survivors of the attack and members of the families of crewmen.

up came from Philip Geyelin, a Pulitzer Prize winning columnist who is now editor-in-residence at the John Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies. He is a former editor of the Washington "Post" editorial page and said he is still a contributor.

[illegible] mistake." He said: "We have a large part of the truth, but you know how little has been told. Fifteen years after the attack, we cannot get a credible" explanation.

He said he recently asked an Israeli official about the "Liberty," and "the Israeli government is still holding to the official line that it was an 'innocent mis-

James M. Ennes, Jr. Research Papers

o Know Truth About Attack

aid the "Liberty" attack was not an olated incident when you consider rael's "instinct to shoot first and ask estions later." He mentioned the bombing of the Iraqi nuclear reactor d earlier bombings of Beirut."

Geyelin freely used the term "conpiratorial cover-up" when referring to he "Liberty." He said the secretary of tate under presidents Kennedy and ohnson, Dean Rusk, who was in office t the time, sent him a letter in which "he concedes the attack was outrageous ut sees a policy question of blowing it p into a confrontation of U.S. and rael."

POST WAFFLES

Asked after the banquet if any of his iew on the attack had ever emerged in he Washington "Post" when he was ditorial page editor, Geyelin said it carried a lot on the 'Liberty'."

"All newspapers carried stories on the ttack itself," he was told. "But did the Post' ever raise the issue of whether it was deliberate?"

Geyelin said he didn't know, and that he would check the files and report. So far, there is no report.

On June 7, the "Post" carried a ensitive story about the meeting but ignored Geyelin's major speech. The story in the "Post" society section belabored such details as the fact that some surrivors now cut Christmas trees while



DON BLALOCK
...Outraged leader.

On June 9, a brief article by Geyelin was carried in which he hints that the attack was deliberate but does not officially admit it.

The fact that survivors' testimony, evidence, and the eye-witness accounts of the crewmen who survived all showed that the attack was deliberate was first exposed by The SPOTLIGHT in a comprehensive story on April 26, 1976.

Subsequently, Liberty Lobby, publisher of The SPOTLIGHT, was vilified by the "Post" and the rest of the

ment cover-up. But the leaders of this crew, so brave in combat, tremble before the prospect of being called "anti-Semitic." In a press conference on June 7, the leaders went to great lengths to disavow such charges in advance while at the same time, supporting practically points made by The SPOTLIGHT six years earlier, which produced the "anti-Semitic" smear.

'SPLIT LOYALTY'

James Ennes, whose book "Assault on the Liberty" echoed The SPOTLIGHT years later without noting the original source, said he "doubt(s) Congress would investigate." He recalled that former Sen. Adlai Stevenson (D-Ill.) said he "can't get support for an investigation because of very heavy pressure from an Israeli lobby taking its orders from Israel."

"They think, as American Jews, they have a blind loyalty to Israel," said Don Blalock, who helped organize the reunion. "If you have a split loyalty, are you trustworthy?"

Ennes then volunteered the observation that "fanatic anti-Semites want to use this to attack Israel, which I will not do."

Blalock, who presided over the press conference, praised a B'nai B'rith newsletter, which, he said, carried an account of the crew's view that the attack was



PHILIP GEYELIN
...His years too late.

(The report's conclusion that the attack was "mistaken identity" because the flag "was not extended" and "visibility was poor" directly contradicts the testimony, which was unanimous that "visibility was good" and "the flag was extended"—making the "report" a transparent whitewash.)

Now outraged by the report that the

James M. Ennes Jr. Research Papers

[illegible] White, was asked if there was a "consensus among the crew as to whether the attack was deliberate."

"It's unanimous—at least everybody I've talked to," White responded.

Moorer recited the now widely known proofs why the attack was deliberate: the extended and large U.S. flag, the distinctive markings and shape of the "Liberty" and the fact that it was a clear day. Visibility was good, and Israeli planes had spent a long period observing the ship before disappearing, then returning to attack.

"There must be a motive that will some day be known," Moorer said.

All the crewmen interviewed by The SPOTLIGHT speculated that the Israelis were afraid the intelligence ship would report the massing of troops on the Syrian border and Washington would bring pressure on Tel Aviv to abandon its planned invasion of Syria. Israel is the strongest military power in the Mideast because of billions of American tax dollars, but, under the agreements, the weapons are to be used for "defensive purposes" only. Israel launched the 1967 war with a surprise attack that obliterated the Egyptian air force on the ground. It then conquered the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

Today, Israel is building settlements in these territories and occupying them brutally.

'CONSPIRACY AND DECEPTION'

Moorer assailed the "internal effort by the U.S. government to make sure the public never heard about the 'Liberty'."

Five crewmen huddled in a group agreed that all of them were under orders forbidding them to speculate on whether the attack was deliberate. At the [illegible] sity" and a "tragic accident." That's still the official line.

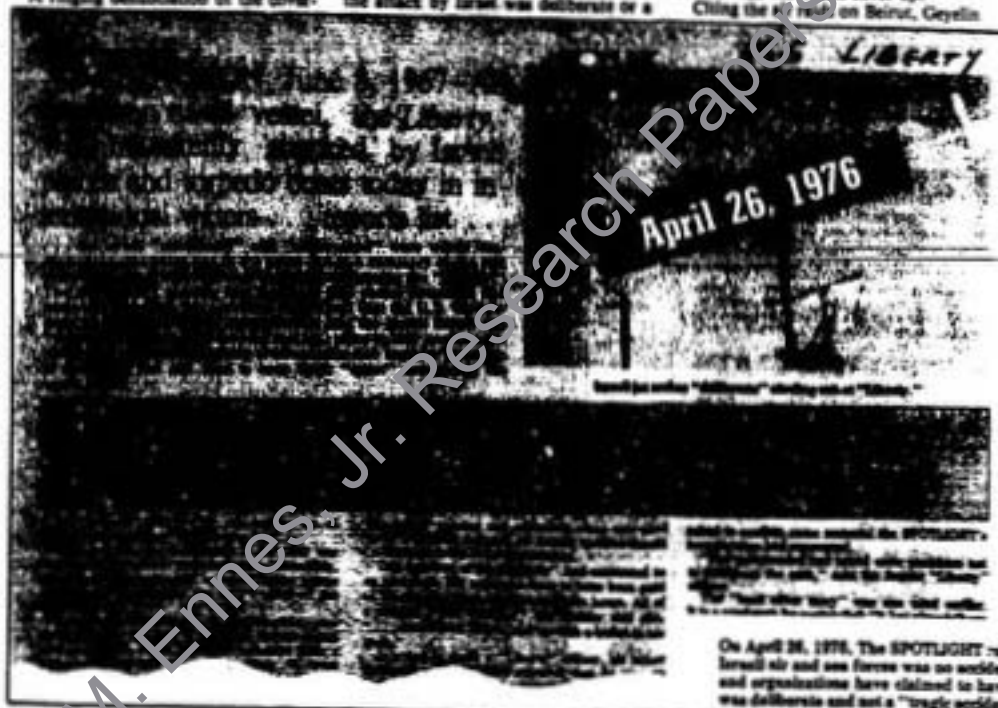
"You didn't have a chance, but you survived because you have a heart," Moorer told the crewmen. "I am humble in your presence."

A ringing denunciation of the cover- [illegible] portant "missing ingredient is the truth. When do governments tell it?" he asked rhetorically. "When and why do they not?"

"It's no question of 'whether'," Geyelin said on the issue of "whether the attack by Israel was deliberate or a [illegible] official line that it was an 'innocent mistake.'

"Why does the U.S. not admit that Israel's explanation is simply not believable? Our government effectively signed on to the Israeli line. The American cover-up is in many ways more effective than the Israeli cover-up."

Citing the [illegible] on Beirut, Geyelin



On April 26, 1976, The SPOTLIGHT reported Israeli air and sea forces was no accident. Be[illegible] and organizations have claimed to have bee[illegible] was deliberate and not a "tragic accident."

James M. Ennes, Jr. Research Papers

words deep in the story:

"To the men of the 'Liberty' . . . the attack was unprovoked and deliberate." Then, chunks of type later, the story closed with the Israeli navy's official conclusion that the attack was an "innocent error . . . incidents of this kind do occur in wartime."

[illegible] contributed to the Mutual Broadcasting System and Amway Products breaking its contract with Liberty Lobby.

Months and years later, magazine articles and two books appeared.

The "Liberty" crew was angry, to the last survivor present, about the govern-

(who read the book)," Bruce chimed in. "They all said, in effect, 'I'm a Zionist, and this is hard to believe.'

"I told them to read the board (Navy board of inquiry) report, and, in each case, these three Jews agreed," after reading the report, that the attack was deliberate.

[illegible] Jews told him that the assault on the [illegible] U.S. hurt "Judeo-Semites and anti-Semites and hurts Israel," he said.

The SPOTLIGHT was never "officially" mentioned during the four-day event. However, individual crewmen greeted The SPOTLIGHT staff warmly, and several [illegible] the populist newspaper for carrying a story about the upcoming [illegible]. They explained that they would have known about it otherwise.

During the sessions, they organized themselves into the "USS Liberty" Veterans Association. Since only 72 of the 253 survivors of the 287 men aboard the "Liberty" attended they're trying to find the others. Survivors are asked to call Blalock at (301) 725-2756.

They plan to meet every three years. Two major goals were proclaimed:

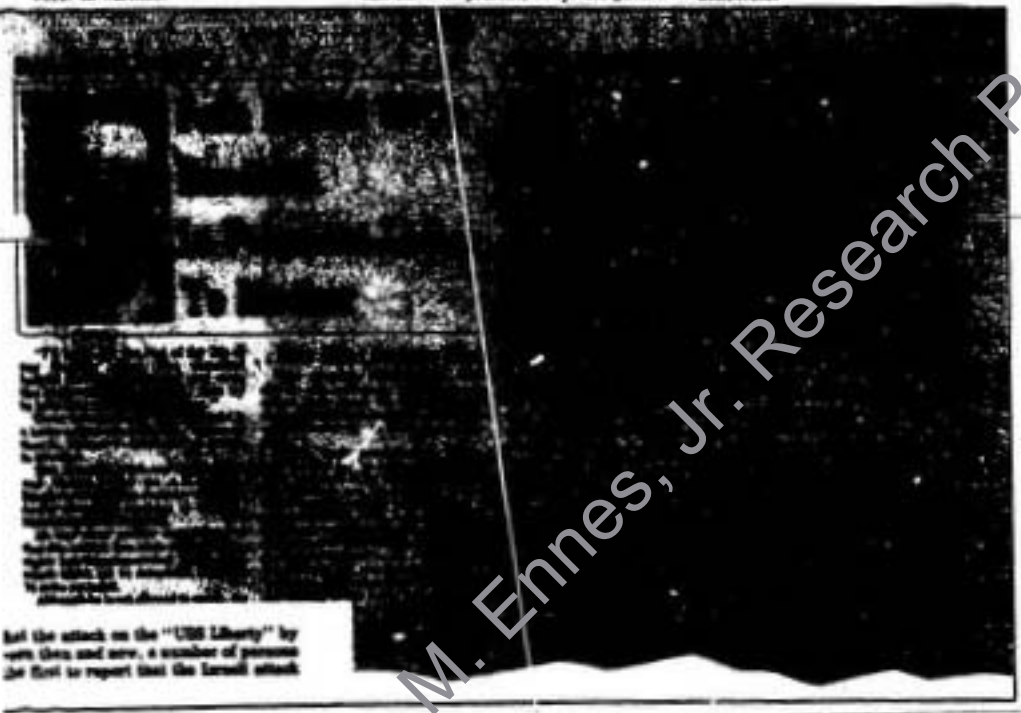
- By forcing the public to confront the issue of Israel's deliberate attack, to "reduce the likelihood of something like this happening to U.S. servicemen in the future."
- To obtain "proper recognition" for the "Liberty's" heroes. The crew is especially outraged that the Congressional Medal of Honor—the nation's highest—was conferred on "Liberty" Capt. William G. McGonagle "outside the White House and not by the president." Such a procedure is contrary to custom.

ATTACK INTENTIONAL, SAY CREW

Cmdr. Lloyd Bucher (retired) told the Sunday brunch gathering that, had the U.S. taken strong action against Israel for attacking the "Liberty," his "USS Pueblo" may not have been seized by the North Koreans—with him and his crew held and tortured for a year.

In both incidents, Bucher said, U.S.

(Set TRUTH, Page 20)



[illegible] the attack on the "USS Liberty" by [illegible] (Jew and new, a number of persons [illegible] the first to report that the Israeli attack

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Truth

(Continued From Page 17)

carrier-based planes could have come to the aid of the distressed ships. None did. He recalled that his crew resisted for seven hours when help was 15 minutes away.

Bucher stopped short of flatly declaring the Israeli attack deliberate. But Blalock said at the Monday press conference that "all speakers" agreed that it was.

Crewmen were of one mind in their judgment. "I don't think it was a mistake," said Bob Schnell. "I think it was deliberate," agreed Ron Grantski. "They were afraid we had information they didn't want us to release; they tried to sink us." Carl Lampkin said "absolutely not" to the "accident" claim.

"Definitely deliberate," maintained Moe Shafer. "They were trying to mislead our government into believing it was attacked by Arabs; they tried to sink us." Lloyd Painter said, "I'll go with that, too." Lewis Eckhart said, "I don't see how it could have been an accident, really."

Stan White, later elected president of the new organization, pronounced the survivors' views on the issue as "unanimous."

Lampkin said that when he discussed the incident on a call-in radio show, other callers said he was "anti-Semitic." But he said, "The issue will not die."

WANNED TO KEEP MUM

The cover-up began immediately after the attack, when reporters were pulled away from the wounded taken aboard the "America," said Blalock. The wounded were warned to never discuss the matter again.

"The attack was planned, coordinated and carried out" by Israel deliberately, said Blalock. "Our own government covered up," and the "biggest victim is U.S. honor," he said.

Blalock said a "powerful lobby group of American-Israeli organizations" that "have a rule in Mideast policymaking" forced the cover-up to avoid "diplomatic and political embarrassment. The truth was trampled. Somewhere, there was great pressure."

Blalock said a reporter for a major newspaper—he didn't name the paper—had planned to write about the attack on the "Liberty." But the story was killed, and, Blalock said, the reporter explained by telephone that "the higher-ups said the Israeli lobby would be all over his case if he carried information that was not positive.

"Somebody does not want Israel pinned down in a blatant lie," said Blalock. "This lie typifies foreign policy."

WEAKNESS LED TO NEW [illegible]

Blalock noted that the "Pueblo" was seized after the "Liberty" was attacked and the U.S. failed to act; later, North Korea shot down a U.S. plane, killing 29, and aned a couple of U.S. soldiers to death in the "demilitarized zone." This theme had been followed by all speakers: that U.S. inaction invited more atrocities.

Referring to the Middle East at the Monday session, after the invasion of Lebanon was under way, Blalock said America allows the Israelis "to do what they want to . . . building cities and towns in occupied territory."

Israel had long claimed that it was aware that the "Liberty" was an American ship only after "rescuing" crewmen from a lifeboat. "That's a lie," said White. "That lifeboat was shot to hell."

KOW TOW TO ZION

Blalock recalled that only months after the "Liberty" incident, in November, 1967, Egypt sunk an Israeli ship that was found in the Egyptian harbor.

"Even later President Gerald Ford) offered to replace the Israeli ship and offered U.S. sailors to man it," Blalock said.

While most agreed that the attempt to sink the "Liberty" was to prevent Washington from learning about Israel massing troops on the Syrian border, a note of gallows humor entered the otherwise grim session when Ennes said that there was a "CIA agent in the Israeli war room at the time." But Israel, of course, was unaware of this.

"INQUIRY" WAS RIGGED

The main ridicule was heaped upon the Navy board of inquiry report first exposed by The SPOTLIGHT in its April, 1978 [illegible] article. The conclusions flatly contradicted everything the witnesses said: "Flag extended, clear visibility" testimony produced the conclusion that the flag was drooping and visibility was poor.

This came even after the admiral running the probe privately interviewed and [illegible] the witnesses, then chose only some of them, in an effort to get the testimony he wanted. First, the crewmen were told to say nothing until a report was made. Then, they were told they were "free to speak" but could use only the actual words in the report.

"If you go beyond that you will be punished. The time limit will never run out; we will track you down," Ennes quoted the Navy brass as threatening. Many, he said, were forced to sign sworn promises of silence.

When someone asked why 15 years had passed before the crew itself raised these issues, Clint Bloxham asked permission to respond:

"We were scared. We were dispersed. Only nine of the crew remained on the 'Liberty,' and we were sent to Panama, Germany, Havana, Alaska and around the world." The men were afraid of having their "security clearance jerked," he said.

"When we saw things appearing in the newspapers, we learned what we can do," Blalock concluded.

("Pearl Harbor II," a 230-page hardback book by Jim Taylor, has the complete story on the deliberate attempt to sink the "USS Liberty." $11.95 from Liberty Library, 300 Independence Ave., S.E., Washington, D.C. 20003.)

James M. Ennes Jr. Research Papers

Unprovoked attacks

Houston Post 10 June 82

Israel's invasion of Lebanon came at an ironic time

By Georgie Anne Geyer

It was one of those eerie quirks of history that the first reunion of the crew of the U.S.S. Liberty, victims of an unprovoked 1967 Israeli attack on their ship, was held on the very eve of the newest Israeli invasion in the Middle East.

Able in retirement to speak out for the first time about the attack by supposedly "friendly forces," retired Adm. Thomas H. Moorer, former chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, said clearly, "I have never been willing to accept the Israeli explanation as a case of mistaken identity."

The Israeli attack killed 34 Americans and was most probably designed to destroy the whole ship and crew in the Mediterranean. In a ballroom of the Washington Hotel, Moorer told several hundred still-somber and still-angry survivors and their wives: "There was a deliberate effort by the U.S. government that no one hear about the U.S.S. Liberty. We were involved with the Vietnam War, and we didn't need more problems."

As he paused, many in the audience who had felt forgotten and humiliated for so long were in tears, most of them certain that the Israelis deliberately attacked their American "allies" in order to stop the Americans from monitoring — and thus stopping — the ensuing Israeli attacks on Syria.

Within hours, across those same seas a new Israeli attack had started. The attack on Lebanon followed days of brutal bombings in which at least 300 died in unsensible retaliation for the terrible shooting of the Israeli ambassador in London. (Three hundred eyes for an eye?)

In both the attack on the Liberty and the attack on Lebanon, the underlying situations were much the same: 1) The reasons given were not even remotely the real ones, and 2) the United States is again acquiescing supinely in the destruction of its own policy and its own diplomatic interests.

Let us be blunt. Old Israeli terrorists Prime Minister Menachem Begin and Defense Minister Ariel Sharon, the latter a fanatic Israeli expansionist, have been spoiling to take southern Lebanon for months. Highly placed American officials last week told me wearily that the Reagan "policy" had been successful because we had stopped planned invasions three times this winter.

Each time, we paid a price — more airplanes, more shuttle diplomacy, more aid — and each time the Israelis better only put off the invasion. Like the raid on the Iraqi nuclear plant that disrupted last year's Ottawa summit conversation, when it finally came, it turned out in total contempt of President Reagan's European trip.

But the most important question is whether there was any break in the 11-month-old cease-fire to justify an Israeli invasion of already shattered Lebanon at this time. There is no question that there was not.

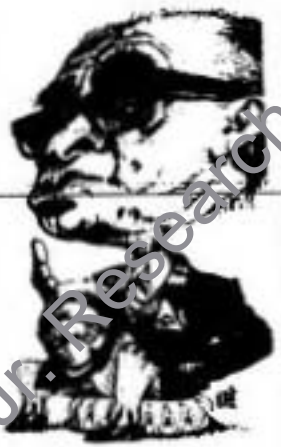
A State Department official close to Haig told me only last week that the Palestine Liberation Organization had not once broken the American-arranged cease-fire. Indeed, before last week, Israeli planes bombed Lebanon on April 21 and on May 9, but there was no PLO response at all until the massive Israeli bombing of last week.

Israel's excuse for the invasion, the [illegible] assassination attempt in London, is so transparent and insolent to be taken seriously.

What does all this point to? It points to the dark confusion in the Middle East that can be instigated or used by anyone — and there is always something to use. This is not in any way to diminish the tragedy of the London shooting, but only to say that Begin and Sharon have been searching for months for a reason to take much of south Lebanon as part of Sharon's plan for expansion in the area.

But the blame for this cynically calculated and totally unnecessary carnage, with hundreds dead and less security than ever for Israel, lies not only with Begin and Sharon. In his new book, *The Past Has Another Pattern*, American statesman George Ball writes that the United States, with similarly weak actions, made the Shah of Iran what he became because "we nurtured his love for grandiose geopolitical schemes and we supplied him the hardware to indulge his fantasies."

Menachem Begin is creating a doomed Israel that is not the old beleaguered Warsaw ghetto but a new fortified ghetto striking out at everyone. But as long as the United States does nothing to restrain Begin's grandiose and cruel schemes, it as well as Israel will pay.



Menachem Begin

James M. Emmes, Jr. Research Papers

NATION

Marker will be changed for victims of 'tragic' error

By William J. Small
United Press International

WASHINGTON — Six men, including one who may deserve a hero's honors, are buried in a mass grave in Arlington National Cemetery with a headstone that doesn't even indicate how they died.

But according to a survivor of the attack that killed the men during the Six-Day War in the Middle East, that will be changed.

The victims include one Marine and five Navy crewmembers of the intelligence ship USS Liberty, attacked by Israeli warplanes and torpedoed in the Mediterranean June 8, 1967.

Although the attack on the Liberty is an issue of continuing controversy, Israel maintains the incident was a tragic mistake.

The attack killed 34 [illegible] wounded 171. Of the [illegible] killed, 25 died when the torpedo struck the ship, recalls Blalock, of Savage, [illegible] a civilian assigned to the Liberty and one of a handful of men in the compartment where the torpedo struck who survived.

There are nine sites where Liberty crewmembers are buried in Arlington, one of which is the mass grave, Blalock, 39, said the headstone for the six men has read "Died in the Eastern Mediterranean" for the past 15 years.

But that was not good enough for retired Navy Cmdr. Xavier Benito Tarsill, of Chevy Chase, Md., Blalock said, and through his assistance officials have agreed to change the marker this [illegible].

Tarsill, now in his 80s, was "affronted" by the vague inscription, Blalock said, and "through his perseverance and dedication, that headstone is going to be changed to read, 'Killed on board the USS Liberty, June 8, 1967'.

"They're going to get some recognition. They're deserving of a great deal more. But it's starting."

Blalock says there may also be special recognition coming for the Marine buried in that mass grave, Sgt. Jack L. Raper, one of two Marines killed in the attack.

"The first I learned of the attack was seeing (Raper) bandaging [illegible] of the sailors after a [illegible] armor-piercing slug had [illegible] through his leg," Blalock said.

"After the torpedo attack . . . I was told that Jack had been seen going back down into that flooded space a couple of times, looking for those who were trapped, still alive, bodies, whatever. And the last time, he didn't come back up."

In preparing for a reunion next weekend of survivors of the attack on the Liberty, Blalock found another crew member who had seen Raper's actions and later found Raper's body in the compartment.

He has asked in a newsletter for Liberty crewmembers for any eyewitnesses to Raper's heroism.

Blalock contacted the Marine Corps and told them what he'd found.

"We need one more eyewitness to ascertain that Jack did, in fact, go down a couple of times and did, in fact, die trying to help others," Blalock said.

"This reunion is the first time we're getting together in 15 years," he said. "Perhaps Jack Raper is going to get the recognition that he deserves."

NATION

■ A newspaper contends many CIA-trained Cuban exiles have turned to drug smuggling.

■ Crayfish rustling is going downright serious in [illegible]

The report is continued on B-6.

James W. Ernest Jr. Research Papers

MONSON CHRONICLE 8 JUNE 82

Survivors of spy ship Liberty ask details of Israeli attack

WASHINGTON (UPI) — Survivors of Israel's attack on the U.S. spy ship Liberty during the 1967 Middle East war have urged the government to disclose more information about the strike that killed 29 crew members.

Nearly 30 survivors of the June 8, 1967, attack adjourned their first reunion with a statement that making public more details would "help reduce the likelihood of something like this happening to U.S. servicemen in the future."

The survivors met with the commander of the USS Pueblo, a spy ship seized by the North Koreans, also in 1967.

Retired Cmdr. Lloyd Bucher, skipper of the Pueblo, seized by a North Korean naval force just months after the USS Liberty attack, told the group "accurate information" was withheld from the public about the North Korean attack.

"The administration, the State Department and military establishment, namely (Defense) Secretary Robert McNamara, effectively kept accurate information and the degree of destruction that occurred from reaching the American people," said Bucher, who was held prisoner with his crew by the North Koreans for a year.

He said the government's actions on the Liberty were an effort "to avoid open argument with a close ally."

Israel said it thought the Liberty was an Egyptian ship and apologized for the torpedo and rocket attack that also wounded 171 Americans.

The ship, which carried 294 men, was positioned in international waters off the coast of the northern Sinai coast before the outbreak of the war. Its attack mission was to evacuate Americans in Israel and Egypt, although the ship was actually surveillance in the two countries.

The Israelis fired rockets, dropped napalm and fired torpedoes at the ship, which was flying the U.S. flag. Later Israel paid $6.7 million to the wounded and the families of those killed, and $6 million for the loss of the ship, which was later scrapped.

"Though the Liberty's surveillance mission was sensitive, we feel that now the United States government can come forth with appropriate recognition for the captain and others," said Don Blalock, of Savage, Md.

Blalock, 38, was elected vice president of the survivors group, the USS Liberty Veterans Association.

June 10, 1982

THE WASHINGTON POST

[redacted]

On June 4, 1967, Israel attacked the USS Liberty on patrol in the Mediterranean, and 34 men were lost. The shroud of secrecy surrounding the incident has slowly been lifting. Now, 15 years after the event, a group of survivors met in Washington, and what started out as a social gathering has turned political.

The men, who contend that the attack on the Liberty was deliberate rather than accidental, formed the USS Liberty Veterans Association. They say their goals are to find other members of the crew with whom they have lost contact; gain recognition for the sacrifices and deeds of the crew; and obtain a Navy Judge advocate review of the testimony from the original inquiry into the incident.

Most important to the group is that the ship's commander, retired Capt. William L. McGonagle, who was awarded the Medal of Honor for his actions during the incident, receive recognition commensurate with the award. He was presented the medal during ceremonies the groupkeys were "bushed-up."

—Michael Goldfarb

Friday, June 4, 1982 MILWAUKEE SENTINEL Part 1, Page 9

Survivors of '67 attack gather

Washington, D.C. — [illegible] Crew members of the USS Liberty gathered for their first [illegible] to compare [illegible] the Israeli attack on the [illegible] at the outbreak of the [illegible] Mideast War.

"There is a tremendous amount of anger [illegible] at both the 6th Fleet and the Israelis," said Don Blalock, a former officer and one of the organizers of the private three-day session, which is expected to draw more than 100 former crew members.

On June 8, 1967, the Liberty, an electronic intelligence ship, was attacked by Israeli jets and torpedo boats as it cruised in international waters 15 miles north of the Sinai Peninsula. Thirty-four crew members were killed and another 171 were wounded during the 2[illegible] [illegible]

Israel later apologized, saying the attack was a mistake. A Navy court of inquiry later concluded that there was insufficient information to make a judgment about the reasons for the attack.

But Blalock and other officers do not buy the Israeli explanation.

James Ennes, a former officer who wrote a book about the incident, [illegible] he discovered information that showed the Israelis knew it was a U.S. ship.

"There is no question that they knew who we were," Ennes said. He suggested that Israel "was trying to protect the secrecy of its plans to take the Golan Heights."

[illegible]

[illegible] the Liberty, Israel [illegible] attacked Syrian positions on the Golan Heights.

[illegible] was critical [illegible] US 6th Fleet, which was cruising off Crete about 400 miles away. The Liberty, which essentially was unarmed, had been promised air cover "in 15 minutes if we needed it," Ennes said.

But one group of pilots [illegible] by the carrier USS Saratoga was recalled, because US officials were [illegible] [illegible] Liberty's [illegible] for help. Ennes [illegible] had been [illegible] ship's crew as part [illegible]

[illegible]

James M. Ennes, Jr. Research Papers

SEATTLE POST-INTELLIGENCER
8 JULY 1982

What really happened to the Liberty?


Shelby Scates

LAKE HARBOR, Wash. — Capt. John Emerson wears four rows of ribbons, steel-rimmed glasses and starched Navy browns. Straight-backed and square-jawed, he looks like he stepped out of "Steve Canyon." He talks deliberately so when he says, "It's been the shortest 40 years of my life" you know it's more than a joke.

James M. Ennes Jr. now wears sport shirts instead of starched whites and slings a typewriter for a living instead of standing deck watch. He, too, is a man of determination which he leaves with humor.

Emerson and Ennes are Navy men, professionals in a profession we civilians, the beneficiaries of the most liberal and rewarding civilization in history, too often discount, if not dishonor.

While we've gotten rich or chased the American dream to our individual fancies, they've guarded the place, sometimes at great risk. They are good men doing a job we tend to undervalue.

Beyond this, some striking career differences.

Capt. Emerson, commander of the reserve forces flying P3s and A3Ds from this astonishing contradiction of a Naval station, is about to retire after 40 years of regular service. He is, in fact, the last of the "enlisted" pilots in the USN, although he and the others received commissions in the early 1960s when the planes started pack[illegible] nuclear bombs.

He plans to make his home here on Whidbey Island near this beautiful, but nuclear armed, war base by Admiralty Inlet. For Emerson, the Navy was its own reward. It provided challenge and opportunity to which he responded and in which he advanced. At the end, he is a contented man.

On the record

Jim Ennes retired years ago, [illegible] before his full time was [illegible]. He [illegible] and writes now in a pleasant [illegible] near Woodinville. Much of what he writes about is what happened to him and his shipmates [illegible] the USS Liberty, a "spy" [illegible] miles off the coast of the [illegible] in June 1967.

Ennes is [illegible]. Far from it. But he does not believe that the men of the Liberty got their just desserts from the Navy, the U.S. government or the people. He's determination is to set the record straight.

If Capt. Emerson winds down his career in quiet glory, Lt. Cmdr. Ennes finished his in a rocket burst. Literally. He survived with 22 rocket fragments scattered through his body after an attack on the electronic [illegible] vessel by Israeli jets at the peak of the Six Day War in June 19[illegible].

It was a sad, regretful episode during a war the Israelis were [illegible] for their very survival against three separate Arab armies. Their brilliant victory gave promise, so far unfulfilled, of peace and order in the Mideast.

They say it is [illegible] the first casualty of war. It [illegible] in this case. Of the Liberty's [illegible] men, 34 were killed, 171 [illegible] a prolonged attack by jets and torpedo boats. Israel apologized [illegible] it had mistaken the Liberty [illegible] an Egyptian ship in the rush of fighting.

It's now known the attack was not a mistake. It was deliberate. Doubters may consult Ennes' meticulously documented history of the attack and its aftermath, "Assault on the Liberty." The evidence of the assault's scope and intensity is overwhelming.

Truth buried

But it will not be officially acknowledged by our government. The Johnson administration wanted the Liberty's crew, ordering them to stay silent about details contradicting Israel's claim of an innocent mistake.

The truth of the Liberty was officially buried. Six of the Liberty's dead, buried in Arlington National Cemetery, were placed under a government gravestone which read "Died in the Eastern Mediterranean." Not a hint of the cause or their duty.

Survivors held a 15th anniversary reunion last month in Washington. If Ennes is any indication, they feel no enmity towards Israel for the attack. It was a misfortune of war. But they do feel strongly about their government's coverup. They want to take the lid off.

They're organized to this end. They want Congress to reopen the case and fix the record in accordance with the facts. So far they've got a change on that gravestone in Arlington Cemetery. It now reads "Killed on the USS Liberty." Ennes talks about this as if speaking of a triumph.

I'm thinking about the men of the Liberty while Capt. Emerson reviews his career and the Navy's mission in this troubled world, passing for the screams of All jets taking flight from a runway behind his office.

"We've got a three-ocean mission with a 1½-sized fleet," he says. "It's exciting. I'm sorry I won't be a part of it. It's a good Navy. It had good people in the old days. It has good people today. It's like our country. I was fortunate. I was always at the right place at the right time."

He will not criticize. When asked his thoughts on the spreading concern about nuclear arms control, he is silent and thoughtful before declining to comment.

Like Jim Ennes, who was not so fortunate, Capt. Emerson is doing his duty as he sees it.

☐ *Scates is a P-I staff columnist.*

James M. Ennes Jr. Research Papers

Liberty attack: a case of mistake

Los Angeles Times
Washington Post News Service

WASHINGTON — On land that sunny June 8, 1967, the Israelis and Arabs were locked in deadly combat in the Six-Day War.

At sea, just 14 miles off Egypt's final coast, it was another story. There, seamen aboard the U.S. intelligence ship Liberty toiled on the deck, occasionally waving to Israeli reconnaissance pilots as they flew overhead. All was peaceful.

Then, suddenly, electronics technician Donald L. Blalock recalls, "World War III seemed to break out." Without warning, the Liberty — which flew a large U.S. American flag and had other clear markings — was hit repeatedly by rockets, cannon fire, napalm and a torpedo from Israeli jet fighters and torpedo boats.

The final casualty count: 34 Americans killed and 171 wounded, out of a crew of 294.

The Israelis said at the time, and still do 15 years later, that the attack was a case of mistaken identity. Blalock and many of the Liberty's other survivors say it was a calculated attack on a U.S. ship by a government that perhaps wanted to stop the United States from listening to its wartime radio communications.

The Israelis called off their attack before sinking the Liberty and apologized to the U.S. government within 11 hours. Later, the Israelis paid more than $6 million in damages to the wounded and to the families of the dead. While expressing some incredulity, U.S. officials have accepted the Israeli explanation of the attack.

But not the Liberty's survivors. About 80 of them met in Washington this month for their first reunion. And they publicly expressed their disbelief of the Israeli explanation and their anger at what they termed participation by the U.S. government in a cover-up of the facts.

"On June 8, 1967, we were attacked by an Israeli force bent on destroying us," Blalock told his fellow survivors. "Since that time, we've been forgotten by our military, we've been forgotten by our government. We have never been known by the American people. We were saved only by the grace of God. We must never forget."

Adding to their bitterness is their knowledge that not only did U.S. planes fail to come to their rescue, aircraft dispatched from the carrier were actually called back to the carrier before they reached the stricken vessel.

The survivors say they were told by U.S. Navy officials not to discuss what happened to the Liberty. Those who have left the Navy, however, say they now feel freer to talk.

"The reason we waited so long to [illegible] was we were scared," said former Petty Officer Glenn L. Bleeham.

As the Liberty's wounded were taken onto U.S. ships on the day after the attack, they were told to keep quiet, according to the survivors.

"Don't answer any questions," former Lt. James M. Ennes Jr. said he was told by a naval intelligence officer who hunched over his stretcher after he was taken onto the carrier America. "Don't talk to the press or anyone else until you're told it's all right."

Ennes didn't talk while he was in the Navy, but afterward he published a book, "Assault on the Liberty," which has sparked much of the renewed controversy over the attack. Ennes and his fellow survivors were also perturbed about [illegible] U.S. Navy as they are about the Israeli attack.

Nine minutes after the attack began, the Liberty sent a message to the U.S. 6th Fleet, operating 400 miles away off Crete, but no U.S. planes ever came to its aid. Eventually, the Israeli torpedo boats that attacked after the jet raids halted their fire, and the Israelis later offered assistance, which the Liberty refused. The next offer of assistance, which the Liberty also declined, came from a Soviet guided-missile destroyer about 10 hours after the attack. No U.S. surface ships were near the Liberty, and the Liberty's sailors saw none until they met up with two U.S. destroyers at 7 a.m. the next day.

"The whole damn thing doesn't tie together," Adm. Arleigh A. Burke, chief of U.S. naval operations from 1955 to 1961 and now retired, said recently. "If you were writing this as a novel, it would be unbelievable."

Several [illegible] U.S. government figures [illegible] during that period also [illegible] crew's doubts. Adm. Thomas H. Moorer, chief of naval operations from 1967 to 1970 and later chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, told the survivors that he thought their ordeal was the result of an intentional attack on a U.S. ship.

Dean Rusk, secretary of state at the time of the attack, said in a recent interview, "Sure the attack could have been deliberate. They (the Israelis) had sightings beforehand of the ship."

Rusk stopped short of labeling the attack a deliberate assault, but he said: "It was an outrageous affair. I don't buy the Israeli explanation. We were never able to get to the heart of what happened."

Survivors of the Liberty allege that the cover-up of their experience means that the nation will be more likely to blunder into similar incidents in the future.

Lloyd M. Bucher, captain of the Pueblo, the intelligence ship that was captured by the North Koreans on Jan. 23, 1968, told the Liberty survivors at the reunion here that his ship would have been less likely to have gotten into trouble if he had been adequately informed of what had happened seven months earlier to the Liberty.

Clear-cut answers to the question of what happened to the Liberty have been buried in layers of military classification.

The Israeli government convened a court of inquiry, but its record has not

James M. Ennes, Jr. Research Papers

n identity or not

been made public. A U.S. naval court of inquiry concerned itself with U.S. Navy actions and heard no Israeli witnesses. The U.S. Navy and the Israeli Embassy here recently issued formal statements in response to inquiries from the Los Angeles Times about the incident, but neither replied to specific questions.

But based on U.S. documents, Israeli statements, memoirs of U.S. and Israeli officials and interviews, here are parts of the Liberty story that are least open to dispute.

•Israel had not been warned by the United States that the Liberty, which one crewman called "the most sophisticated spy ship in the world," would be operating in the eastern Mediterranean. American officials said it is not U.S. policy to inform other nations of ships operating in international waters.

•U.S. military authorities sent five messages to the Liberty telling it to move further from the coast in the 12 hours before the attack. Because of mix-ups and a communications overload caused by the Arab-Israeli war, the Liberty never received the messages. A subcommittee of the House Armed Services Committee that investigated the incident called it a "one of the most incredible failures of communications in the history of the Department of Defense."

•The unescorted Liberty was sailing slowly west in international waters about 14 nautical miles north of Egypt's Sinai coast on a clear day. There was no sea or air warfare going on in the area around the ship. Israeli land forces already had occupied the adjacent coastal region.

•The Liberty had no warning of an Israeli attack. Israeli aircraft did not ask the ship to identify itself, nor did the Israelis try by surface ship to ascertain the Liberty's nationality before beginning their aerial attack at 2 p.m. local time.

•The Liberty did not provoke an attack by firing one of its four 50-caliber machine guns, although it did fire at both the Israeli planes and torpedo boats after the attack began. The Israelis did not report any damage to their attacking craft or any casualties among their military personnel.

•The attack consisted of strafing runs by Israeli jets and, later, an attack by three torpedo boats. The Israelis broke off the attack after hitting the Liberty with rockets and strafing the ship from the torpedo boats.

Perhaps the Israelis' most contradictory statement is that they lacked sufficient motive to intentionally attack the Liberty. "Why should Israel deliberately attack an American ship?" said a statement issued by the Israeli Embassy in response to The Times inquiries. "Friendship with the United States is the cornerstone of Israel's foreign policy.... It would require an extremely strong provocation for Israel to risk making an enemy of the United States."

James M. Ennes Jr. Research Papers

WASHINGTON TALK

Briefing

Campaign Against Baker

[illegible] night, reports in [illegible] Wright, [illegible] Texas Democratic Party, [illegible] the Democratic national [illegible] campaign against James A. Baker 3d, the White House chief of staff, who served previously as Republican national chairman.

Mr. Wright, a Dallas lawyer, originally drew up plans to allow even Ronald Reagon to join them, with his permission, in the fund-raising [illegible]. But Mr. Reagan declined the offer of help and in January Mr. Wright is joining Democratic leaders in Dallas to launch the campaign to defeat Mr. Baker, whom, the General predicts, is to be Herbert Phillips of the Conservative Caucus.

In a recent letter to the President, Mr. Wright described Mr. Baker as "an unstable, unbalanced, lazy, dignity-minded politician" who had undermined Reagan policies. He sent copies to hundreds of party Reagan supporters who, in the words of one source close to Mr. Wright, responded with a real chorus of "right on!"

Mr. Baker's friends inside the White House do not seem to be taking the Tuesday rally too seriously. It was said, they are young, [illegible] long hours and [illegible] when all the world is [illegible] eight years served [illegible] Washington.

Attacks on the Liberty

[illegible] 20 years since Israeli [illegible] mistakenly bombed and attacked the American intelligence ship Liberty with rockets and napalm in the Mediterranean, killing 34 American sailors and wounding 171, Israel apologized, saying the Liberty had been mistaken for an Egyptian ship.

That official explanation has never been accepted by many of the survivors, who still remember the day that should have been a commemoration of victory, flying over the Liberty and [illegible] attack that caught many [illegible] running for deck.

Yesterday, many of those survivors gathered here for a weekend reunion. Tonight, CBS News [illegible] special, "Attack on the Liberty," based largely on the survivors' testimony, in which they [illegible] Government documents and [illegible] Government officials, including [illegible] Defense, [illegible] testimony, in his investigation.

The Department of the Navy, in a [illegible] to the survivors, has agreed to review the [illegible] the Navy of the Liberty attacks in the [illegible] National Cemetery. The [illegible] that the [illegible] Israeli [illegible]

"They [illegible] do, but they were killed," said Dan Shifrin, a Liberty survivor. "It is time [illegible] and give a settlement. It is important that the world remember that."

[illegible] survivor, [illegible] Clark, USS Liberty, Post 9, [illegible]

Of Mercury and Ballet

Members of the Royal Danish Ballet arrived in Washington this week complaining of the cold and [illegible] of the [illegible] Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts. On Tuesday night, [illegible] performance at the [illegible] auditorium there, [illegible] dancer at the [illegible]. The [illegible] and [illegible] and [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]

Sad accident

To the Editor: Accustomed as we are to the usually well-thought-out editorial comments in The Oregonian, it was saddening and discouraging to read, "Should not Portland honor USS Liberty?" (June 4).

Anyone who dies in the service of his country should, of course, be honored. But the thrust of your editorial is quite different.

When James M. Ennes Jr. or any other member of the unfortunate crew of that ship strikes out in the aftermath of horror and fear, he may be forgiven. Others have the obligation to be more thoughtful.

Israel had everything to lose by antagonizing the United States by an assault on one of our ships, and it would have been madness for her to launch one.

Shooting at a wrong target — even at one's own units — is a recurrent vicissitude of war. Remember the large-scale bombing raid, with numerous casualties that our air force carried out against our own army on the Anzio beachhead, when we presumably were well-informed on the positions of our own forces.

I was a member of a convoy during World War II when four ships were sent to destruction by a foul-up in orders.

The shooting of Stonewall Jackson by his own men is another case in point.

Of course the Israelis gave an unsatisfactory explanation (for attacking the USS Liberty). There never [illegible] there was no cover-up of the [illegible] remember well not only the [illegible] of the incident but its [illegible] in the journals.

Let us by all means honor our dead. But let us not be seduced into needless further antagonisms by sometimes mistaken, sometimes deliberate, misinterpretations.

SHELDON A. JACOBSON,
7413 Buena Vista Drive,
Vancouver, Wash.

Oregonian (Portland)
Thurs., June 10, 1982

206 693-1397

James M. Ennes Jr. Research Papers

9110 N.W. Stark Court
Portland, Oregon 97229
June 10, 1982

Editor
Letters to the Editor
The Oregonian
1320 S.W. Broadway
Portland, OR 97201

To the Editor:

Contrary to Sheldon Jacobson's assertion (Oregonian, June 10), it is clear the attack on the USS Liberty on June 8, 1967 by Israeli military aircraft was deliberate and not an accident or foul-up. His citing instances of honest mistakes in previous wars as being similar is a deliberate misrepresentation in itself. It makes me wonder if he has even read the book, "Assault on the Liberty" by James Ennes, Jr.

If the attack was not ordered by the Israeli high command, then some sub-level commander did. The best guess as to why is that they resented the interception of coded Israeli telecommunications by the U.S. vessel.

I have followed coverage on the event since it occurred. The Johnson administration treated the matter gingerly from the outset, first stating only four Americans had been killed. It was well over a day later that they finally revealed American crew casualties were 34 dead and 75 wounded. They fed the information out in dribs and drabs which served to minimize the impact on the public.

The individuals responsible were never court-martialed by Israel. In fact, Israel has refused to this date to open their files to the U.S. and reveal what really occurred. Those involved could well be described as war criminals. Mr. Jacobson contends there can be no satisfactory explanation expected from Israel. I ask why not?

U.S. support of Israel has been extremely generous and virtually unquestioning over the years. Reciprocation by Israel has not always been in kind. It accomplishes nothing to ignore the reality of what transpired, and I totally reject and deeply resent the intimation that a desire to uncover the truth is motivated by anti-semitism.

Israel is not fully-white and in recent years Menachem Begin has repeatedly thumbed his nose at us. The latest intrusion into Lebanon is but the latest example. Antagonizing the U.S. is nothing new for Israel, and when it suits their self-interest [illegible] country has been more than willing to jeopardize our friendship. They apparently calculate (and sadly, rightly) that time will heal the wounds inflicted, however deep they may be.

Yours very truly,

Richard A. Carlson
229-5101 or 292-0975

AN ATTORNEY —
I CALLED 13 JUN 82

50¢

James M. Ennes, Jr. Research Papers

June 14, 1982

Letters to the Editor
The Oregonian
1320 SW Broadway
Portland, Oregon 97201

Editor:

Complaints by Sheldon Jacobson (June 10) and David Stahl (June 13) about James Kilpatrick's discussion of the Israeli attack on the USS Liberty (June 3) are wrong-headed and ~~ill~~uninformed.

I was Liberty's officer-of-the-deck and am author of the award winning book, Assault on the Liberty (Random House, 1980).

The attack on our ship was preceded by 10 hours of intense, low-level reconnaissance by aircraft which were overhead reporting the sighting of our American flag. The attack started with high speed jets using rockets and cannon, and was followed by slower jets with napalm. Torpedo boats fired five torpedoes and machine-gunned our life rafts in the water, whereas troops arrived in helicopters for the coup de grace. All of this was coordinated from the Israeli war room where senior officers kept a running plot of the progress.

To pretend now that the attack was a battlefield error is ludicrous and easily disproven. Admiral Thomas Moorer, who became Chief of Naval Operations a few days after the attack, scoffs at any possibility of such an error and adds that "even a rag tag Navy could not make such a mistake." Admiral Arleigh Burke, another former Chief of Naval Operations, agrees. So does Adlai Stevenson. So does every leading military journal including those of the U.S. Naval Institute and the Naval War College.

Anyone still unconvinced after reviewing the documented story in my book need only read the official Navy Court of Inquiry report, which is now available from the Navy for about $70. Even diehard Zionist commentators were stunned by the evidence in that report, and this is only a fraction of the proof available.

If Israeli spokesmen truly believe that the attack was an accident, why will they not defend their positions in open debate. Why do they so heatedly resist calls for a reopened investigation? Liberty crewmen recently assembled in Washington, D.C., for a reunion. They invited the Israeli press and the Israeli Ambassador to ask questions and to review our evidence. None came. I have invited Israeli spokesmen such as David Stahl to public debate. None will accept. Why not?

Sincerely,

James M. Ennes, Jr. Research Papers

For "Comments and Discussion", several new points (Syria's importance, Johnson's error, Golden's heroism) about the "Liberty", from George Weller. (Author of the classic BASES OVERSEAS (1944) [redacted]

Yamini Krishnamurti will perform at the Pan-Asiatic Dance Festival at Piazza del Campidoglio in Rome August 7.

BOOKS

INTERNATIONAL DAILY NEWS - ROME AUG 5, 1981

Assault on the Liberty aired

Begin's bombing washed over by US government

By GEORGE WELLER

ASSAULT ON THE LIBERTY
by Ensign James M. Ennes USN (ret.)
Random House $11.95.

Begin's technique of sending Israeli war planes outside her legal space was not originated with current raids into Lebanon and Iraq. Nor did it start with the window-bashing sallies on Cairo in the sixties, nor with the deep raids from Sinai into southern Egypt.

As far as the US is concerned, Israel struck on June 8, 1967, fourth day of the Six Day War. In clear weather of midday with American sailors sunbathing on the deck, a navy and air force directed by General Moshe Dayan, minister of defense, having just knocked Nasser out of the war, attacked the US intelligence ship *Liberty*. 11,000 tons of acute radio listening gear were loafing along at Washington's orders in international waters 13.6 miles off the Egyptian, not the Israeli coast. Then came the impossible blow.

The attack occurred under political conditions that accurately resemble those today. Israel had subjected Egypt from the Arab alliance, then by bombs, today by Camp David. Dayan's next target was Syria, as it is Begin's today, when seduced Syria's 22,000 troops are mainstays of the official Arab peacekeeping force in southern Lebanon.

Syria, advised by Russia, had stubbornly refused to enter the war and help the fallen, bleeding Nasser. Israel's problem was to bring Syria in also, shatter her too by a secondary attack, and then pretend that isolated Syria had attacked first. Then the Golan Heights could be taken, placing Israel's artillery in range of Syria's capital, Damascus (where they are today).

But how to prevent the *Liberty* 's far ranging antennae from registering the battle commands of the Israeli tanks as they launched their attacks on Syria's defended heights? The only way to plug the ears of the Americans was to knock out the "*Liberty*", so Dyan did it. And he did it, according to this book—heavily fortunated and supported as book choice by the official Naval Institute—without either his or any of the Israeli command's being subjected to court martial or civil investigation. History's finger has not touched Dayan.

This is the fullest account of how 34 American sailors of a crew of 315 died and over a hundred were wounded. Ennes is a trained cryptologist, very precise. He was doubling at the wheel and was gravely wounded, like the skipper, Commander William McConaghy. Now, regarded US official accounts have been may be measured by the fact that President Johnson's memoir, *The Vantage Point* (1971) [illegible] that [illegible] men were killed. [illegible] the helpless old freighter a communications ship and suppressed the fact that a US submarine photographed the attack after planes bombed and put the *Liberty* afire and a PT boat torpedoed her. (And that the submarine stayed submerged.)

Wearing naval paint and huge numbers, her name large on the stern, flying a 5ft-by-8 ensign, *Liberty* was actually a lame and tardy effort to overtake the loop lead of the Soviets in snooping antennae-studded "fishing trawlers". Israel's attack, together with the [illegible] attack by the North Korean [illegible] and capture of its [illegible] the retreat of America's Navy from this bold, successful Soviet technique, still used worldwide.

Attack "without warning?" Far from it. On May 26 Israel's Foreign Minister Abba Eban gave Johnson an explicit warning that Israel was planning an offensive. [illegible] Johnson ordered the *Liberty* to [illegible] up from the African coast [illegible] a front seat. At that time, [illegible], Dayan was considering a joint and simultaneous attack on both Egypt and Syria, not two staggered strikes.

The publication of the *Liberty* 's story is timely because of public pledges by Israel that they will attack the AWAC radar warning planes bought by Saudi Arabia and manned by American crews. The question is: Will Reagan obey rules of surveillance determined by Israel in the air as well as at sea?

And the Sixth Fleet? Well, the *Liberty*, attacked at two [illegible], in sunny weather, with two-thirds of her men dead or wounded, [illegible] mirror, after an afternoon and night of unaided agony, by a Soviet destroyer—at dawn the next day, [illegible] noon, Israel invaded Syria.

The bungle was largely the work of the [illegible] Joint Chiefs of Staff in Washington, which had taken responsibility away from the Sixth fleet. Secretary of Defense Robert S. McNamara called off, indeed, not one but two air strikes that were ordered to fly from carriers to help the *Liberty*. The reason for his second wipeoff was, according to the official signal, "Israel admitted the error."

When an official investigation began, tightly tethered to Malta as protection against news leaks, this gallant ship produced its first authentic hero of intelligence, a wise-cracking Jewish chief engineer named Lt. George H. Golden. When his captain collapsed, and his number two was killed, Golden took command, determined to show a lesson in damage control to his "college punks" in the wardroom. The world would never have got an inkling of what went on had Golden not ignored the blackout imposed by George J. Feldman, the American ambassador in Malta, and spilled the story to Colin Frost of the AP, a Briton, anonymously, of course. Say a prayer for British integrity.

RECEIVED SEP 14 1981

Some books are to read, some to ban

James M. Ennes Jr. Research Papers

JAMES M. ENNES, JR.

Dear Friends:

Since Assault on the Liberty was first published, it has been the target of a smear campaign directed by some who object to the telling of this story, most notably the Israeli government. Soon after Assault first appeared, the Israeli Foreign Office in Jerusalem produced an attack on the book charging that "Ennes allows his very evident rancor and subjectivity to override objective analysis" and that "Ennes's conclusions fly in the face of logic and the military facts."

Those arguments were subsequently adopted by the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith for distribution to Israeli supporters throughout the United States and were picked up, embellished, and further circulated by other Israeli supporters such as, for instance, an editor of Jewish Week who charged in print in a recent letter to the Overseas Press Club Bulletin that "Ennes's book about the sinking (sic) of the Liberty reeks with a hatred that is blind to the facts." The result of all this emotional rhetoric has been serious damage to sales, and a marked reluctance of media executives to allow discussion of this story.

The campaign has been pervasive and successful. For example, a talkshow host in San Francisco received over 500 complaining letters in an obviously organized campaign, and his life was threatened on the air during a discussion of the Liberty story. The Washington Post received hundreds of angry letters and telephone calls following a highly laudatory review. Retail and wholesale booksellers are regularly informed, falsely, that Assault on the Liberty is out of print and will not be reprinted, or that it has been "withdrawn because it is libelous," or that it should not be ordered because it will come out soon in paperback. All such reports are false, but they have effectively blocked most retail sales of the book--although enough orders have trickled through that the book has gone through four printings and is still in print and in demand.

Partly to overcome distribution obstacles, I have arranged with my publisher to buy and sell the book myself through a small retail outlet near my home. Even this, however, has been difficult. Even though my orders are relayed through a Random House vice president, most such orders are tampered with after they leave his office, apparently by individual pro-Israeli clerks acting on their own in the Random House warehouse.

My orders are routinely delayed, lost, shipped to incorrect addresses, billed incorrectly, and in almost every case have been shipped by some means other than the one requested (e.g., mail when UPS is requested or UPS when mail is requested).

Recently two large and important shipments from Random House were not shipped at all. They "dropped out" of the Random House computer during processing. Those shipments included your order.

Random House is doing its best to overcome the problem, and in fact reshipped my order by air express at their own expense. But your order was nevertheless delayed, and I apologize for the delay.

Sincerely yours,

James M. Ennes, Jr.

James M. Ennes Jr. Research Papers

The Evening Star

Editorials, Opinion

John L. Murphy
Editor

Kenneth M. Carter
Publisher

James M. Eanes, Jr. Research Papers

Peekskill, N.Y., Saturday, January [illegible], 19[illegible]

A continuing cover-up

ON THE AFTERNOON of June 8, [illegible] U.S. electronics intelligence ship Liberty was repeatedly attacked by Israeli warplanes and torpedo boats while steaming in international waters in the Mediterranean off the coast of Sinai.

When the attacks ended, 34 American sailors lay dead or dying and 75 more were wounded. The defenseless, slow-moving Liberty — strafed, rocketed and torpedoed — was a smoking, listing wreck.

The following day the Israeli government apologized to the United States and explained that the attack was a "tragic mistake."

It was almost certainly nothing of the kind. The Liberty, which the Israelis said had been mistaken for an Egyptian supply ship, had received extensive identification including a large American flag. Moreover, the Israeli air and sea attacks occurred in crystal-clear weather in mid-afternoon following a full [illegible] hours of overflights by Israeli reconnaissance planes.

Yet, the [illegible] accepted the Israeli explanation. The Navy conducted a court of inquiry which concluded that there was insufficient evidence to reach a judgment about the reasons for the Israeli attack. The surviving officers and crewmen of the Liberty were warned not to discuss the incident. Israel paid $6.7 million in claims filed by the families of the dead and wounded.

Now, 13 years later, the U.S. State Department has agreed to close its file on the Liberty in exchange for an additional Israeli payment of $6 million in damages. Presumably, this final payment is in consideration for a State Department finding that there was "no information to corroborate allegations of a deliberate attack."

The suspicion of a joint coverup by U.S. and Israeli officials will not be dispelled by such a conclusion. It simply isn't possible to believe that skilled Israeli pilots flying repeated passes within a few hundred feet of the Liberty could identify it as anything other than what it was — a clearly marked U.S. Navy ship.

Why then was Liberty attacked? The best guess is that the ship was monitoring Israeli and Egyptian communications at a time when the Six-Day War was raging at fever pitch.

We know now the Israelis were planning to storm the Syrian-held Golan Heights on June 9, the day after the Liberty was attacked. The Israelis undoubtedly knew that the Liberty was eavesdropping. They may well have decided to strike to preserve the secrecy of their impending attack and to preclude the possibility of U.S. diplomatic interference at a time when developments on the battlefield were clearly in Israel's favor.

Admitting as much, then now, would be deeply embarrassing for the Israelis. It is reasonable to assume that U.S. officials would be equally loathe to discomfort a valuable ally and, in the process, indict [illegible] past mishandling of the case.

Still, American officials in particular have a larger responsibility to the families of the Liberty's dead and to those who will bear the scars of this attack to their graves. They, and the American public, deserve more than the transparent coverup that continues today more than a decade after the bloodiest peacetime attack on a U.S. Navy ship in this century.

James M. Barnes, Jr. Research Papers

Ex-Navy Head Says Truth Still Hidden on '67 Attack

WASHINGTON (UPI) — The State Department says the book is finally closed on the 1967 Israeli attack on the U.S. intelligence ship Liberty that killed 34 crewmen, but a former head of the U.S. Navy says the truth is not yet known and Congress should prove it.

The U.S. government Thursday accepted $6 million as "final settlement" for the loss of the Liberty, which was so badly damaged in the attack by Israeli planes and ships on June 8, 1967, that it had to be scrapped.

The Israeli government, which had already accepted responsibility for what it termed a tragic mistake in the heat of battle, has already paid $3.3 million in the family of the 34 dead crewmen and for 171 crew members who were injured in the attack.

Retired Adm. Thomas Moorer, who as then chief of naval operations spent two months in Israel after the Liberty attack, told United Press International, "I think the American people should finally get the truth. I think it should be payment from Israel that I would think that there would be a tremendous responsibility on the part of Congress to determine just exactly what happened."

Moorer and James Bamford, retired naval officer and author, testified in the House Armed Services Committee that they believe that Israel's attack was premeditated. Bamford, who was an officer of the desk on the American ship during the attack and author of a recent book, "Assault on the Liberty," claims that the presence of the U.S. intelligence ship underscored Israeli secrecy for its plans to attack the Golan Heights.

He believes that was the reason for the attack.

The Israeli move on the Golan Heights occurred the following day, after the Liberty was put out of action.

A secret 1967 naval court of inquiry, according to an unidentified participant, found that the [illegible] and concluded that the attack was deliberate.

[illegible] Moorer said [illegible] about whether the attack was deliberate.

[illegible] an investigation [illegible] the matter, [illegible] comment.

The Senate Intelligence Committee looked into the matter earlier this year, after the publication of Moorer's book, but [illegible] according to a staff [illegible]. "There was not enough new material to support a hearing."

One source said, "That does mean that the committee decided that [illegible] Israeli attack [illegible] of that was the truth, but we simply would [illegible] it in committee."

Moorer, now living in Middleburg, Va., said the Israeli attack [illegible] of the air [illegible] with a mark [illegible] of [illegible] the [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]

The Tacoma
News Tribune

FRANK S. BAKER 1874-1960

ELBERT F. BAKER II
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President-General Manager

DONALD A. PUGNETTI
Editor

ROD O. CARDWELL
Managing Editor

What's the truth about the *Liberty*?

Nearly 14 years ago, the U.S. electronics intelligence ship *Liberty* was attacked by Israeli warplanes and torpedo boats while cruising in the Mediterranean off the coast of Sinai.

Thirty-four U.S. sailors were killed and 75 others wounded, while the strafed and torpedoed *Liberty* was left a listing, smoking wreck. The Israelis apologized the following day, explaining that the attack was a tragic mistake.

Israel paid $6.7 million in claims filed by the families of the dead and wounded, and recently it agreed to pay an additional $6 million in damages after the State Department had declared there was "no information to corroborate allegations of a deliberate attack."

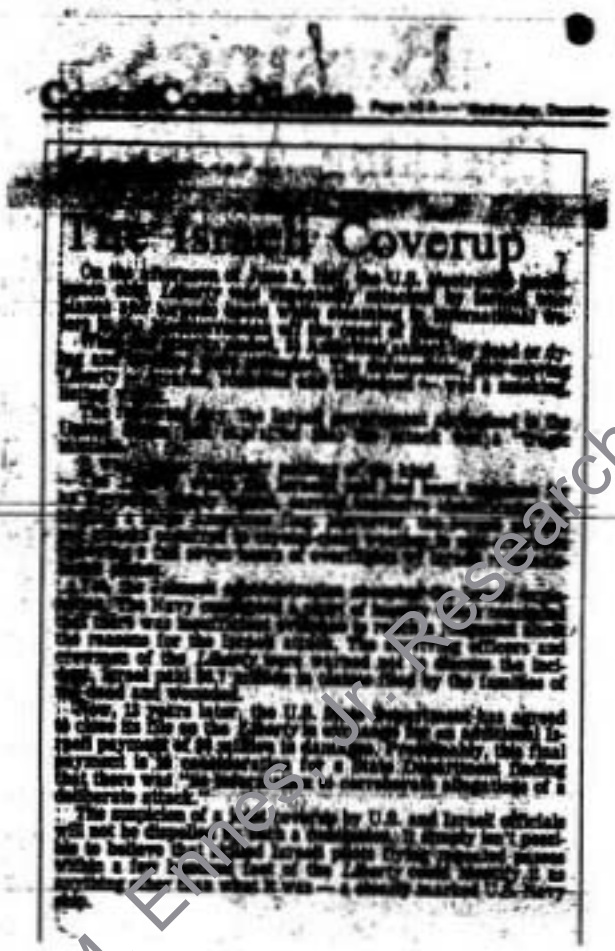
The incident is closed, or is it? What is the truth about the *Liberty*?

The facts are that the vessel was in international waters and that it was clearly marked U.S. Navy ship. It is also known that at the time the Israelis were preparing to storm the Syrian-held Golan heights on June 9, the day after the *Liberty* was attacked. And it can be assumed that the *Liberty* was electronically eavesdropping on Israeli and Egyptian communications at a time when the Six-Day War was at its height.

With these facts and assumptions in mind, it is difficult if not impossible to accept Israel's explanation that it had mistaken the *Liberty* for an Egyptian supply vessel. The attack, after all, was carried out in the mid-afternoon, during clear weather and after overflights by Israeli reconnaissance planes.

The State Department may have agreed to close its files on the *Liberty*, but the truth still needs to be told about the bloodiest attack ever made on a U.S. Navy ship in peacetime in this century.

James M. Ennes, Jr. Research Papers



Contra Costa Times Page 10A — Wednesday, December

The Israeli Coverup

On the afternoon of June 8, 1967, the U.S. [illegible] with the *Liberty* was repeatedly attacked by Israeli [illegible] jets [illegible] while cruising in international [illegible] off the coast of [illegible]. [illegible] dead or dying [illegible] the *Liberty* [illegible] was a smoking [illegible].

The [illegible] the Israeli government [illegible] in the United [illegible] the attack was a "tragic [illegible]".

[illegible] of this kind.

[illegible] the Israeli [illegible] the reasons for the Israeli attack. The [illegible] officers and crewmen of the *Liberty* were warned not to discuss the incident. Israel paid $6.7 million in claims filed by the families of the dead and wounded.

Now, 13 years later, the U.S. [illegible] Department has agreed to close its file on the *Liberty* in exchange for an additional Israeli payment of $6 million in damages. Presumably, this final payment is in consideration for a State Department finding that there was "no [illegible] to corroborate allegations of a deliberate attack."

The suspicion of a [illegible] by U.S. and Israeli officials will not be dispelled [illegible]. It simply isn't possible to believe that [illegible] Israeli pilots flying [illegible] passes within a few [illegible] feet of the *Liberty* could identify it as anything [illegible] what it was — a clearly marked U.S. Navy ship.

Dean S. Lesher, Publisher
[illegible], Editor
John [illegible], Managing Editor
[illegible], Opinion Page Editor

Opinion

[illegible], 1980

Dean S. Lesher/Publisher

James M. Ennes Jr. Research Papers

The Virginian-Pilot

Established 1865

Published by Landmark Communications, Inc.

Perry Morgan, Publisher — Carl W. Morgan, President — Frank Batten, Chairman

Frank Caperton, Executive Editor — J. Harvie Wilkinson III, Editor — William O. Connolly, Managing Editor — Richard F. Barry III, President

The *Liberty* Legacy

A satisfactory end to the USS *Liberty* tragedy is impossible while the truth remains hidden.

Israel maintains that its 80-minute air and sea attack on the electronic-surveillance vessel was an accident. That's disingenuous at best. The lightly armed *Liberty* was clearly marked and in international waters off the Gaza Strip. The reasonable inference is that Israel didn't want *Liberty* eavesdropping on its military activities during the Arab-Israel Six-Day War. The mournful result: 34 U.S. Navy personnel killed, 75 others wounded.

U.S. and Israeli authorities have upheld the fiction that this massacre was an unfortunate mishap near a war zone. Suggestions that it was deliberate jeopardize U.S.-Israeli ties.

Washington's embarrassment is a factor also. The *Liberty*, which had been directed toward Gaza, was denied a destroyer escort prior to the assault, and none other than Defense Secretary Robert S. McNamara ordered the call of fighter aircraft from USS *America* to defend the battered vessel. Pentagon messages cautioning the *Liberty* to stay well off Gaza's coast never reached the ship. More than 18 hours later, U.S. destroyers, bringing medical help and damage-control technicians, appeared before the crippled ship.

Israel apologized promptly, pleading a mistake and accepting responsibility for the attack. In 1968 it paid the U.S. $3,323,500 on behalf of the families of the dead. It followed that up with payment in 1969 of $3,453,273 for injuries sustained by the wounded. Now Washington has accepted a $6 million settlement of its claim for $17 million in compensation for the *Liberty*'s damages.

Former naval officer James M. Ennes Jr., wounded on that fateful June day, believes Israel feared the *Liberty* might learn of its preparations to seize the Golan Heights from Syria in the closing hours of the Six-Day War.

President Johnson had warned Israel that it would forfeit U.S. support by initiating war against its belligerent neighbors.

Ennes asks rhetorically in his recently published book, *Assault on the Liberty*: "With the war virtually over and with the world crying for peace, could Israel put troops in Syria without being seen as an aggressor? Not with *Liberty* so close to shore and presumably listening. *Liberty* would have to go."

If that is speculation, it is not reckless. Meanwhile, enlightenment from official sources is lacking. Whatever Israel may have gained by the *Liberty* slaughter, it has no credibility.



The USS Liberty after the Israeli attack.

James M. Ennes, Jr. Research Papers

(SC)

4-A THE HARTSVILLE MESSENGER, OCTOBER 14, 1981

Dear Jim
I am still
I had the
stone [illegible]

Editorial Opinion

This News Wasn't Printed

retired

(Editor's Note: The following guest editorial was written by Dr. Dant[illegible] F. Sims, Hartsville chiropractor. It first appeared in the Winder (Ga.) News. The book he refers to, Assault on the Liberty, is available at the Hartsville Memorial Library on Fifth St.)

There are two kinds of news. The kind that is known and the cover-up. The latter has a way of leaking out, but if it is not in the mainstream of news, people don't react the same way.

The following account of two international events will demonstrate what I mean.

Iran, a country that is now considered an enemy or unfriendly to the United States, held 52 American hostages for more than a year. During this time, not a day passed without extensive news coverage of the situation.

Somebody must have made a [illegible] on yellow ribbon because it was arranged in some fashion all over the country to keep the people aware of the hostages.

Finally, the hostages were released ALIVE and well-nourished, apparently. I don't believe the welcome they received has been topped since Lindbergh flew the Atlantic.

In June, 1967, the U.S.S. Liberty, an American intelligence ship was cruising in the Mediterranean Sea when war broke out [illegible]

One of the wounded officers, James M. Ennes Jr., has written a well-documented book entitled Assault on the Liberty. The coverup of the Liberty attack by Israeli sympathizers extends to this book. They don't want you to read it. However, you can get a copy if you are persistent, even though you may be told, "It's out of stock."

We don't get all the news. We are brainwashed with lies and propaganda. For example, we are led to believe the PLO is a terrorist organization. Not true.

It is made up of people who have been driven from their homes, robbed of their land and have had to squat in squalor in another country. Under such circumstances, you and I would fight like hell any way possible, too. I know I would.

The American taxpayers have financed the arming and building of Israel from its inception. They have used our weapons to kill their neighbors and take their land, and some of their neighbors furnish us oil to keep our cars, trucks and tractors running.

Can we blame them for raising their oil prices? If you want to know why you pay $1.50 per gallon for gas, the answer is Israel.

The 34 Americans the Israelis murdered received no public recognition at their burial

James M. Ennes, Jr. Research Papers

radio messages from Israel and learned that Israel had started the war and was planning to attack Syria via Golan Heights.

An order was given to sink the Liberty and murder everyone aboard. Evidently, they reasoned, "Dead men tell no tales" and there is good evidence that Moshe Dayan gave the order.

The Liberty was under air attack for more than two hours, with #21 rocket and machinegun holes being inflicted in the ship. It was flying an American flag as big as a barn door before it was shot away. The decks were aflame with napalm.

When the Liberty stubbornly remained afloat, the Israeli torpedo boats came and launched a torpedo attack. A direct hit amidship blew a hole 40 feet in diameter in the ship's side, murdering 25 officers and crewmen.

When the order to abandon ship was given and life rafts were lowered over the side, the torpedo boats circled the ship and machinegunned the rafts, rendering them useless. The abandon ship order was retracted.

Repeated calls for help to the nearby Sixth Fleet got so fouled up (perhaps purposely) that no help came. Two jets were sent out but called back by direct order from Washington.

Israeli troop-bearing helicopters appeared on the scene to finish the murderous task but left when an American helicopter was spotted.

The Liberty was listing badly, but managed to limp into port under escort. The dead and wounded were removed from the ship and the wounded flown to a hospital, and put under armed guard and ordered to say nothing to any news people. Some of the dead could not be recovered.

Thirty-four officers and crewmen were dead. One hundred seventy-one officers and crewmen were wounded.

and the wounded did not get a ticker tape parade, a trip to the White House to shake the President's hand, get to wave to cheering throngs along the roadside, or have a nation string yellow ribbons from coast to coast to show they had not been forgotten.

I think its about time this country awakened and looked at the facts. Our foreign policy in the Mid-East is not based on common sense or fairness. If it was, almost every country in the area would be a staunch ally.

A good question for senators and congressmen: Why was Sen. Adlai Stevenson unable to get a congressional investigation about the attack on the Liberty?

After all, seeking truth is a rather noble endeavor.



Censing The News

With

Anthony Harrigan

Fighting Porn

If civilized values are to prevail in our society, it will be necessary to turn back the tide of filth that has been released by hoodlum-dominated pornography operations.

Over the past two decades, the porn operators have had a field day. They have been allowed to establish "adult" bookstores that sell the most depraved materials. Their diseased fantasies have filled the pages of slick magazines. They have created a huge underground traffic in filmc that appeal to sick minds.

There has been very little resistance to this pornography which conditions people to anti-human attitudes and unnatural experiences. Happily, the situation seems to be changing. Influential public figures are beginning to speak out against the brutalization of society.

For example, Gov. William P. Clements of Texas told a meeting attended by more than 1,000 concerned citizens in Houston that he would support new measures to fight

James M. Fetes Jr. Research Papers

The Virginian-Pilot

Established 1865

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Page A18 — Monday, December 22, 1980

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U.S. and Israeli authorities have upheld the fiction that this massacre was an unfortunate mishap near a war zone. Suggestions that it was deliberate jeopardize U.S.-Israeli ties.

Washington's embarrassment is a factor also. The *Liberty*, which had been directed toward Gaza, was denied a destroyer escort prior to the assault, and none other than Defense Secretary Robert S. McNamara ordered recall of fighter aircraft sent aloft from USS *America* to defend the battered vessel. Pentagon messages cautioning the *Liberty* to stay well off the Gaza coast never reached the ship. More than 16 hours later, U.S. destroyers, bearing medical help and damage-control technicians, appeared beside the crippled ship.



The USS Liberty after the Israeli attack.

Israel apologized promptly, pleading a mistake and accepting responsibility for the attack. In 1968 it paid the U.S. $3,323,500 on behalf of the families of the dead. It followed that up with payment in 1969 of $3,452,375 for injuries sustained by the wounded. Now Washington has accepted a $6 million settlement of its claim for $17 million in compensation for the *Liberty*'s damages.

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[illegible] is speculation, it is not [illegible]

James M. Ennes, Jr. Research Papers

Opinions

Columns do not necessarily reflect the newspaper's position

The Longview Daily News

Tribute paid 34 men killed in 1967 attack

Editor:

This tribute is in honor of the 34 brave American men of the U.S.S. Liberty who were killed and 173 who were wounded by "friendly" action on June 8, 1967. On that day of infamy the Liberty was cruising in international waters of the Mediterranean on special assignment off the coast of the Sinai. Its captain was Cmdr. William Loren McGonagle, USN. The weather was clear. The ship flew the American flag. Its profile and general appearance were unique, partly because of its complicated system of radio antennae including a "Big Ear" sensor radio listening device. The Liberty was prominently marked as an American naval vessel. There was no mistaking her.

On three occasions during the morning of June 8, Israeli aircraft reconnoitered the U.S.S. Liberty. At 2 p.m. Israeli jets flew criss-cross patterns over the Liberty, strafing and "punishing the ship with machine guns, rockets and fragmentation bombs." Shortly three torpedo boats joined the attack, firing cannon and finally torpedoes. One of these latter found its mark in the heart of the ship near its water line.

Why did Israel seek to sink the Liberty with all hands? The Johnson administration had encouraged Israel to attack Egypt but had set distinct limits beyond which Israel was not to go against Egypt and had specified that there was to be only "containment" of Jordan and Syria. Israel had gone beyond those limits and had scrambled "cooked" messages between the three Arab countries to encourage Jordan and Syria to take actions that provided Israel with excuses to attack them. The "Big Ear" monitored the messages involved in this treachery.

Cmdr. McGonagle was among those seriously wounded. He had sent out messages of distress. Unaccountably all but 1 wound up on the other side of the world except the last one he was able to send before enemy action knocked out his equipment. Fortunately this last one reached the 6th Fleet. Despite his severe leg wound and loss of blood, the commander [illegible] to his post till 8:30 A.M. the next day. Six days after the attack he brought his ship to Malta, where a total of 821 separate hits were counted on hull and superstructure. The tear-drop hole caused by the torpedo measured 39 [illegible]. Cmdr. McGonagle received the Congressional Medal of Honor.

If you haven't previously heard of this outrage, thoroughly documented by a Naval court of inquiry held in London, it is because the Johnson administration did all in its power to cover up its perfidy.

Lest we forget, these 34 dead and 173 wounded should be especially honored on June 8, 1981. They served in the finest tradition of the United States Navy.

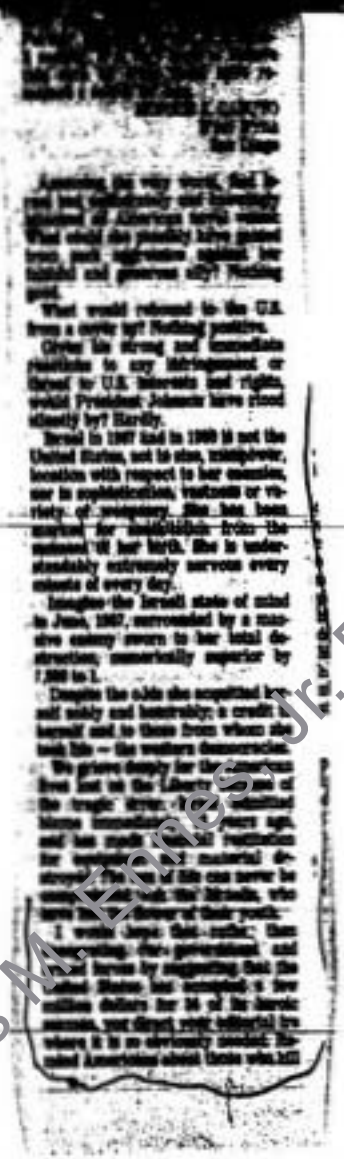
A.G. Thomas, D.D.S.
813 Hillcrest Dr., Longview

James M. Barnes Jr. Research Papers

OUR READERS WRITE

Compounding The Liberty Tragedy

James M. Ennes, Jr. Research Papers



James M. Eppes, Jr. Research Papers

EL STATESMAN

Editorials

Gary F. Sherlock, Publisher
Roderick Sandeen, Managing Editor
Rick Ripley, Editor of Editorial Page
Russell W. Ford, Circulation Director

The comments below represent the opinions of The Idaho Statesman. Columns, commentary, cartoons and letters appearing elsewhere on the page represent the opinions of the authors.

PAGE 10A

Saturday, October 10, 1981

"A Part of Life in Idaho"

IDAHO STATESMAN
10 OCT 81



James M. Ennes Jr. is a retired naval officer and professional writer who lives in Woodinville, Wash.

Guest opinion James M. Ennes

Israeli attack recalled

Joel Stone's Guest Opinion of Sept. 12 scolds columnist James J. Kilpatrick for suggesting that Israeli forces would not hesitate to attack AWACS, even with American airmen aboard, just as they attacked the clearly marked USS Liberty in international waters in 1967 killing 34 and wounding 171. Stone calls the Liberty attack "a tragic mistake" for which Israel apologized and made financial reparations.

If Stone and others want the facts about the Liberty attack, they should look beyond statements issued by the Israeli government and the American Israel Public Affairs Committee.

I was the Liberty's officer of the [illegible] on the day of the attack, and I spent [illegible] than 12 years collecting further [illegible] and testimony to help me understand the things I saw that day. My 1980 Random [illegible] book, *Assault on the Liberty*, reports [illegible] learned about the attack and surrounding circumstances, and it is not the same story told by spokesmen for Israel.

Before the attack, the USS Liberty was reconnoitered for at least 16 hours by Israeli aircraft, which circled the ship 13 times in daylight and passed as low as 300 feet directly overhead. Our radio intercept operators heard the Israeli pilots radioing to their headquarters that we were an American ship and flew an American flag. Shot's [illegible] and other evidence prove that the flag was clearly displayed in 13 knots of wind, and Israeli documents in my possession prove that the Liberty was properly identified and her track charted in the Israeli war room.

The carefully orchestrated attack that followed started with a two-stage air attack using rockets, cannons and napalm, and supported by sophisticated radio jamming to prevent our calling for help. After torpedo boats blasted a 40 foot hole in the ship's side, the Israeli gunners fired upon our crippled ship for another 40 minutes and machine-gunned ship's life rafts that had been put in the water in preparation to abandon ship.

My version of the attack is drawn from my personal experiences and those of my shipmates, and is supported by thousands of pages of solid documentation from both Israeli and American government files. My story is endorsed by senators Goldwater, Stevenson, Fulbright and Albertson; by retired chiefs of naval operations Arleigh Burke and Thomas Moorer; and by every military journal including those of the Naval Institute, the Naval War College and the Naval Academy Alumni Association.

Dean Rusk, who was secretary of State in 1967, described the attack as a "quite literally incomprehensible (attack which) must be condemned as an act of military recklessness reflecting wanton disregard for human life."

In a later exchange with Sen. Rusk called the attack "a genuine outrage."

Israeli reparations came only after extremely difficult negotiations in which Israel tried to evade responsibility for the attack, and even the American secretary of State describes the settlement as inadequate. The final payment, however, was not agreed to until Sen. Adlai Stevenson, after spending two hours with the reviewing evidence and questioning me privately in his office, publicly announced his intent to hold a public inquiry into the circumstances. And even that final payment, apparently agreed to in haste in order to avoid an investigation, will not be made until 1983.

Anyone interested in learning the truth about this affair is invited to review the Navy Court of Inquiry transcript, which is available from the Navy Judge Advocate General for about $45, or to read my book, *Assault on the Liberty*, which is now in a fourth printing. Despite some claims to the contrary, the book is in print and readily available through bookstores or by mail from Random House.

James M. Ennes, Jr. Research Papers

...STATESMAN

Guest opinion/Joel Stone



Kilpatrick missed this time

James J. Kilpatrick's column of Aug. 31 advocating sale of the AWACS planes to Saudi Arabia prompts my remarks. As a general rule, Kilpatrick's writing makes enjoyable reading. His thinking is clear, his reasoning is sound, and his conclusions are valid. This time he missed on all points.

This writer is convinced that Congress should go along with President Reagan's recommendation and approve the $8.5 billion package for military help to the Saudis but not for the reasons stated by Kilpatrick. For the record, Kilpatrick failed to mention that this package also includes long-range fuel tanks for the F-15s sold to the Saudis during the Carter administration and U.S.-made Sidewinder air-to-air missiles, the best in anyone's arsenal at this time.

The Carter administration promised Congress that the fuel tanks and missiles would not be sold in the near future. Reports in the Israeli press indicate that Israel's objection to the sale is primarily based against the offensive Saudi capability — rather than the AWACS planes. But, of this January in history, events in the Middle East, i.e., Gulf internal upheavals of Iran and the protracted war between Iran and Iraq, the lack of progress in the Camp David accords and the Syrian presence in Lebanon, all make it imperative for the United States to have a viable presence in the region in addition to the friendly governments of Egypt and Israel. The AWACS planes would help give us that presence.

Let's examine our relations with the House of Saud and its behavior in the region going back to the end of World War II. It was Arabian American Oil Co. — now Saudi Arabian Aramco — that made the Saudis the major supplier of petroleum to the world, thereby transforming a weak desert kingdom with a feudal government into a wealthy nation capable of influencing events in the world. In 1947 the United Nations planned to create a Jewish-controlled Palestine into two states, one state, one Jewish and one Arab. The plan, very pleased with the active help of the United States, did Arab nations vote against this reasonable proposal. In an old problem, but which proved to be unworkable, the Soviet urged the establishment of a Jewish state in Palestine.

[illegible] make for an exemplary region. Perhaps it would have been a nuclear-free zone, a common defense against the common enemy, the Soviet Union. But above all, this approach would have made these two Semitic peoples friends and not mortal enemies.

Instead, the aftermath of the 1947-48 war left homeless 700,000 Palestinian refugees, who live in squalor in camps in Jordan, Lebanon and Gaza. The Saudis, with all their wealth, could have encouraged the 20 other Arab states in the region to take in these unfortunate people and resettle them, even on a temporary basis. They did no such thing. For years they refused to help financially towards the Palestinians' support. The refugees were left to exist on the dole of the United Nations. This festering problem eventually led to the birth of the Palestine Liberation Organization and its radical philosophy of eradicating Israel. At this time, the House of Saud has made [illegible] to fear the PLO internally than the external threat of Israel.

Without the Saudis there would be no OPEC. Anyone believing otherwise is blind. It is Sheik Ahmed Zaki Yamani of Saudi Arabia who calls the tune at OPEC meetings. Kilpatrick thinks the Saudis "deserving" of military equipment, because they sell us oil at confiscatory prices for American dollars. Well, Kilpatrick, they do that for their own interests. By not hiking dollars, they would hurt their holdings in the United States, which no doubt total in the billions.

Kilpatrick further states that the Saudis are anti-Communist. I fail to see what that has to do with anything. Perhaps he means anti-Soviet. That is why it is difficult to understand why as recently as two weeks ago the Saudi foreign minister said the only threat to peace in the region is not the Soviet Union but Israel.

The most hopeful step for settlement exists with the Camp David accords. President Sadat has fought several wars with Israel, and the results of each time alienated a country to which [illegible] and peace. The United States politically [illegible]. The Israelis [illegible] to Sinai [illegible] Israel. The most [illegible] President [illegible] for us lately? It costs us nothing and perhaps a great deal. How do you measure a small country that is dedicated to be a home for the homeless, for the oppressed, for the persecuted of its fellow [illegible]? How do you measure the worth of the only popularly elected democratic government in a region that has absolute monarchies and Soviet-style dictatorships? How do you measure a country that extends religious freedom to all its citizens and strives to be a good neighbor and friend even to its sworn enemies?

If at some future date our 6th Fleet is unwelcome at its present bases in the Mediterranean, it will be welcome in Haifa Bay. That is one of the bonds between Israel and the United States and what Israel can and will do for us now and in the future.

To bring up the incident of the sinking of the USS Liberty by Israel in 1967, as Kilpatrick did, is a low blow. The Liberty episode was a tragic mistake committed unwittingly in the heat of war. Israel apologized profusely to the people and the government of the United States and to the families of the dead and wounded. Financial compensation also was made to the families.

Finally, I fail to see the validity of the argument that in the planning and implementation of foreign policy, we consider which states are deserving and undeserving. We are a major sovereign power. We conduct foreign policy on the basis of what is best for our own national self-interest. Any administration doing otherwise would be committing a great disservice. At times our policies, domestic and foreign, are [illegible] and generally serve the [illegible] for us [illegible]. For instance, we are currently helping El Salvador. We think this is good for us. We are planning to sell armaments to China when only a short while ago we would not have done so. We now feel that it is in our own interests to do so. Many more examples could be cited.

By all means, let's sell the Saudis this package of arms. Let us also hope that it will enhance our cause for peace in the region. When [illegible] Minister Begin gives us his blessing for [illegible] arms to Saudi Arabia, I think that the administration will [illegible] Israel and say that it is time for Israel to cease the occupation [illegible] Gaza, Golan, that it is wrong for [illegible] to be [illegible] over others, [illegible] that [illegible] will be [illegible]

James M. Barnes Jr. Research Papers

Why The Cover-Up?

On the afternoon of June 8, 1967, the U.S. electronics intelligence ship Liberty was repeatedly attacked by Israeli warplanes and torpedo boats while steaming in international waters in the Mediterranean off the coast of Sinai.

When the attacks ended, 34 American sailors lay dead or dying and 75 more were wounded. The defenseless, slow-moving Liberty — strafed, rocketed, and torpedoed — was a smoking, listing wreck.

The following day, the Israeli government apologized to the United States and explained that the attack was a "tragic mistake."

It was almost certainly nothing of the kind. The Liberty, which the Israelis said had been mistaken for an Egyptian supply vessel, carried extensive identification, including a large American flag. Moreover, the Israeli air and sea attacks occurred in clear, clear weather in mid-afternoon, following a full seven days of overflights by large reconnaissance planes.

Yet, the Johnson administration accepted the Israeli explanation. A Navy conducted a court of inquiry which concluded that there was insufficient evidence to reach a judgment about the reasons for the Israeli attack. The surviving officers and crewmen of the Liberty were warned not to discuss the incident. Israel paid $6.7 million in claims filed by the families of the dead and wounded.

Now, 13 years later, the U.S. State Department has agreed to close its file on the Liberty in exchange for an additional lump payment of $6 million in damages. Presumably, this final payment is in consideration for a State Department finding that there was "no information to corroborate allegations of a deliberate attack."

The suspicion of a joint cover-up by U.S. and Israeli officials will not be dispelled by such a conclusion. It simply isn't possible to believe that skilled Israeli pilots flying repeated passes within a few hundred feet of the Liberty could identify it as anything other than what it was — a clearly marked U.S. Navy ship.

Why then was the Liberty attacked? The best guess is that the ship was monitoring Israeli and Egyptian communications at a time when the Six-Day War was raging at fever pitch.

We know now the Israelis were planning to storm the Syrian-held Golan Heights on June 9, the day after the Liberty was attacked. The Israelis undoubtedly knew that the Liberty was eavesdropping. They may well have decided to strike to preserve the secrecy of their impending attack and to preclude the possibility of U.S. diplomatic interference at a time when developments on the battlefield were clearly in Israel's favor.

Admitting as much, even now, would be deeply embarrassing for the Israelis. It is reasonable to assume that U.S. officials would be equally loath to discomfort a valuable ally and, in the process, indict their own past mishandling of the case.

Still, American officials in particular have a larger responsibility to the families of the Liberty's dead and to those who will bear the scars of this attack to their graves. They, and the American public, deserve more than the transparent cover-up that continues today more than a decade after the bloodiest peacetime attack on a U.S. Navy ship in this century.

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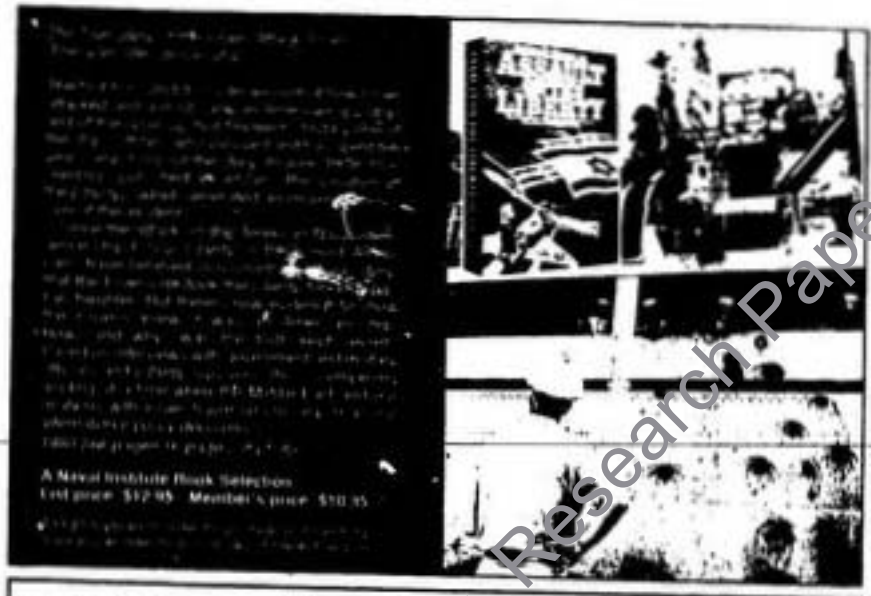

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New Tools for Crisis Management

By Hugh Ware

Prize Essay 1974

SECOND HONORABLE MENTION

In such diverse panic situations as the* Pueblo *affair, the USS* Liberty *incident, and the Dominican Republic intervention, mortified and angry Americans have watched their civilian and military leaders, knee-deep in hot water, fumbling in a battered tool box full, it seems, only with left-handed monkey wrenches and Philadelphia screwdrivers.

What do we mean by "crisis?" All of us recognize a crisis when we encounter one, but let us put some definition on record. A useful definition is: a political/military event or situation of considerable urgency that contains at least the potentials of Presidential involvement, resource/force management, and confrontation.

It is obvious that crises will continue to threaten the U.S. position; they will not disappear with a change in Administration, or the invention of a way of getting this nation's total energy requirements from old tires, or as a result of any other factor. It is only a little less obvious that crises will not only continue to arise but they will do so more frequently and in increasingly unforeseeable and novel ways.

It has been stated that our surveillance, command, control, and communication systems "must be efficient enough for day-to-day operations, extensive enough to serve in large-scale tactical operations, rigid and sufficiently controlled to ensure measured response in a nuclear war, and yet have the flexibility to provide the kind of rapid response necessary to deal with the often unanticipated components of a crisis." Although the American systems seem to work satisfactorily enough in the first three areas, the systems and their operators have often not done well in past crises.

President Nixon's Foreign Policy message of 1972 established what has since come to be known as the "Nixon Doctrine." His message recognized some of the more important realities of the geopolitical situation of our times, and this policy, perhaps with modifi-

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cations, will probably endure past this Administration's term in office. Here are the pertinent parts of his statement:

- We will maintain a nuclear deterrent adequate to meet any threat to the security of the United States or of our allies.
- We will help other nations develop the capability of defending themselves.
- We will honor all of our treaty commitments.
- We will act to defend our interests whenever and wherever they are threatened any place in the world.
- Where our interests or our treaty commitments are not involved, our role will be limited.

We have the nuclear weapons referred to in his first point, but their possession also means that we cannot allow anyone to involve us in a crisis to the point where we have to decide whether or not to use these weapons. The remaining points refer to the fact that no longer are we the economic and military top dog in the post-World War II era. Dr. Walt Rostow entitled his book, "The Diffusion of Power," a phrase that aptly describes what has been happening and will continue even more rapidly, particularly in the military area. We are becoming richer, the world also becomes richer, but our percentage of the world's wealth is decreasing. Many parts of the world have recently found themselves entangled in the pleasures and problems that traditionally have belonged only to Americans in general and to tiny minorities of the wealthy in other countries. Now it is our turn to secretly sense, sympathize, and act condescendingly matured as the [illegible] countries struggle with pollution, crowded streets, noise, and the other [illegible] of material wealth. Putting such human [illegible] aside, one must note that the diffusion of power will not only modify our response to crises, but will increase the probability of crises.

There are at least two [illegible]-producing aspects to this new-gained wealth. One direct definitely tends to cause tensions and hence crisis; the other can react either to cause crises or to reduce them. First, the newly-rich nations can support larger military establishments. This increases their sense of power and, consequently, their willingness to cause crises. Second, the importance of natural resources to modern industrial nations, their distribution around the globe, and the limits on their availability can be causes of crises. On the other hand, an apparent need for economic cooperation for mutual benefit can be a damper on potential crisis situations.

Look, for example, at the defense budgets of some of the countries where "progress" has arrived: 1.3 billion dollars per year (Iran), $1.24 billion (Brazil), $7 billion (France), $1 billion (Spain), and $1.33 billion (budgeted before the latest war of October 1973) in Israel. (The latter figure is 25% of the GNP of that country!) These countries are not acquiring obsolete weapons of World War II vintage—no ships from the Reserve Fleets, no Garand rifles from storage, and few obsolescent American aircraft. They buy the latest and the best—often equipment specifically designed for their needs, like the frigates and special support ships sold by the British or our Northrop F-5 Freedom Fighters. Sometimes, they purchase better equipment than the producing country has in its own inventory, such as the Bell helicopters for Iran. And for every nation that is supplied by the Free World, there is a counterpart equipped with late equipment by the Soviets and their allies. Some countries get the very latest models for trial in combat, as was demonstrated all too well in the Yom Kippur War.

This military affluence holds the potential for one horrifying form of growth and sophistication—nuclear weapons. Several nations can acquire at least a junior membership in the world's most exclusive club by the diversion of relatively small amounts of money, resources, and manpower. India detonated a nuclear device in mid-May. Israel is often discussed as a possible entry-seeker, and Brazil has actively debated the acquisition of nuclear weapons. The crisis-potential created by the possession or use of nuclear weapons by additional countries is obvious.

This newly gained affluence of much of the world exists largely due to the expenditure of natural resources, whether for materials or for the energy to transform, transport, and use those raw materials. It is problematic whether competition for the limited resources will create crises or dampen the chances of their happening. Are the rulers of a country which needs some imported resource apt to get nasty in order to maintain shipments? Or are they more apt to do everything possible to avoid or calm a crisis—for exactly the same reasons? The answer is that either course could be taken and accurate predictions are seldom possible. But it is a sobering thought, as we leave this subject, to reflect on recent discussions by some parties about annexation of Middle East oil lands in order to secure adequate and reliable oil supplies.

There remains one other lesson that recent history can teach us, and [illegible] the crisis manager should ponder upon at length. [illegible] seem to be inventing nastier and dirtier ways [illegible] trouble. The political and religious beliefs of many groups are being propagated in strange ways and the attention of the world is being sought by schemes and devices of gruesome ingenuity. Spend a moment recalling the exotic variety of hijackings, kidnappings, murders, and blackmailings that have been devised in recent years (whose victims often

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were innocent or, at best, most remotely connected with the protagonists) and then extrapolate into the future. The crisis manager will have an increasingly difficult and painful task. Americans may have to forego their traditional self-benevolence and adopt instead an Israeli-like attention to the long-term goals for the many while ignoring the short-term hurts to a few.

So much for a quick summation of the pressures that will tend to cause and shape crises. Let us now look more pointedly at the subject of this discussion—how well American surveillance, command, control, and communications systems have performed in crisis management. Let us take four crises to illustrate problems that still seem to be with us: the capture of the USS *Pueblo*, the attack on the USS *Liberty*, the landing of forces in the Dominican Republic, and the Cuban Missile crisis.

The story of the *Pueblo* is well-known, documented in books and congressional testimony—an electronic intelligence-gathering mission executed behind the walls of an intelligence operation, committed despite heightened tensions and an NSA warning of probable danger, under operational control of a commander (ComNavForJapan) who knew little of the mission but far more than did the White House Situation Room (WHSR) from which soon issued the now-famous battle cry of "What's a pueblo?"

The *Pueblo* tale is not a happy one except for the lessons it can teach us. The *Pueblo* case is an example of the problems that a crisis can present to a commander who has to locate appropriate force elements, formulate options using whatever is available, and present those options for decision-making to the National Command Authorities (NCA).

In the *Pueblo* case, the NCA were essentially out of the picture—in fact, the President was not notified of her capture until more than two hours after the WHSR first heard of the event because the National Security Advisor could offer no viable options in response to the inevitable presidential questions.

ComNavForJapan, however, was trying to do something. But the only option he perceived to be available was some sort of arrangement with the Air Force for protection. He figured a phone call was the quickest way. It took 20 minutes to place, there was difficulty in reaching the right person, and the planes were no longer on strip alert. Finally, two fighter-bombers took off with the proper loads, too late and too far away to help. But the nuclear carrier, USS *Enterprise* was within range of the *Pueblo* and could have come to the rescue, as could have Marine aircraft in Japan and (at least, theoretically) aircraft of the Republic of Korea. Sadly, these were all outside the access of ComNavForJapan, and the *Pueblo* was escorted into Wonsan without let or hinderance.

The lessons of this crisis are these: There had been no properly coordinated contingency plan due to the walls between Services, and between the intelligence community and the Services. It took too long for the news to traverse the PINNACLE/CRITIC chain (classified systems for electrical communications) to the WHSR and, when it did, the information was garbled. The lack of rapid, reliable, secure conferencing (voice or otherwise) was a constant handicap here, as in so many other crises.* The WHSR lacked the real-time information it should have had or been able to get. The *Enterprise*'s lack of response also could have been remedied by rapid access to data. Finally, the "people," especially the officers and crew of the *Pueblo*, should have been selected, trained, and exercised for better judgement and attention to the crisis-prone realities of the mission.

The American intervention in the Dominican Republic in 1965 presented a different set of problems. This crisis extended over a longer period than the preceding one and the problems were pervasive, not dramatic. Basically, they fell into two categories: coordination between the military and the diplomatic, and the processing of field reports in a rapidly changing political environment.

I remember how we deployed forces under General Bruce Palmer to try to arrange a truce between the rebels and the ruling junta (although a truer reason may have been that Castro's takeover of Cuba was too near in time and distance for comfort). As usual, the military reported up the chain, eventually to the President; the diplomats reported directly to the Secretary of State and the President. But, on the scene, there was absolutely no coordination between our political and military representatives, not even "respectful and cordial but empty communications," as Roberta Wohlstetter describes interservice coordination before Pearl Harbor. As a result, our diplomats were hopelessly confused every time either the rebels or the junta talked about military deployments. When the American Armed Forces opened a corridor between the airport and downtown Santo Domingo, it played havoc with the police negotiations and could have (but luckily didn't) caused much bloodshed.

General Palmer's report after the operation revealed that he could not exercise adequate command and

*The present systems are not doing the job. Major General Paschall, Director Command, Control, Communications, Headquarters U.S.A.F., recently stated, "If we have a major deficiency in the DoD communications business and in the command, control business, it is the lack of a good secure voice communications system," and the reader is invited to peruse the Autovon/Com Telephone Directory's complicated instructions for placing a secure conference call.

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As they examine the film they shot above, Lee Cristobal, Cuba, in October 1962, three Navy [illegible] see disturbing images that were not visible to their naked eye. In the photograph, above, the access roads, the five launch positions, the nearby missile erectors, and the profile markings confirm that the Soviets had transformed an agricultural area into a medium range ballistic missile [illegible]

control, he could not keep track of anyone's position, not even his own force's. He didn't lack reports, what he needed was something more than his extremely limited conventional capability if he were to process the reports resulting from operations against urban guerrillas.

The attack on the USS *Liberty* was a crisis that can be characterized as a main dish of poor communications, with a dash of a bad "people" factor, and a pinch of unimaginative, sloppy staff work among the operational commands involved, all smothered in the sauce of failure-to-follow-through's. It was another intelligence gathering mission, this time in the Mediterranean in June 1967 to monitor the radio traffic of the Israelis and Egyptians, and once again the operational commands weren't able to take good care of the chicks that appeared in their nests. When the war broke out, the *Liberty* was under CINCSIX, but soon was transferred to the Sixth Fleet's aegis. A few hours later, the ships of the Sixth Fleet had been ordered to withdraw beyond 100 miles from the coast. Nobody passed the word to the new member of the Fleet although the *Liberty* was then only 12½ miles off the coast of the Sinai Peninsula.

However, someone, [illegible] was alert and worrying; a telephone call was made to the duty officer at CinCUSNavEur who decided to wait for the confirming [illegible] message; it got misrouted and went via AUTODIN to the Philippines, and thus affairs went. Several messages were sent, all arrived too late or never arrived, so 34 men died and a Navy ship was for only [illegible] sinking.

Reading the testimony in the *Liberty* case leaves one shaking one's head—how could so many things go wrong at the same time? But, offsetting this wonderment is the amazement that any orders at all managed to percolate down through that complicated C^3 structure even though it took too long to do. The *Liberty* case is a failure in all three elements of C^3—*command* was not exercised properly; *control* was not maintained; and *communications* (in the overall sense) were atrocious. Good acknowledgment procedures would have ensured that the orders issued were effecting control, while some effective point-to-point communications bypassing the C^3 layer cake might have prevented the crisis altogether.

The Cuban Missile Crisis was probably the most serious crisis of recent years, and most people feel that it was one that we handled with considerable success. In effect, we lucked out. In spite of the many failures of our systems, we got away with it, perhaps because the Russian Bear's moves were tentative and probing and he didn't have a world-wide, offensive-capable Navy at the time. General Paschall described the exist-

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ing facts of life nicely when he said, ". . . President Kennedy found out things were a little uncoupled in the Cuban Missile Crisis of 1962."

This is the crisis that perhaps best illustrates the problems of the interfaces between the military structure and the civilian NCA because of differences of vocabulary, background, and needs. This was the crisis in which the Secretary of Defense talked directly with the commander of a destroyer intercepting a Russian missile-laden freighter (and this highest-to-lowest communication led, in part, to the issuing of DoD Directive 5100.30 covering the Worldwide Military Command and Control System (WWMCCS)). But this was also the crisis in which much of the actual diplomatic message-passing was via a newsman (hence, the resulting establishment of the Moscow-Washington "hot line").

This was the crisis in which vocabulary confusion vied with the lack of suitable preplanned options. The Navy, when asked by the NCA for a "quarantine," tried to furnish a "blockade." The President, however, merely wanted the interception of only the missile-carrying ships. (When this was straightened out, the quarantine line was set 500 miles farther out than the President desired—and he wanted to use the close-in line to provide time for negotiations.)

The Air Force, meanwhile, was also "doing things by the numbers." Several months earlier, the President had announced that SAC aircraft would no longer be deployed to municipal airports. But SAC aircraft, for some reason, did deploy to city airports in this crisis. They also went to other deployment bases throughout the South, a fine defense against Russian missiles from the homeland, but of dubious value against Russian ABMs in Cuba. To compound the confusion, the aircraft of the Tactical Air Command also deployed to some of the same southern fields in preparation for possible action against Cuba.

The Air Force response to the President's query about a "surgical strike" has raised questions as to whether this was a vocabulary problem or a lack of flexibility in supplying options for the unexpected demands of a crisis. The President wanted to know if we could strike only at the missiles, with little peripheral damage. He was told that he got only one response—a plan for some 500 sorties against Cuba, including defense-suppression waves, attacks on airports and military installations, and so on throughout the gamut of tactical aerial warfare. All in all, it cannot be said that the planning was a standout feature in this crisis, and it is obvious that the military and civilians had differing vocabularies.

There were many other weak areas in that crisis, such as the slowness of the initial intelligence to flow from the agent in the field to the NCA's attention, the straying of a U-2 flight over Russia which was construed as such an ambiguous signal that some Russian leaders urged a preemptive strike against us, and so forth. There was even the unanswerable (at the moment, at least) question by the President as to whether a Russian-speaking officer would be available on the intercepting destroyer. (The data is always in the system somewhere but how do you get it out quickly?)

Out of the Cuban Missile Crisis we got the promise of WWMCCS, the Russians got the reality of a vastly improved navy, and both countries share the hot line. Most of the other lessons of that crisis produced little fruit, and there is still much to be done.

Napoleon once said: "The great evil of our Navy is that the men who command it are unused to all the risks of command." A good defense can be made for the equally strong statement, "The great evil of our present C^2 structure is that the men who command it are unused to all the varied challenges of a crisis."

It would seem, through deliberate consideration or lack of it, that, it has been tacitly accepted that the conventional, existing C^2 structures can handle the strategic or large-scale tactical wars, day-to-day peacetime operations, and the occasional crisis as it comes along. But history has proved us that crises are not satisfactorily managed when we are "unused to all the risks"; and major improvements are needed in our C^2 structure and the people who run it.

Some improvements *are* being made, of course. The Defense Communications Agency was recently tasked by JCS to improve crisis management, and other agencies are at work in this area. WWMCCS, by definition, is a large part of the crisis-management structure, and it was reassuring to see WWMCCS revitalized by Deputy Secretary of Defense Packard after its long Halloween disguise as the cover for an ADPE buy. The WWMCCS improved communications and proposed computer interretting (with its consequent use of common software programs and sharing of data bases) may be of considerable usefulness in future crises.

The area of communications in its entirety needs tremendous improvements. For instance, Congressional investigations have revealed that less than half of AUTOVON calls are completed and any AUTOVON user knows the quality is often not up to Ma Bell's standards. It is estimated that over 1,000 messages are lost each day in the defense global communications networks, and there are a host of procedural errors (try on for size the idea of FLASH messages going to information addressees but not to the action addressees). One table in a congressional investigation report shows that only a PRIORITY message actually gets transmitted

James M. Emes, Jr. Research Papers

and received within its DoD objective time (3 hours); a FLASH message (10 minutes) takes an average of 69 minutes.

It is obvious that one great need in crisis communications is a positive-acknowledgment procedure—not just a message-center receipt but, ideally perhaps, a full repeat of the message so the original sender can proof-read what the receiver says he received. Crisis after crisis has shown instances where messages have been sent but not received, or received in garbled form. A positive acknowledgment procedure would eliminate this problem.

Technology, either existing or within the state-of-the-art, can help crisis management. Satellites, for instance, could provide the highest-to-lowest direct communications so desired by recent Presidents, and the speed of digital communications combined with techniques such as time division multiplexing could furnish the vertical conferencing that increasingly is considered to be the ideal way of altering the C^3 structure when necessary in a crisis while benefiting from the expertise resident in its layers.

There are many other areas where technology can help. Improved sensors and reconnaissance systems are one group. The potentials of airborne communications platforms like TACAMO and the equivalent Air Force relay aircraft are obvious, and the capabilities of the airborne command posts for crisis management need consideration (especially those of the Advanced Airborne Command Posts although they are currently planned for the strategic role only). The AWACS aircraft are capable of being far more than airborne aircraft warning and control sites; the computing and display power on board has to be capable of useful application in some crises.

An important part of crisis management is people, and this problem has two parts. One has to do with the "smart" ones, the leaders, the doers; the other is concerned with the people who do routine things, and these are the people who should be designed out of the system. The *Liberty* crisis saw messages misrouted by errors in assigning routing indicators and by apparent stupidity; other crises saw errors in assembling data, and thus the sad story goes on and on.

Automation can eliminate much of this problem, but what does one do about the first category of "people"—they are just the people who can't be automated. And, from the [illegible] down, they are the ones who need special attention if crises are to be successfully managed.

Selection, training, tests, and exercises all help. So does emphasis on discipline, such as curbing the sharp increase in communications use during a crisis and the even steeper shift to using the higher levels of precedences. There are additional ways to see that the people do a better job and acquire a "crisis attitude" of course, but space allows little more discussion. Let me make one final point.

Many *Proceedings* readers will play a part in a crisis or two in their professional careers. Perhaps the most important lesson they should absorb is that crises almost always demand the creation of an *ad hoc* C^3 structure, and an *ad hoc* staff and planning to go with it. So found the Fitzhugh Blue Ribbon Defense Panel of 1970 when they investigated the workings of the DoD. So be prepared (to mix the jargon of two generations) to hang loose and keep your cool. The existing layered organizations and communications will rarely do the job in a crisis; someone will invent some simplified structure on the spot that will prove reasonably workable. Perhaps that someone may be you or you will help him. One may find that, metaphorically speaking, the only tools available are the proverbial non-existent left-handed monkey wrenches and Philadelphia screwdrivers (improperly used tools or tool-substitutes). But, somehow, a workable *ad hoc* structure will probably result.

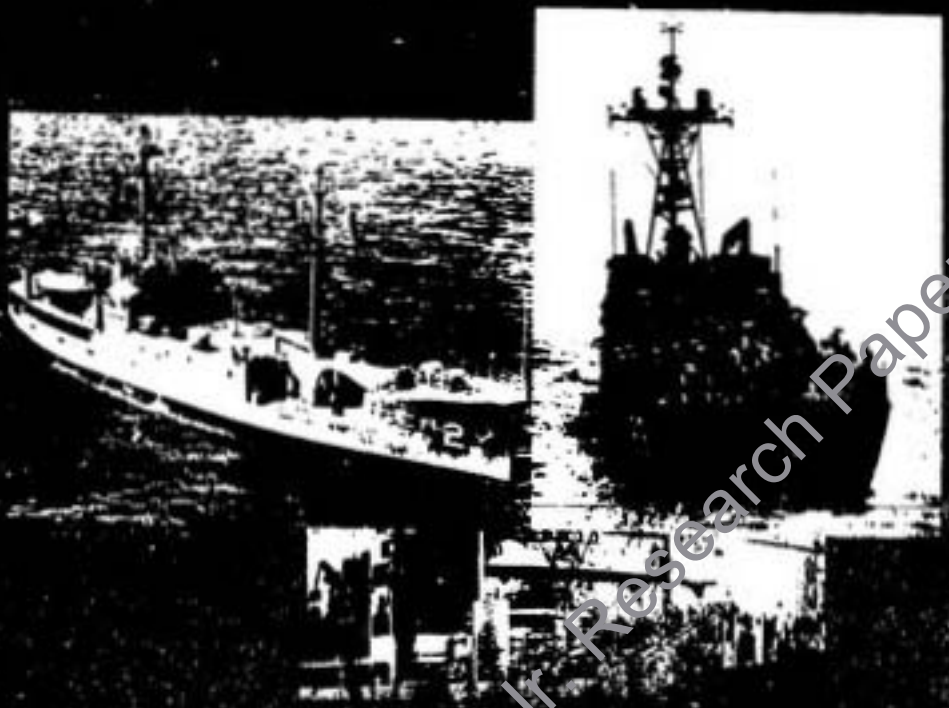
It is so easy to shrug off the problems of crisis management. Crises don't happen very often (perhaps five a year); they usually happen to someone else somewhere else on the other side of the world; they are *many*—one can't do much in the way of preplanning options except for a few probable crises; and, when a crisis does occur, one may have to manage it as best one can with an impromptu C^3 structure.

Yet it is in crises that the world approaches the precipice of nuclear war, that the pains of a few of mankind's representatives are spotlighted, that governments topple and people are killed. It is in crises that the military man's resourcefulness is most severely tested because it is then that the civilian/military interface is most prominent, important, difficult, and highly stressed. Be glad that some attention is being paid to the problems of crisis management; be ready to perform well when your time comes.

Mr. Ware served in the U.S. Army Infantry and Signal Corps during World War II and the Korean Occupation. After the war he joined the U.S. Naval Reserve and served inactively until his discharge in 1951. He spent seven years as head of his own contracting business and has been employed primarily in high technology areas with Raytheon, Yale and High Voltage Engineering, and in communications with WCBH and WCBH-TV. He now works in the Command Systems Engineering Department of the MITRE Corporation, a Federal Contract Research Center.

This paper is based on interim results of a continuing, internally funded study by the MITRE Corporation. The program is examining the role of Surveillance, Command, Control, and Communications in the 1980s under the leadership of John C. Morgenstern. Contributors include P. H. Bailey, E. J. Lowman, J. F. Jacobs, C. F. Nuthmann, S. E. Rose, and the author.

James M. Ennes, Jr. Research Papers



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(Continued from page 23)

"The Violation of the 'Liberty'"
(See R. K. Smith, pp. 62-70, June 1978 Proceedings)

Ivor C. Tresse—Dr. Smith recounts in graphic detail the ordeal of the crew of the U. S. intelligence ship *Liberty* (AGTR-5) during the Six Day War of June 1967. His discussion rightly highlights the acts of heroism and sacrifice by the men on board the ill-fated ship, and is of significant historical interest because it clearly describes the events of the attack. But his article falls short of offering proof that the Israeli government knew in advance that the ship its aircraft and torpedo boats attacked was American and that the attacks were indeed intended by the government to suppress any knowledge of Israeli successes against Egypt. He fails to inform us at what level the decision—if indeed a decision was made—to attack the *Liberty* was reached. Does the blame lie with the pilots of the warplanes or the commanders of the torpedo boats, or with the local commanders, or at some higher level of authority? After 11 years of dispute, these critically important unknowns remain. At best, Dr. Smith offers us the chronology of a tragedy, a chronicle which provides little additional insight into the reasons behind the horror and shame of the Israeli attack on the *Liberty*. This is unfortunate because an objective analysis of the future course of the relationship between the United States and Israel in which their interests would be served best can be achieved only by a complete and dispassionate review of all available information. Where information cannot be obtained, such an analysis must recognize that certain conclusions cannot be drawn which, if in error, could damage both nations' interests.

One wishes that Dr. Smith had stated his contention more clearly. He implies that the Israelis were ready to go to any lengths to prevent information about their successes during the opening days of the third Arab-Israeli war from being publicized. He argues that the Israeli government feared U.S. and Soviet pressures for a cease-fire before Israel could assure its security through victory. His observation that "Any instrument which sought to penetrate this smoke screen so carefully thrown around the normal 'fog of war' would have to be frustrated" implies a conscious Israeli governmental decision to curtail all U.S. intelligence efforts by whatever means were available. Yet, he gives no evidence that this indeed was so.

Dr. Smith's arguments that the jamming of U.S. communications frequencies was "proof" of official Israeli knowledge of, and culpability for, the attacks against the U. S. ship is suspect also. Were the Israelis jamming Egyptian or Soviet frequencies as well? Was the jamming specific to the *Liberty* attack, or was it only part of a general practice carried on throughout the short conflict? Again, Dr. Smith's discussion does not consider many of the difficult questions that have remained unanswered even after the official Israeli apology and explanation.

Finally, his [illegible] juxtaposition of the *Panay* incident with the *Liberty* tragedy shows an insensitivity to the divergent cultural heritages of the Japanese and Israeli people and a misuse of history to draw questionable parallels. And, there is little recognition of the vastly different political-military milieux pertaining in 1937 and 30 years later. The result is that this comparison provides little understanding of the point Dr. Smith has tried to make and indeed is peripheral to his thesis.

At the time of the *Panay* incident, imports from the United States figured importantly in the plans of the Japanese government, much like U.S. assistance to Israel has since 1948. But Dr. Smith shows slight recognition of the importance of U. S. public opinion to the future of this trade for both countries. In 1937, U. S. public opinion was running 59% against Japan, 1% for, and the rest undecided, according to Thomas A. Bailey's *A Diplomatic History of the American People* (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1969). Faced with cries from Congress and vocal pressure groups to do something in response to the Japanese involvement in the July 1937 "China Incident" at the Marco Polo Bridge in Peking, President F. D. Roosevelt, shackled by the Neutrality Acts, threatened to impose economic sanctions against both China and Japan, although China's trade with the United States was but a trickle compared to what Japan imported. Given this background, plus the plausible explanation [illegible] by the Japanese that [illegible] had [illegible] Tokyo and mistakenly own attacked the clearly marked U.S. gunboat, it is easy to understand the Japanese government's desire to apologize and pay full monetary reparation.

On the other hand, Israel in 1967 was clearly the public favorite, enjoying its "underdog" status and the sympathy of the American people. The threat, much less the possibility, that U.S. assistance would be cut off could not have figured prominently in the minds of Israeli leaders. When the Israeli government offered its apologies, Washington and many Americans accepted, although the official Israeli explanation met with criticism and rejection by some. Nevertheless, the historical and cultural heritage of Israel and the self-confidence and chauvinism of the Israeli people may have precluded the massive national outpouring of grief that was the reaction of the Japanese people in 1937 and 1938, perhaps shamed by the reckless behavior of unthinking pilots. Dr. Smith points with some disdain to this lack of a national reaction to the *Liberty* attack, as if to imply that such callousness could have permitted the attack to take place.

The ordeal of the *Liberty* unquestionably has been the "Navy's bloodiest 'peacetime' international in-

James M. Eagles Jr. Research Papers

cident of the twentieth century." Dr. Smith's article provides an important service in that the events of the actual attack on the *Liberty* have been clearly chronicled. But his discussion of the causes of the attack, much more important in the long run than the attack itself, is deficient; he leaves many critical questions hanging fire. At a time when the traditional U.S.-Israeli relationship is being closely scrutinized in Washington and elsewhere, this shortcoming is regrettable. The deafening silence as to "why?" and "how?" creates an ambiance for conjecture and possible recriminations, a result which will certainly fail to serve the best interests of both countries.

The Alcoholic Navy

Lieutenant Commander H.G. Rubens, U. S. Navy—There is no doubt that the Navy has an alcoholism problem of high magnitude. Statistics prove it, our dry docks prove it, and if there are some who don't believe it, they need only look next door or perhaps in the mirror.

Unlike Commander Cloward (April 1978 *Proceedings*, p. 21), however, I have the answer to the problem. It lies in the attitude reflected by the statement Commander Cloward attributed to a senior officer, "I drink that much and it doesn't bother me." I have heard the same statement many times from senior and junior officers, and senior and junior enlisted personnel. We are educated in alcohol problems. Every Navy supervisor or division officer has had plenty of instruction to confirm the existence of the problems, define the symptoms, and identify the treatment. The solution lies in prevention.

How do we prevent alcoholism? We probably can never prevent it 100%, but we can make a start by convincing those "senior officers" not to "drink that much." We can eliminate low cost drinks at "happy hours," "beer busts," and package stores. We can have a party or two without depending on alcohol to provide the entertainment. We can get strict with officers and enlisted personnel who bring liquors and beer aboard ship (which is against Navy directives in the first place). We can prohibit transport of liquors, wine, and beer on board Navy ships and aircraft and get out of the liquor business at foreign bases where prices are cheap. We can outlaw those Navy traditions which use liquor as a reward or gift, for initiations, or as toasting mediums. We can remove beer machines from BOQs, BEQs, officer and enlisted messes and from Navy exchange snack bars and cafeterias. We can make alcohol totally unavailable through Navy sources, discourage its use at Navy-sponsored social functions, and require specific comments on fitness reports and evaluations concerning an individual's attitude and performance regarding the use of alcohol.

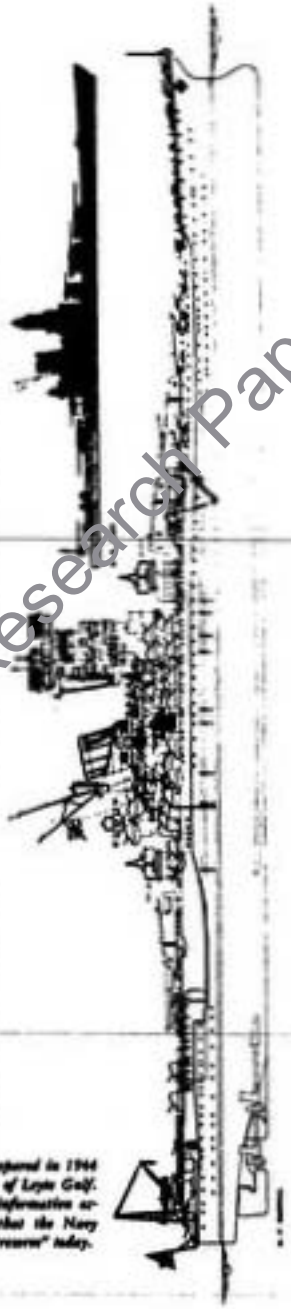
Sound harsh? We take this exact approach with drugs. Yet we continue to condone alcohol's use, encourage its sale, refuse to hold drinkers responsible for their actions while under the influence, and generally promote alcohol as standard Navy equipment. Could it be we really don't want to stop alcoholism in the Navy? Of course we do; we just don't want to stop drinking!

"What Ship Is That?"

See E. J. Mathews, pp. 61-73, July 1978 Proceedings.

Chief Ship Maintenance Technician Robert P. Sumrall, U. S. Naval Reserve, Curator of Ship Models, U. S. Naval Academy Museum—Commander Mathews has presented an interesting account of the preparation of ONI recognition manuals during World War II. It is a prime example of how the Naval Reserve has been able to meet specific needs of the Navy almost instantaneously.

Considering the information with which the section had to work, its output must be considered outstand-



The small drawing of the Yamato was prepared in 1944 from photographs taken during the Battle of Leyte Gulf. Chief Sumrall's drawing, prepared from information assembled after World War II, suggests that the Navy has a latter-day Commander Mathews in "reserve" today.

James M. Eynes, Jr. Research Papers

come up: tied to the appearance of nuclear submarines can regular diesel submarines find application in a future war?

"Regardless of the fact that diesel submarines defer to nuclear submarines with respect to their characteristics they still have not lost their military value.

"In the course of military operations at sea there may arise those missions, for the execution of which it would be irrational to use long range nuclear submarines.

"Modern diesel submarines can successfully carry out reconnaissance, operate against enemy transport convoys, attack shore targets of the enemy with missiles and carry out other combat missions.

"The construction of diesel submarines is tied to the expenditure of less money and material resources. The construction times for these diesel submarines are less than for nuclear submarines."

A recent study for the Brazilian Navy determined that the *Barbel* class could be duplicated at a unit price of $50 million (1977 dollars). If one adds the cost of a modern sonar suite and a reasonable estimate for the lifetime cost for fuel, it appears that a squadron of about six small non-nuclear submarines might be constructed for the same cost as one *ten*-class nuclear attack boat. Manning such a squadron would require more people than that required by the one *ten*-class vessel, but, since nuclear training and bonuses would not be required for such crews, significant personnel cost savings could result.

Whether a few such diesel submarine squadrons should be built is strongly dependent upon the missions assigned to the submarine force. An objective assessment of the non-nuclear submarine's ability to accomplish some of these missions should include consideration of the experience of one NATO staff [illegible] commander: "Time and again we find, regretfully, that there is still no answer to the *well-handled* modern diesel."

Former Secretary of Commerce Elliot Richardson was quoted when giving a self-portrait to that department as his official portrait "You may be asking yourself, 'Why not the best?' The answer is, of course, it's too expensive." Non-nuclear submarines are weapon platforms that are much less expensive to build, maintain, and man, yet they can carry the same weapons load as their expensive, full capability, nuclear counterparts. Mr. Chapman is right; we need to design smaller, simpler, cheaper nuclear subs. But while we are waiting for them, we should use a portion of our resources to construct some of the simple, small reliable submarines we already know how to build.

In the 1950s Admiral H. G. Rickover led a difficult crusade to persuade the Navy to accept the nuclear-powered submarine. In the hubris left from that successful battle, let us not forget that there were and are cogent arguments that support a mix of both kinds of vessels. It is time to stop designing the best submarines that the world has ever seen and, based upon an objective evaluation of our needs, start constructing the most effective naval force that this nation can afford.

"The Violation of the 'Liberty'"

(See R. A. Smith, pp. 62-70, June 1978; C. E. Tayer, pp. 91-93, September 1978 *Proceedings*)

Norman Polmar—The article ignores the real-world history of the past three decades. On a legal basis, an intelligence collection platform outside of a country's territorial seas or air space is immune to attack or capture during peace.

However, international law is only as valid as its enforcement or acceptance. Since World War II, intelligence collection platforms have been "fair game" in the cold war and actual combat encounters. The United States should have learned this in 1950 when a Navy PBMY-2 Privateer was shot down by Soviet aircraft over the Baltic with loss of the entire crew.

Put simply, in the post-war era the intelligence collection platform is at risk and, as has been demonstrated by the political and military actions over the past 30 years, some fraction of those at risk will be lost. A dozen U.S. intelligence aircraft have been lost over or along the borders of the U.S.S.R. and mainland China, including the U-2 downed on May Day 1960. The United States lost another U-2 over Cuba in 1962, an RF-8 Crusader was shot down over Laos in June 1964, and an EC-121 aircraft and the intelligence ship *Pueblo* were later lost to the North Koreans. There have reportedly been some close calls for U. S. submarines on covert reconnaissance missions in northern waters.

Other nations, notably Egypt, Israel, and Taiwan, have lost intelligence collection aircraft to hostile action because they operated too close to or over the territory of their antagonists. Indeed, on 7 September 1950, U. S. Navy fighters shot down a Soviet bomber type aircraft over international waters while the Red plane was apparently flying reconnaissance against a U. S. carrier in the Yellow Sea. The Soviet plane, flying from Port Arthur, was shot down with loss of [illegible] board.

Thus, despite the requirements of international law, the real world of the last three decades has demonstrated that intelligence collection platforms are operated at risk when near or over another nation's territory. Commander Sixth Fleet knew this in June 1967 when he ordered the *Liberty* to open from 12 to 100 miles from the coast. The question is not whether the Israelis were right or wrong from a legal viewpoint; the action was wrong from a moral viewpoint . . . but it should have been expected (as it was by some), and we could not then nor should we now pound the table over technical points while missing the basic historical facts of the past 30 years.

"The Naval Reserve: Separate and Unequal"

(See R. W. Lyons, pp. 44-51, July 1978; C. N. Dragonette, p. 21, September 1978 *Proceedings*)

Commander Adalbert A. Balonek, U. S. Naval Reserve—It took a recent graduate of the Armed Forces Staff College to unmask the fiction that passed for and still masquerades under the name Total Force. Not only the

James M. Enright Jr. Research Papers

"Grading the Fitness Report"

(by F. M. Snyder, pp. 48-51, September 1978 Proceedings)

Lieutenant Joseph M. Mattaffer, U. S. Navy—In raising many germane questions about what qualities should be evaluated, Captain Snyder failed to touch on what I believe to be the more systemic cause of exaggerated grading in officers' fitness reports: the bureaucratic expectations of the Navy. How many commanding officers consider "average performance" for these officers acceptable? In my nine years of active service at four different commands the term "average performance" has been synonymous with substandard.

Certainly this is a broad generalization from a limited data base, but there are several factors that support such an assertion. First, officers are presumably recruited because they possess a high degree of personality traits specified on the fitness report form. Second, when commissioned, the officer is officially notified that he or she is the repository of special trust and confidence and is admonished to carefully and diligently discharge all assigned duties. Third, once on active duty, a naval officer is given every opportunity to excel in a challenging environment of heavy operating schedules, reduced manning, limited funds, and short-fused tasking. So the last thing the Navy expects from its officers is average performance.

Clearly, a major cause of inflated fitness report grading is the fact that the performance criteria for being a typically effective officer are so ambiguous that reporting seniors are unwilling to debase such efforts for the sake of creating a statistical aberrant. This problem is further complicated by the present use of fitness reports for purposes other than performance evaluation—such as discriminating career officers and recommending junior officers. The fitness report has become a means for convincing officers that they have a viable future in the Navy. As a result, these reports are required to serve two masters: one which evaluates an officer's potential worth and another which wants recognition for effort put forth.

Given these complexities, the problem in any consideration of improving the officer evaluation system is how to deflate superior performance into a bell-shaped curve without reducing the overall morale of the officer corps. I recommend attacking this dilemma simultaneously on two planes.

Initially, stricter documentation must be required for all officers evaluated above "typically effective." If the documentation is lacking, the fitness report should be returned by the Bureau of Naval Personnel to the command for correction or explanation. Right now there is no penalty for submitting a fitness report with top numerical grades which are not fully substantiated in the write-up. Unfortunately, there can be no effective stratification of officers' performance until these non-evaluative functions are discarded.

Captain Snyder noted some qualities that should be documented in a fitness report, such as comments on potential performance in the next higher pay grade and type of assignment best suited for the officer. I would also add significant contributions to the accomplishment of the command's mission as an important area for consideration. By categorically increasing the burden of proof in each of these three categories, I believe a more accurate means for discriminating performance levels among officers might evolve.

In conjunction with stricter documentation, demonstrative meaning must also be given to the term "typically effective officer" by providing higher retention rates for junior officers and meaningful career progressions for senior officers so graded. The Navy must recognize the fact, that despite its high performance expectations, half of its officers are, by statistical definition, below average. Undoubtedly, this must be seen as the mathematical construct that it is. Without such a bureaucratic curtainin which accepts a typically effective officer as a valued member of the organization, exaggerated grading seems to be a blight that will continue no matter how the mechanics of the reporting system are revamped.

Unless the bureaucratic pressures pushing fitness report grades to the left are tempered by enforceable standards for discriminating between levels of performance, reporting seniors will remain reluctant, and rightly so, to apply tougher criteria to the top performing blocks for fear of destroying the morale of their wardrooms.

"The Violation of the 'Liberty'"

(by B. K. Smith, pp. 42-70, June 1978; S. C. Tower, pp. 93-95, September 1978; N. Palmer, p. 88, October 1978; T. Moran, pp. 111-115, November 1978 Proceedings)

Virgil L. Brownfield—At the time I was a member of the USS *Liberty* (AGTR-5) who was on the bridge as Captain McGonagle's telephone talker during the Israeli attacks on 8 June 1967, it was with the greatest interest that I read Richard Smith's "Violation of the *Liberty*." Of all the material I've collected and read through the years, it is the most accurate.

One thing Dr. Smith neglected to mention—maybe it wasn't in the documents he used—was a small "Piper Cub"-type airplane which circled the ship between the transport-type aircraft's first and second overflights. The small plane flew close aboard, obviously taking pictures. Several of us waved, as it was not unusual for us to be photographed on any of our deployments.

Commander Paul E. Tobin, U. S. Navy—Dr. Smith's recent article on the USS *Liberty* (AGTR-5) incident rekindles many thoughts of what transpired after the attack on the *Liberty* and how the damaged ship was delivered safely to port. As engineer officer of the USS *Davis* (DD-937), I boarded the *Liberty* the morning after the tragic attack and remained with her until she was turned over to shipyard personnel in Malta.

On 8 July 1967, the *Davis* was steaming in the screen of Carrier Task Force 60, approximately 500 miles from the scene of the attack. Late in the afternoon, the *Davis*, with Commander Destroyer Squadron Twelve embarked and in company with the USS *Massey* (DD-778), was directed by

James M. Furniss JF Research Papers

Commander Sixth Fleet to proceed to aid the stricken *Liberty*. Steaming at over 30 knots throughout the night, the two destroyers arrived at the scene early the next morning. The *Liberty* was lying dead in the water with blast damage and scorch marks covering most of the topside area. A 10° starboard list complicated transfer of assistance personnel from the *Davis*, and therefore, the commanding officer chose to moor alongside the damaged ship. This maneuver was accomplished with no damage and allowed the transfer of personnel, food, and supplies to the *Liberty*'s exhausted crew. After the *Davis*' crew rendered assistance for nearly seven hours, Commander Sixth Fleet directed the *Liberty* to proceed to port under her own power, if possible, or under tow.

The *Davis* was directed to provide necessary assistance and placed a 20-man team on board the *Liberty* for the transit. This group was headed by the ComDesRon Twelve chief staff officer and consisted of the *Davis*' engineer officer, the damage control assistant, and leading petty officers from the damage control, electrician, interior communication, and boilerman groups. A signalman and several boatswain's mates were included because the *Liberty*'s communications facilities were inoperative and extensive high-lining would be required.

The account that follows is a narrative of what transpired during the next five days based on my personal experience. In this discussion, there is no attempt to speculate on the events surrounding the attack. Rather, it is an effort to demonstrate that classroom and shipboard damage control training continue to be an important part of the naval profession.

Damage control is a difficult subject to teach in the classroom, and a great deal of imagination and enthusiasm is required to make practical shipboard damage control training effective. Navy men are required to think about it unthinkable as they study ashore or drill their repair parties on board ship. Firefighting and flooding trainers do much to create the atmosphere of a disaster at sea, but when the moment comes, few men are fully prepared to deal with the realities of a fire out of control, massive flooding, or the possibility of instability and capsizing.

On the morning after the attack, the first order of business was the evacuation of casualties. This was accomplished by sailors from the *Davis* and helicopters from other Sixth Fleet units. The remainder of the crew suffered from shock and exhaustion and could well have been evacuated with the seriously injured, but fortunately those uninjured or with only minor injuries chose to remain on board to conduct salvage operations. Their intimate knowledge of the damage of this large, unique, and uncompromising ship was extremely valuable in preventing further major damage and reaching port.

The [illegible] bulkheads, deformed topside structure, and the hundreds of jagged and fragment holes were mute testimony to the severity of repeated strafing attacks. What was less evident was the cause of the ominous

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James M. Barnes, Jr. Research Papers



U.S. Navy

When U.S. Sixth Fleet ships reached the Liberty the morning after the attack, she was dead in the water and listing 10° to starboard. One of the first priorities was to inspect the torpedo hole in the starboard side.

10° list. The torpedo hit occurred on the starboard side of the number three hold and opened the entire hold to the sea. This hold had been reconfigured to house the research spaces, but there was no watertight integrity between the partitioned spaces in the hold. Aluminum bulkheads and joiner doors provided the required separation. The size of the torpedo hole was not known, but reports of those present when the torpedo hit indicated the flooding had been rapid. The flooding had been so rapid that a decision was made to secure the hatch on the first watertight deck over the hold.

On the morning of 9 July, the crew concluded that the hold was completely flooded solid. Since the progressive listing had long since stabilized, it was assumed that the flooding had stopped. The question remained why the ship was listing in the entire space, which was symmetrical about the centerline, was flooded.

Before the ship could be towed or proceed under her own power, several basic questions had to be answered. What force was pushing the ship over 10° to starboard? If spaces other than the hold were flooded, how was the ship's structure affected? What amount of residual roll stability remained in the battered hull? How would the ship be affected by a 20-knot beam wind? Was there a danger of capsizing? Finally, if the ship were taken under tow, were the keel and hull girder sufficiently intact to prevent the ship from breaking up under the strain of a bow tow?

The first step was to consult the liquid loading diagrams which all Navy vessels routinely carry. A study of these charts revealed that there were several fuel oil and fresh water tanks as well as voids located below number three hold. All of the ship's tanks and voids were sounded and the contents examined. The presence of salt water in voids, fuel tanks, and fresh water tanks gave some clues to the extent of the damage and explained the starboard list. The troubling conclusion was that if the damage extended to these spaces below the hold, the torpedo hole was much larger than originally estimated and located closer to the keel.

Using the ship's inclining experiment report and a new set of draft readings passed from the *Davis*, the salvage team calculated the residual stability. All those associated with the salvage were relieved when it was determined that a sufficient margin of transverse stability remained to ensure an adequate righting arm if heavy weather was encountered. Further analysis revealed that the tanks and voids nearest the keel had not been damaged, and that the keel was most likely intact. Therefore, a towing operation was possible, but propulsion by the ship's engines was preferable because of the damage forward. The next two steps were to determine the damage to the main engineering plant and to adjust the list to the best condition for getting under way. This meant righting the ship. It was clear from the draft readings that the ship was loaded down with flooding and firefighting water, and, therefore, counterflooding was an unacceptable alternative. A transfer from starboard to port of some of the remaining 250,000 gallons of fuel on board was selected. After approximately 40,000 gallons were pumped, the ship returned to an even keel momentarily. Then, with an unexpected and frightening shudder, the vessel commenced listing in the opposite direction. After a gradually diminishing oscillation from a starboard to port list the ship finally stabilized. It was subsequently determined that this unexpected shift to a port list was caused by the large volume of loose water throughout the ship.

As the efforts at righting the ship were taking place, the engineers were carefully examining the main engineering plant to determine the feasibility of raising steam. The Vic-

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tory ships possessed a reliable and relatively simple steam turbine plant with two header-type boilers. Unfortunately, these plants used gravity to assist the operation of the feed and main lube oil systems. Parts of these systems were located high in the superstructure and were vulnerable to strafing attack damage. Hundreds of ma[illegible] bullets and metal fragments [illegible]ged in the insulation of both [illegible] and the crew was not able to [illegible] determine what punctures or [illegible] resulted. Furthermore, the morning soundings revealed a large unexplained consumption of feed water which indicated a massive leak somewhere in the system. Additionally, the loss of key engineering personnel necessitated a crash course for the *Davis'* sailors who were on board to assist the *Liberty*'s remaining engineers.

With the ship righted, it seemed possible that the water level in the flooded space would now be below the level of the secured hatch above hold three. The dogs were, therefore, carefully loosened to detect leakage, but only hot air was detected. When the hatch was partially opened, the observers were bathed in a wash of oil fumes and steam. The damaged space apparently had not been [illegible] isolated, and a ruptured low pressure steam line clearly was the source of the mysterious feed water consumption. Unfortunately, the water in the space was covered with a thick layer of fuel oil so no estimate of the damage below could be made by peering through the hatch. There were thought to have been all men in the various spaces in the hold, and their fate was still unknown. Using eductors and portable pumps, the damage control team commenced to clear the oil from the spaces. There was little hope of dewatering the space, but the removal of most of the surface oil seemed possible.

The work of the electricians during the first 24 hours was of fundamental importance. In order to have any hope of reenergizing the ship's electrical systems, all of the major electrical cables which were open or grounded had to be located and repaired. This complex and tedious process was completed rapidly, and the work of the electricians was clearly evident in the form of hundreds of tagged and dead ended cables. Within hours it became possible to commence energizing lighting and ventilation throughout the ship. These measures bolstered morale and speeded damage control efforts.

A survey of the main engineering plant revealed no major machinery damage. It was, therefore, decided to test the feed, steam, and lube oil systems. Steam pressure was raised, and the main engines were tested. In company with the *Davis* and the fleet tug USS *Papago* (ATF-160), the ship began a transit of approximately 1,000 miles to Valetta, Malta.

Several basic problems still confronted the crew. What was the extent of the number three hold damage and how would the ship react in heavy weather? Since getting under way, a suction effect was drawing debris out of the torpedo hole in the starboard side. This debris contained material that was highly classified, and there was a possibility that important documents and remains would be lost. For this reason, the *Papago* took up a vigil astern of the *Liberty* and sifted through the large volume of material being washed out of the flooded space. An attempt to place a net over the opening revealed the large size of the hole, and the jagged steel edges precluded sealing the opening.

The dewatering efforts aimed at removing oil from the surface of the flooded hold were successful enough to allow a visual inspection of the damage below. What remained was a jungle of twisted metal, furniture, and equipment. Crude measurements taken over the side showed the hole to be about 20 feet wide at its largest point and to extend from the waterline to the bilge keel (about 50 feet).

The slow transit to Malta was marked by the gradual restoration of most of the ship's vital systems, including the main gyro, sound-powered phone circuits, and a main fire and flushing pump. Damage control watches were set, and a steaming routine was established until heavy weather brought the final major challenge of the voyage.

When the ship was approximately 150 miles from Malta, the wind and sea conditions deteriorated to the point that unusual noises were heard in the damaged portion of the ship. The bulkhead on the forward side of the flooded hold was visibly panting as hogging and sagging stresses distorted the ship's structure. The unusual noises were determined to be the sound of breaking surf and the impact of desks, chairs, and equipment being violently tossed about in the hold.

The integrity of the sustaining bulkheads became highly suspect under these conditions, and there was considerable doubt that the ship would remain seaworthy with another major space flooded. It was an unnerving experience to watch distortions form in the forward bulkhead upon the impact of some object and then begin to slowly leak. The ship was slowed, and those spaces joining the leaking bulkhead were evacuated and stripped of all movable items. This material was thrown overboard to make way for an elaborate shoring effort. Steel clips were welded to the decks and a complex system of metal and wooden shores was constructed. Watches were set at key locations and provisions were made for rapid evacuation of lower spaces in the event of rapid flooding. After a very nervous night, the rough weather subsided and the ship entered Valetta for dry docking and interim repairs that would allow an Atlantic transit.

It was this officer's observation that the men of the *Liberty* and *Davis* knew what was required and carried out their hazardous and unpleasant tasks in a dedicated and professional manner. An ability to contemplate, confront, and overcome catastrophic damage at sea must remain an integral part of our trade.

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"The Violation of the 'Liberty'"

(by B. K. Smith, pp. 62-70, June 1978; S. E. Eisner, pp. 91-93, September 1978; N. Polmar, p. 88, October 1978; T. Nissen, pp. 111-115, November 1978; V. I. Brownfield and R. E. Tobin, pp. 104-107, December 1978 *Proceedings*)

Captain William L. McGonagle, U. S. Navy (Retired), Commanding Officer, USS Liberty (AGTR-5), in June 1967—It is my conviction that had not the individual and collective efforts of the officers and men of the USS *Liberty* (AGTR-5) been of the highest professional caliber throughout our hours of peril, the ship could have sunk with a far greater loss of life. The crew's efforts were an inspiration to me, and I believe that all share in the award that was accorded to me. The individual decorations and "Presidential Unit Citation" awarded to all who served on board *Liberty* on 8-9 June 1967 were well and truly earned by those gallant men of the sea.

Alfred Friendly, who won the Pulitzer Prize for foreign reporting for his coverage of the Six-Day War—Dr. Smith argues that the Israeli pilots and seamen must have known that the *Liberty* was an American ship when they made their sustained and obviously deliberate attacks 14 miles offshore, and within sight of the Egyptian town of El Arish. As a layman, I am in no position to dispute that element of his account.

He goes on to imply—indeed, in effect to assert, and vehemently—that the purpose of the attack was to prevent American and world knowledge of the extent of Israel's victories as of that moment. He writes:

"A vital part of Israel's war plan was preventing the rest of the world from knowing about its military victories until they could be presented together as a political *fait accompli*. After two or three days, this news blackout created great anxieties among the civilian population of Israel, but it was more important to keep foreign powers in the dark. The Israeli leaders feared superpower pressures for a cease-fire before they could seize the territory which they considered necessary for Israel's future security. Any instrument which sought to penetrate this smoke screen so carefully thrown around the normal 'fog of war' would have to be frustrated."

In fact, however, as I am able to testify from my presence in Israel throughout the Six-Day War as *The Washington Post*'s correspondent there during the entire period, the Israeli Defense Department, through its official military spokesman and others, proclaimed its conquests, promptly and in detail, about land occupied, for all the world to hear.

At a press conference attended by scores of foreign and Israeli newsmen as well as by many others who crowded into the room, the spokesman declared at about midnight on 5 June, roughly 18 hours after the war opened early that morning, that the Israelis had occupied El Arish and captured Khan Younis, an important road junction well to the west of it in the Sinai. I reported that as part of a "stupendous air and ground victory" for my paper's editions of 6 June.

On the evening of 6 June, [illegible] officially released information, I filed a dispatch declaring that Israeli troops that day had advanced midway into the Sinai. By next day, it was clear that the war against Egypt was as good as won, and that Israeli troops were on, or close to, the banks of the Suez Canal. The information was in no way [illegible] concealed from anyone, and rather than there being a "news blackout (that) created great anxieties among the civilian population of Israel," there were immediate announcements to the nation, by radio and newspapers, of every forward thrust, creating a state of unrestrained jubilation.

By the time of the 8 June attack on the *Liberty*, at about 1400, the land war in the Sinai had become so "uninteresting" as "news" that I, for one, was no longer writing about it but had begun producing pieces on the diplomatic considerations and speculation about an armistice agreement with Egypt and had, in fact, left Tel Aviv that morning to visit the Syrian front where hostilities had just begun.

That the attack on the *Liberty* was ordered by the Israeli high command to prevent American and world knowledge of the capture of El Arish, announced with fanfare in Tel Aviv more than two days before, or of further progress of the Israeli forces to or near the Canal, also announced day by day, almost hour by hour, is a thesis that simply does not hold water.

Dr. Smith also remarks that the Israelis agreed to the U.N. Security Council cease-fire resolution "with great reluctance." In a dispatch I wrote on 7 June, I noted that the Israelis were ready to sign a cease-fire agreement "when there was a similar agreement from the other side," but that Syria and Egypt had rejected the U.N. Security Council proposal. I believe that report was entirely correct.

"ASW and the Naval Officer Oceanographer"

(by W. Shaar, pp. 41-49, February 1978; [illegible] Perkins, p. 88, July 1978; M. A. [illegible], p. 82, August 1978 *Proceedings*)

Lieutenant Commander R. C. Willems, U. S. Navy, and Lieutenant Commander R. F. Barry, U. S. Navy—The ASW subspecialist assimilates and blends a variety of inputs to plan and, subsequently, from the tactical sensor and environmental information, to provide real-time, critical information to the on-scene commander in an ASW encounter. The spectrum of inputs he uses are all reasonably static with the exception of the environment which is variable and is always dynamic. The environmental subspecialist with a good description of conditions as they exist, coupled with the climatology and acoustic models available with the on-board prediction systems, can produce accurate forecasts which may greatly influence the tactical decisions to be made. Also, the professional environmentalist, armed with new and existing techniques, can accurately and quickly locate anomalies in the sensor and platform media which significantly alter the acoustical properties and may therefore influence the platform modes of operation. The environmental subspecialist provides critical assessments of environmental

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give them to the reserves. These are expensive to maintain and may be utterly useless in a war, having been completely overtaken by new technology. I would suggest that we assign some up-to-date hardware for every mission suited to the part-time sailor. We should strive to identify missions which are not required in normal peacetime operations but would be required in the event of war.

For example, in World War II we had 12-knot merchant ships and 35-knot escorts. We now have 35-knot merchant ships and 27-knot escorts. Defense of merchant shipping should be a reserve mission. Reserve research units could develop sophisticated defense packages to defend each merchant ship. The Arapaho project described by Mr. Polmar is just this. Reserve units in the Midwest could drill with an air defense missile package and with an antisubmarine package. At the outbreak of war, the packages and ships would head for the same port and the merchantmen would take on their own defense. The timing should be consistent since the ships would have to make port and the reservists could be deployed to these ports simultaneously.

Another mission that might be shared with the Naval Reserves is harbor defense. Reserve units along the coasts could man small craft, even hydrofoils, armed with missiles or sophisticated electronic gear now in the Coast Guard inventory. They might be assigned all minelaying or minesweeping capabilities, as there is no need to keep regular forces tied up in this type of mission.

Another possibility would be to have Naval Reserves maintain a package which would quickly convert a specific fast merchant into an escort carrier to supplement the active ASW. The ships' helicopters that would have a second wave of aviators to offload without stopping in port. The merchantmen would be designed from the ground up for their dual role, and the additional cost would be fully subsidized. In the same manner, we could have subsidized keel up, backup jeep carrier. Such a commercial ship should be capable of conversion to a jeep carrier in about 24 hours after arrival in the United States by her Naval Reserve crew. Inasmuch as her flight deck would be an integral part of the ship, she could receive helicopters or jet aircraft for short takeoff and landing aircraft as soon as the Naval Reserve crew was on board.

These suggestions are offered simply to start us thinking. I believe that Congress is telling us that it wants a larger, better defined role for the reserves. Congressmen seem to be saying that they would fund some modern equipment rather than to maintain obsolete ships and aircraft or to pay for reservists without a mission.

Finally, an essential mission and modern hardware for the Naval Reserve could be needed boosts for morale, and reserve units drilling with small craft up and down the coasts and with mobile packages inland would give the Navy exposure to the voters which should make our entire budget less vulnerable.

There is an easy way to see whether I'm right or not. Simply assign a mission such as Arapaho to the reserves and request funding for it. (Congress has recently appropriated $6.[illegible] to continue research on the Arapaho project.)

"The Violation of the 'Liberty'"

(by R. K. Smith, pp. 65-71, June 1978; S. C. Truver, pp. 91-93, September 1978; M. Polmar, pp. 88, October 1978; Y. Nimitz, pp. 113-[illegible] November 1978; V. L. Bowen, pp. 107, E. Tabor, pp. 104-107, December 1978; W. L. McGonagle and [illegible], p. 88, January 1979 Proceedings)

Dale Tapp—I am in general agreement with Mr. Truver's critique of Dr. Smith's article.

Lacking definite proof of Israeli intentions, it is somewhat presumptive to reach any firm conclusion, but one is on reasonably safe ground in noting that the "flag-of-war" can be far flagier than Dr. Smith seems to realize, especially as applied to the pell-mell rush of events during the 1973 War.

Israeli unit commanders on the scene may have interpreted the *Liberty*'s unexpected appearance and languid attitude as an Egyptian ruse, since masquerading as a neutral or friendly flag vessel is commonly accepted as falling within the rules of war, short of actual engagement in combat. In this context, such pacific postures as sunbathers on the forecastle could be viewed as deliberate role-playing.

Like Mr. Truver, I find Dr. Smith's comparison of the *Liberty*/*Pueblo* incidents as distinctly farfetched. More germane would have been a probing inquiry into U. S. intelligence gathering capabilities and high-level policy concerning intelligence ship movements. An emphasis on the appalling laxity, poor judgment, and shoddy planning, which represented what these exceedingly vulnerable vessels in the most hazardous and potentially awkward circumstances without adequate provision for support or rescue in case of attack, would be most appropriate. If the *Liberty* tragedy needs completion, let it be measured against the Pueblo fiasco or other less-remembered incidents concerning U. S. intelligence ships and aircraft.

"ASW for the Amphibious Task Group"

(by W. P. Mack, pp. 90-101, March 1978 Proceedings)

C.W. Vest, Vice President, Victor Research Company—Generally, the points made in that article are well taken. However, certain points require further elaboration and discussion. The author states:

> "Detection ranges are highly dependent on a ship's speed, and one traveling faster than 20 knots can be detected acoustically at very long ranges. Movement at 10-15 knots produces little noise, is comparable to that of many merchant ships, and is non-identifying."

This generalization contains much truth, but it may be somewhat misleading. Slower speeds do not always mean less noise. For some ships very slow speeds result in higher radiated noise levels than do moderate speeds because of extra machinery items necessary for operations at very slow speeds. Movement at 10-15 knots certainly produces less radiated noise than movement at 20 knots or more,

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numbers of retired persons living near our naval bases have grown in sufficient numbers to overwhelm the Navy's delivery systems for everything from medical care to package goods. Those active duty only perquisites are perquisites of duty, not rank, and they go to those who are charged with our nation's defense. We who have retired are excused from those responsibilities. We must accept that the business of those on active duty takes precedence over the exercise of our privileges, which we can enjoy at a much more leisurely pace.

Captain Seymour Dunkroff, U. S. Navy (Retired)—I just received a letter from the Director, Personal Services Division, Bureau of Naval Personnel, which was most gratifying to me. I have no objections if you wish to quote from it for those of your membership who have expressed an interest in my original comments.

"Your comments published in the March 1979 *Proceedings* come at an opportune time, although, as you might have suspected, a number of actions already are underway to redress the grievances you cite:

▶ The autumn seminars we have run for the past seven years have traditionally been aimed at dispensing information to retired members. Feedback from those sessions has been minimal, and primarily concerned with commissary hours, CHAMPUS eligibility questions, and the like. However, in January 1979, the Chief of Naval Operations directed that increased emphasis be made to obtain information from those attending these seminars for forwarding to the Secretary of the Navy Advisory Committee on Retired Personnel (ACRP). That is where action is [illegible] for policy changes [illegible] retired personnel.

▶ I couldn't agree more with your comments about the *Newsletter*. [illegible] will be pleased to know that even as you were preparing your letter for *Proceedings*, we were initiating changes in the format, content and timeliness of the *Newsletter*. Effective with the Summer 1979 issue and thereafter, the *Newsletter* will be a significant improvement over previous years.

I'm glad you raised these issues. Your letter gives us a perfect opportunity to inform you what we're doing to keep retired members in the family.

"The Violation of the 'Liberty'"

(See R. K. Smith, pp. 62-70, June 1978, S. L. Truver, pp. 91-95, September 1978, N. Polmar, p. 88, October 1978, Y. Nitzan, pp. 111-115, November 1978, V. L. Brownfield and P. E. Tobin, pp. 104-107, December 1978, W. L. McGonagle and A. Friendly, p. 88, January 1979, D. Topp, p. 86, February 1979 *Proceedings*)

Douglas H. Robinson, M.D.—Many Americans have waited 11 years for such comprehensive information on "The Violation of the *Liberty*." It was most satisfying to see the subject treated in such clinical fashion and gratifying to have it published in a magazine such as the *Proceedings*. The editors are to be commended.

At the same time I have been hard put to understand the comments offered on the article by Mr. Truver and Mr. Polmar. Mr. Truver [illegible] over the "cultural" differences between the Japanese and the Israelis relative to their responses to the respective *Panay* and *Liberty* incidents. While raising a point he also [illegible] it completely. If cultural differences are of any significance, it is a matter of Japanese vis-à-vis Americans and Israelis vis-à-vis Americans. He ignores the obvious that in both cases it was the United States which was the aggrieved party. It was incumbent upon the attackers to appreciate what *American* "culture" expected by way of adequate amends. The Japanese understood and handled the matter expeditiously. The Israelis did not, and after more than a decade have not yet paid for the ship. And it is specious for Mr. Truver to fault Smith's article for not explaining the "how" and "why" of the attack from Israeli sources. If the U. S. Government, with so many instruments of coercion at its disposal, could not obtain a satisfactory explanation from Israel, it is foolish to expect a lone U. S. citizen to be more successful.

To recite a litany of similar incidents in which U. S. ships and aircraft have been similarly attacked, destroyed, or seized by Communist nations, as does Mr. Polmar, displays a talent for collecting interesting tidbits without the capability of understanding the context in which they occurred. While the United States must anticipate such hostile actions by Cold War belligerents, it should not have to be apprehensive about similar actions by "friends"—especially a client state such as Israel. Unless. Was there in fact a covert "cold war" on that day in June 1967 between high-level U. S. and Israeli policymakers who were in disagreement as to previous agreed "limits" on the political scope of the war, and the *Liberty* was a pawn in a silent conflict? This is strongly suggested by British journalist Anthony Pearson in his *Conspiracy of Silence* (New York: Horizon Press, 1978) a new book which offers an intriguing and dismaying (but not [illegible]) explanation of the *Liberty* incident. Perhaps this is the "real world" Mr. Polmar writes about while failing to make it coherent.

The comment offered by Captain Yaakov Nitzan, Israeli Navy, is more understandable. He is at least speaking on behalf of his own country. But when he cites the Turkish Air Force accidentally sinking the Turkish destroyer *Kocatepe* (D-114) on the assumption she was a Greek man-of-war during the Turko-Greek clash over Cyprus in 1974, and expects it to help explain away the *Liberty* incident, his premise is faulty. The *Kocatepe* was a *Gearing*-class destroyer (ex-USS *Harwood* [DD-861]). The Greek destroyers *Kanaris* (ex-USS *Stickell* [DD-888]) and *Themistocles* (ex-USS *Frank Knox* [DD-742]) are also *Gearing*-class ships. As sister ships, the Turkish and Greek destroyers were absolutely confusable. The same cannot be said of the alleged similarity between the small Egyptian supply ship *El Qasir*, with her old-fashioned hull lines (typical of the 1920s), and the USS *Liberty* (AGTR-5) whose distinctive Victory ship silhouette was well known (more than 750 were built) on the oceans of the world.

It deserves note that the captain re-

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Just as the men on board the America (CVA-66) strained to see what happened to the Liberty in 1967, Proceedings disassembly have extensively examined the attack on the U. S. Navy ship.

frained from comment on the intensive pre-attack air surveillance of the *Liberty*: six overflights in almost nine hours, most of them by the slow-flying Noratlas aircraft. This activity does not support the "snap decision" the captain suggests. Eight hours and 48 minutes makes for an unbelievably long "snap." And now Mr. Brownfield's comment informs us of a seventh overflight by a Piper Cub-type airplane which flew very close and apparently took photographs of the *Liberty*. When this lone, noncombat "Egyptian" ship, operating in hazardous waters without an escort at a time when Israel had air supremacy, failed to challenge these several overflights with any form of antiaircraft fire, it is no less than amazing that it did not occur to someone to blinker the ship: "Who are you?" Or were they under the impression the "Egyptians" had forgotten to sound reveille!

Furthermore, the captain's assertion that the *Panay* incident of 1937 "took place in peacetime" is too frivolous to pass without correction. A reader of the younger generation who is ignorant of the episode might take this at face value. I well remember that when it occurred, the Japanese and Chinese had been conducting large-scale military operations against each other for six months (not a mere six days). Japanese armies were swarming over northern China; hundreds of their airplanes were bombing Chinese cities from airfields seized in China; the great port city of Shanghai had been occupied, and other Chinese ports were closed by a Japanese naval blockade. The two belligerents were under a definite impression that a state of war existed (the gruesome "rape of Nanking" in which half a million civilians were literally put to the sword had just occurred), and the rest of the world of 1937 regarded it as a war. To nitpick over the lack of a declaration of war is like wondering precisely when the parties to the Arab-Israeli wars of 1948-1973 formally exchanged declarations of war in the quaint fashion of the 19th century.

Finally, with all respect to the captain's statement that "a cornerstone of Israel's foreign policy is the maintenance of close friendly relations with the United States," I, and I believe most other Americans who have become familiar with the details of the *Liberty* incident, find it inexplicable that Israel has for all these years refused to pay for the damage to the ship. In view of Israel's dependence upon American largesse (e.g., $2.4 billion from the U. S. Treasury, plus $1.2 billion from other American sources, in the one year of 1976), remittance of the *Liberty* damages would amount to little more than a charade in bookkeeping. But it would have been a wise stroke of public relations; it would have demonstrated Israel's good faith. More important, it would have fulfilled Prime Minister Eshkol's public promise of 1967 to "make amends for the tragic loss of life *and material damage*." (The emphasis is mine.) More than a few Americans cannot help but think that with those same $2.4 billions of 1976 the U. S. Navy could have laid down the keels for two sister ships to the carrier USS *Nimitz* (CVN-68); ships that will be missed by the Sixth Fleet before the end of the 1980s.

"Punishment, Discipline, and the Naval Profession"

(In J. B. Bonds, pp. 45-49, December 1978; E. E. Brelsen, p. 20, March 1979; B. Hindsley, p. 28, April 1979 Proceedings)

Captain J. E. Pons, U. S. Marine Corps—At the outset we must recognize that prerogatives of commanders in the military judicial system have been taken away because of demonstrated abuse. Commander Bonds recognizes that even in the military, rights of individuals are important. But these rights have suffered annoyance. Abuses have ranged from execution of the death sentence without benefit of higher review to widespread improper influencing of individual court members.

Congress and the courts are limited by their own respective political or procedural inertia. Changes in military justice have not been made spontaneously but in response to instances of power being misapplied. Thus it is line officers, and more specifically commanding officers, who must shoulder the real responsibility for the deterioration of their judicial power.

There is some aspect of visiting the sins of the father upon the son in blaming present commanders for the system under which we now labor, but it is important to realize, too, that the current retinue of lawyers is even less to blame. (It is ironic, but the very power that commanders so jealously guard from the lawyers is often willingly abdicated to a mob. I have on two separate occasions [once in the Navy, once in the Marine Corps] witnessed a commander publicly surrender his legal responsibilities and authority by announcing to all hands that they were responsible for identifying and dealing with their own barracks thieves.)

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or five American assistants—did an incredible job of taking care of several *hundred thousand* Meo refugees. But "Pop" was one hell of a scrounger. Another cogent argument for Seabees and marines!

Next, the difficult problem of the CIU's effective employment must be considered. Countries with active insurgencies almost automatically have governments which lack broad popular support. Unfortunately, we can't pick and choose, so our potential targets must have weaknesses which the Communists have begun to exploit. In the past, particularly in Vietnam and Cambodia, we failed to make any serious effort to use the carrot and stick approach. As Colonel Long points out, in Vietnam, we rewarded failure with more carrots!

On the other hand, as Mr. Blaufarb details, we have to keep our patient alive while curing him. Reforms which destroy a shaky government's power base, without shoring it up during the transition period, can result in the kind of chaos that now exists in Iran. Before we begin prescribing medicine to cure a target country's illness, we had best [illegible] reasonably certain it won't kill the country as well. In most cases, options will be limited, but they will exist. Thus enters the carrot and stick. The host country must agree to implement such programs or actions as are deemed the minimum necessary to allow a counterinsurgency program to become effective. These measures will probably exist but are ignored or, at best, badly managed. In this respect, our Communist enemy will usually provide us with chapter and verse in his propaganda literature.

It has been my experience that relatively minor personnel changes—ousting corrupt or incompetent officials—can work wonders. The stick comes in if such officials happen to be the prime minister's relatives! Distasteful as it may be, sending such people "off to foreign study" is usually a cheap "carrot."

Once in operation, a CIU will at least initially ruffle a number of other U. S. agencies' feathers even more than during its original formation. The most likely prospect will be the U. S. ambassador. The CinCs, however, can prevent the CIU from being misused by an ambassador as a new toy or frustrated by an ambassador's refusing to apply NSC-directed carrots and sticks as appropriate. Other U. S. agencies may also resent the "new boys" for any number of reasons, but the CIU commander's direct line to his CinC should soon resolve these situations as well.

I firmly believe that an organization like the CIU, placed directly under a CinC and buttressed by a calculated carrot and stick approach, would give the United States an effective counterinsurgency weapon, and our "lessons bought in blood" in Vietnam can be applied to the future.

"Survivability—A Science Whose Time Has Come"

(by C. N. Sapp, pp. 56-67, December 1978 *Proceedings*)

George Chernowitz, American Power Jet Company—Survivability involves numerous design details which are not readily specified at the early stages of acquisition. Rather, it is an objective which must be made a part of the design and the ongoing design-review process.

As an illustration, our company was engaged in work on survivability in the post-World War II Korea era. It was [illegible] at the time that jets were [illegible] vulnerable than piston engines. (This was actually used as one of the arguments against their early adoption for tactical [illegible] like results of tests seemed to confirm this until we did a detailed analysis which showed this "vulnerability" was entirely related to the way in which fuel lines and controls were closely grouped and unprotected. The simple addition of a strong protective tube made all the difference, eliminating this type of cheap kill.

Commander Sapp's objectives can be advanced in a single stroke by getting survivability included as a specific "call out" in the acquisition review process. Similar approaches in the areas of reliability and maintenance are bearing fruit.

"The Violation of the 'Liberty'"

(by R. K. Smith, pp. 62-71, June 1978; S. C. Trotter, pp. 93-95, September 1978; N. Palmer, p. 88, October 1978; V. Nelson, pp. 113-115, November 1978; V. L. Brownfield and P. E. Tobin, pp. [illegible], December 1978; W. L. McGonagle and A. Friendly, p. 88, January 1978; D. Tapp, p. 90, February 1978; D. H. Robinson, pp. 90-91, June 1978 *Proceedings*)

Frank G. McGuire, Editor, Helicopter News—As an editor of specialized periodicals dealing with helicopters and lighter-than-air vehicles, I normally would not become involved in the events surrounding the attack upon the USS *Liberty* [illegible]. Nonetheless, I did by accident play a small role in this episode long after the fact, and your readers should know about that.

In May 1978, I was preparing for a trip [illegible] as part of a group from the Aviation/Space Writers Association, invited by the Israeli Government. As it so happened, one of the pieces of mail I received during those last few pre-trip days in the office was an advance proof copy of an article scheduled to appear in the June 1978 *Proceedings*. It dealt with the installation of helicopter landing decks on hydrofoil vessels, and accompanying this was the table of contents page for that same issue in case something else should be of interest.

What was of interest was the reference to an article concerning the attack on the *Liberty*. In view of my impending trip, I telephoned the *Proceedings* offices and requested a copy of Dr. Smith's article.

I read the article on the plane en route to Tel Aviv, with no more than the intention of filing the information mentally. Until, that is, one portion of the article caught my eye:

> "Although the United States submitted a claim of $7,644,146 for the material damage inflicted upon the *Liberty*, the government of Israel has refused to pay it."

Whatever the other aspects of the incident, this did not seem right. If the claim was valid, why did the Israelis—a friendly nation—not pay it and clear the record? If the claim was not valid, why wasn't it?

One of the privileges of journalists

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is the oft-presented opportunity to ask questions of government officials directly, on behalf of the journalist's readers. On our group's schedule was a meeting with Israeli Defense Minister Ezer Weizman. I decided to ask him.

Journalists facing any nation's defense minister in front of a battery of television lights are vulnerable to as much stage fright as anyone else, however, and until I actually heard myself speaking I could not have guaranteed that I would ask that provocative question, nor that I would not fumble it badly.

The United States was at that time arranging to transfer F-15 jet fighters to Israel (the only nation outside the United States to operate this aircraft at the time), and the relatively new government of Prime Minister Begin was in power.

We had the scheduled press conference on 5 June 1978 with Defense Minister Weizman in a dining room of the Tel Aviv Hilton. There were several dozen U. S. journalists in the room, as well as an undetermined number of Israeli journalists and others.

In a short preliminary talk, the personable and articulate Weizman referred to the fact that it was just 11 years since the Six-Day War. He recapped the aviation history of Israel, expressing the hope that eventually aviation would become a more constructive influence in the Middle East than its past uses had indicated.

Subsequent questions from the press centered about the role of U. S. aircraft and equipment in Middle East conflicts, what countermeasures were being taken against Soviet-designed surface-to-air missiles, and similar topics.

I should have prepared my question in writing for my own use, but neglected to do so, and posed it *ad lib.* My cassette tape recorder was operating throughout the exchange, and the following is taken [illegible] from the tape:

"My name is Frank McGuire with Kimberly Communications. The United States Naval Institute *Proceedings* . . . is about to publish an article going into considerable detail on the attack on the USS *Liberty* which Israeli forces carried out. . . ."

At this point, the tape recorder preserves a general outburst of "Oh, my God . . ." and other exclamations from those in the room, there being no way of telling if this distress was coming from the Israelis or their guests. Weizman's voice is clear, however, saying: "Oh, my aching back. You're going back that far?"



Israeli Defense Minister Ezer Weizman

After pausing as a result of the commotion, I continued:

". . . in 1968. They are about to publish the article this month. The magazine makes a point of noting that the Israeli Government has refused to pay a claim that the United States Government has against it of seven-some million dollars. Do you have any expectation that this will be settled, in view of the friendship aspects or the F-15 package, or anything like that?"

Weizman at this point can be heard saying: "Oh, my God . . ." and my own voice continuing: "It is obviously going to rankle American military people with this fresh publication."

Weizman hardly hesitated before replying.

"My good friend . . . first of all, this is a real knocker. A real surprise. [Some uncertain laughter from others in the room.] We have inherited . . . you know, we are in office only a year. And we have inherited a government that lasted 29 years. We have inherited lots of things. I, by now, have found out certain things that I did not know.

"I can tell you one thing: we did not inherit this . . . and if we did, I haven't heard about it. [Much laughter.] And it could be that . . . well, I hope that they settled all their accounts with the U. S. Government before they were kicked out of office.

"If not, I think that we'll sit down with the Treasury and talk of things pop up again. In my [illegible] office, and having been in Washington once and seen the Secretary of State of the United States more than once, I never had an account pushed on my desk, and if it comes along we'll take it with due respect, as we take everything that comes on our desk from the United States Government."

That was the end of the exchange.

There are some things, of course, that a tape recorder transcript does not reveal, and so I will note that Weizman's reply was not couched in hostile terms by any means and was, in fact, far more gracious than replies I have had from U. S. military officers and government officials to whom I have posed equally valid and provocative questions. These things always hinge, it is said, on whose ox is being gored.

As for publication of the exchange, if any articles concerning this question or Mr. Weizman's reply appeared in print, I have never seen them. I had assumed at the time that representatives from the U. S. embassy in Israel were present and would be aware of the question and of the Israeli Government's implied position concerning the unsettled claim. From this assumption, I also concluded that the information would be passed through interested services, i.e., the naval attaché, and eventually to the offices of the *Proceedings*.

Since it appears that this flow of information did not occur as I had assumed, and my tape recorded version of the exchange sat here unpublished for nearly a year, I owe the readers of the *Proceedings* an apology (and possibly Mr. Weizman as well) for being negligent.

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"national technical means," would not the people of the United States, and their industrial and governmental installations, be more certain of continuing to thrive than under the alternative of being in the bull's-eye of the massive Soviet counterforce capability?



In 1938, a converted freighter, the Observation Island, launched a Polaris before the first SSBN was built.

Moreover, even at sea one can obtain some diversification. One can use surface ships as well as submarines as ballistic missile platforms. Studies made by the Navy, Air Force, Boeing, and Lockheed in the late 1950s and early 1960s and since verify that there would be no insurmountable technical problems in converting Kitty Hawk, for example, so that it could launch from a merchantman. In fact, this mode of deployment of an ICBM has so much to offer from the points of view of security, survivability and costs that one wonders why such a program was not initiated in the United States either in lieu of fixed sites or in addition to them.

One can play the old shell game with ships, too. Not every ship equipped to launch missiles would have missiles aboard.

While ships at sea, constantly on the move, one gains mobility. In bad weather one also gains some concealment. If the Soviets put tattletales on each ICBM-fitted surface ship, this would be something to be desired because it would be a further dilution of their resources. Of course, the reason the submarine is the ideal platform is that she provides both mobility and concealment. As for a Soviet preemptive attack, even if the tattletales would have to time their strikes perfectly to avoid giving the United States ample warning. Spotting even the oceans of the world, thus would be a very difficult feat to accomplish. And should U. S. policy ever change, there would be no way in which a Soviet tattletale could stop a U. S. preemptive attack.

As for the ability to execute a counterforce attack, the issue is system accuracy. It is not clear, by the way, why one would want to carry out such an attack if there are no ICBM launch sites and strategic runways to shoot at. Nevertheless, there might be other point targets which one might have to hit with extreme precision either to demonstrate a capability or to limit damage. Could a ship-launched system meet this need? First, an ICBM launched from a mobile platform will never be as accurate as one launched from a fixed site. However, the advent of gravity gradiometers, missile-borne celestial object trackers like TRANSIT and GPS satellite navigation systems, more precise electronic navigation systems, the same improvements that are going into the fixed platforms of land-based missiles, and warheads of greater yield suggest that ship-launched ballistic missile systems could be used effectively in a counterforce role.

Currently in the United States there are no massive programs to develop new strategic bombers, and while the MX development project is significant, it is at this point in time not a full-blown acquisition program. Consequently, if the decision were made now to go to sea basing, industrial dislocations would not be great. Many of the vendors involved in the MX conceivably might remain involved should the decision be made to convert MX to surface ship launch rather than using a version of Trident. Moreover, it would seem that any surplus industrial capacity which might become available from such a decision would be quickly committed to helping solve the problems associated with the energy crunch.

Furthermore, our current tactical air and airlift capabilities appear to be marginal. Consequently, personnel and other resources freed from the Air Force could be reassigned to building up these capabilities. A phased buildup could be planned to match the gradual, mutual (SALT-directed) drawdown of the ICBM and strategic bomber forces.

The concept of putting all strategic weapons to sea certainly cuts through many of the intricacies associated with SALT II, such as attempting to control the deployments of MIRVs, the size of ICBMs, and the ranges of cruise missiles. This concept is much more fundamental approach to a meaningful type of arms limitation than are the provisions of SALT II. It offers far more potential for truly significant reductions in the number of strategic weapons and the level of tension between the superpowers.

"The Violation of the 'Liberty'"

(See R. K. Smith, pp. 82-91, June 1978; S. C. Evans, pp. 91-95, September 1978; N. Peltier, p. 88, October 1978; V. Nixon, pp. 111-115, November 1978; V. L. Brownfield and P. E. Tobin, pp. 106-107, December 1978; W. L. McGonagle and A. Donaldy, p. 88, January 1979; D. Tapp, p. 80, February 1979; D. H. Robinson, pp. 90-91, June 1979; F. G. McGuire, pp. 99-97, August 1979 Proceedings)

Rear Admiral Kemp Tolley, U. S. Navy (Retired)—Dr. Douglas Robinson has so ably summed up the case of "The Violation of the *Liberty*" that I can add only a footnote. A U. S. diplomat on the ambassadorial level gave me his opinion of the incident based on what he considers solid information and service in the area at the time. It is that the Israelis were determined that the preemptive strike would once and for all "take care of" Egypt. They were planning on a speed of execution which would preclude any international interference such as the U. S. pressure (albeit aided by bungling on the part of the attackers) which killed the Anglo-French-Israeli strike against Egypt in 1956, following the latter's takeover of the Suez Canal. The USS *Liberty* (AGTR-5) was an

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me to the world in general and the United States in particular that had to be shattered if the Israeli plan were to succeed.

"Tactical Complacency: Change Now or Fail Later"

(by M. A. Libbey, pp. 30-33, April 1978; R. A. Dietz, Mem., p. 88, July 1978; P. M. Shepherd, p. 97, August 1978 Proceedings)

Lieutenant S. D. Arnett, Operations Officer, USS Brooke, (FFG-1), Battle "E" Winner—Although in agreement with Lieutenant Commander Libbey's article on the importance of continually changing our tactical concepts to counteract the ever changing threat, I believe that there are two areas with which I must take exception.

The first area is that of pointing the finger at the always available whipping boy, "The Bureaucracy." The implication is that a bureaucratic system fails at maintaining fleet readiness. Yet, the proposed solution is that of establishing another bureau, "Inspector of Target Practice." Our present system of the chain of command, which includes squadron commanders, group commanders, etc., is adequately established to [illegible] the goals which are proposed by the establishment of Inspector of Target Practice. However, establishing the framework of a system and having the system produce the product desired are not functions of the system but of the [illegible] who manage the system. If [illegible] are not adequately prepared, as the article implies, then we must place the blame on each and every one of us and not on the "system."

The second area is the attack of the Battle Efficiency competition and award—The Battle Efficiency Award recognizes a unit standing first in respective competitive [illegible] in the intertype competition.

The three criteria for determining the award would begin with day-to-day performance—50%, of which 40% is [illegible] superior in command (10%) evaluation and 10% is maintenance and material management (10%) performance. The second mission area training readiness—50%, with 15% for maintenance of mobility training readiness and 15% based on an operations readiness evaluation. And, finally, 20% consists of the command inspection which includes [illegible], personnel qualifications standards, postal, and supply.

After examining the inputs to the Battle Efficiency Award, it becomes apparent that the so-called trivia and contrived exercises play a very small part in the Battle "E" competition. With the great percentage of the award based on material readiness [illegible] tactics observed in battle problem responses, multiplexes, readiness, and fleetness with the ship's reaction against the perceived threat, the award criteria, with the exception of the [illegible] appear justified.

Perhaps there is some merit in changing the name to "Bureaucratic Efficiency Award." However, the benefits of recognizing a group of men who have made a ship the best in her competitive group with an award are numerous.

Ships "which invent clever ways around the rules to ensure a passing mark" have lost sight of the goal of fleet readiness and are instead attempting to turn the Battle Efficiency Award into a "hollow honor." However, these ships are doomed—they will not win the award because they [illegible] and will not be ready.

"Needed: Heavy Firepower"

(by T. Hayward, pp. 53-54, July 1978 Proceedings)

[illegible] Jr.—Commander [illegible] article, on the urgent [illegible] (pre-eerily, [illegible] subsequently addressed by, may [illegible] program) for heavy fire support during amphibious operations, reviews most of the alternative solutions, which seem to shake down to three:

The first option, employing high-value ships like *Spruances* for the dangerous trade of inshore fire support, is worrisome. It sounds like a good way to become "fresh out" of *Spruances*, which will take a long time to replace.

A better answer, and a cheaper one (both long- and short-term), would be a class of purpose-built fire support ships. They should be fast enough to keep up with the LHAs and new-model LPDs. A reasonable specification would be: a compact, diesel-propelled craft with shallow draft, carrying a certain amount of armor composite, aluminum, spaced) based on modern armored fighting vehicle practice, and mounting at least two 5in/71 lightweight 8-inch gun turrets.

Certainly, the second option, [illegible] missiles fitted with laser seekers and [illegible] outline laser designators, represents a reasonable, if partial, solution and one which can be attained relatively quickly. However, "cost per shot" will be high; cruise missiles are expensive. Furthermore, the ability to loiter over a battlefield until called upon will be [illegible]. Finally, the ability [illegible] targets—by [illegible], depends on subsequent launches.

The third option, a modern replacement for the Douglas AD-1 Skyraider, is easier than it might seem [illegible] aircraft already exists that is fully capable of terrain-hugging flight operations and is better able to ingest flak and survive than any other aircraft ever built by the United States. It has, however, two obvious flaws: it isn't a Navy-designed aircraft, and it is extremely ugly—so ugly, the pilots who fly it call it the "Warthog."

The Warthog, known officially as the A-10 Thunderbolt II, has been developed specifically for exactly the kind of close support missions the marines need. Equipped with a formidable 30-mm. Gatling gun, it also carries a staggering weight of ordnance, including TV-guided Maverick missiles. It is a bomb-smuffer, par excellence.

Propelled by twin turbofan engines, the Warthog—either in the single-man version presently being deployed in Europe, or in the two-man all-weather form which Republic Division of Fairchild is developing with its own funds—looks to be a prime candidate for conversion. The "blood and guts" approach to really close air support which its design exemplifies should resonate nicely with the Corps way of doing things—but it is ugly!

(Continued on page 79)

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"The Violation of the 'Liberty'"

(by R. K. Smith, pp. 42-70, June 1978; S. C. Trusse, pp. 91-95, September 1978; H. Palmer, p. 88, October 1978; Y. Nimer, pp. 111-115, November 1978; V. L. Brownfield and P. E. Tobin, pp. 106-107, December 1978; W. L. McGonagle and A. Evansky, p. 88, January 1979; D. Tupp, p. 86, February 1979; D. H. Robinson, pp. 90-91, June 1979; F. G. McGuire, pp. 96-97, August 1979; K. Tolley, pp. 24-25, September 1979 *Proceedings*)

Lt. Wittenborn—Despite the extensive comments which the article in question has engendered, part of the story remains untold.

In combat, getting off the first shot may mean the difference between survival and death. The various fail-safe procedures and the rules of engagement are a set of compromises developed to allow one's own forces to get off the first shot while doing the best possible to provide protection for innocent parties who might stray on the scene. In the final analysis, the only absolute means of identifying a target is to get close and look at it. Electronic sensors cannot always distinguish between friend, foe, and neutral.

The case made regarding the attack on the *Liberty* rested squarely on the assumption that the Israelis knew exactly what they were doing—i.e., they knew that the ship they were attacking was American. I do not believe this was the case. I handled lookout training in three of the five ships in which I served. I know how difficult it is to identify a ship at sea. And it is much harder to identify a ship from the deck of a pitching motor torpedo boat, doused with spray, than from the wing of the bridge of a destroyer which is some 20 feet higher above the water.

Aviators are also noted for their inability to accurately identify ships at sea. Even pilots trained especially for maritime operations have trouble. The American pilots who attacked Tulagi returned home [illegible] with their success. But they [illegible] done much damage. As S. E. Morison put it, "All their swans were geese and their geese were ducks or goslings."

With this background information in mind, consider the following scenario of the attack on the *Liberty*. The ship is overflown by Israeli aircraft while on course toward Gaza. She is presumed to be identified and reported to some central controlling authority. I assume that the United States has more sophisticated and reliable command and control than the Israelis, and yet the U. S. Navy was not able to prevent attacks on American and Australian warships off the coast of Vietnam. If ComSixthFlt was not kept fully aware of the *Liberty*'s operations and movements, how can one expect the Israelis to have known?

Following a gap of several hours, during which the *Liberty* alters course in the general direction of Port Said, the Israeli Navy orders the sortie of motor torpedo boats from Ashdod to investigate possible enemy naval activity off the Sinai coast. The first Israeli contact is by radar—an unknown vessel moving towards Port Said. The radarman tracks the blip on the face of his scope. There is no dead-reckoning tracker on such a small vessel.

The torpedo boat crew members are all young and inexperienced. The radarman makes a scale error of 2:1 in converting from the relative plot to the speed triangle and arrives at a maneuvering board solution for target course and speed. The enemy is withdrawing at 30 knots. An urgent call is made for air support. The first available aircraft are [illegible] fighters which have been flying cover for the other aircraft in the area. The pilots are not trained in identification of ships at sea, which, in any case, is a difficult task. They make a high-speed pass over the ship. All that they are able to distinguish is that the ship is painted gray, the color of warships, and that there are a large number of uniformed men on deck. Is this an Egyptian transport rescuing trapped soldiers from Gaza?

The local air support center diverts a ground strike mission. The aircraft are Mystère fighter bombers armed with napalm. The pilots, like those before, are not specially trained in antishipping strikes. Their armament is particularly unsuitable. Nevertheless they attack. Through extraordinary luck or skill they manage to score one hit with napalm. The torpedo boats, in the meantime, have been engaged in a stern chase. The *Liberty*'s famous white hull number is on the bow. Even when the boats draw up to an attack position, nearly abeam, the number is obscured in the shadows because the *Liberty* is between the boats and the sun. One of the boats challenges the *Liberty* with the signal "AA," meaning "What Ship?" (from the international code of signals). There is no reply.

It is hard to make out any details of the ship as she is partly obscured by smoke from the burning napalm. No flag is visible, perhaps obscured by the smoke, or perhaps because the Israelis are looking for it in the wrong place. Merchant ships do not "shift colors" when getting under way. The torpedo boats attack. After launching torpedoes the boats pass up sun of the *Liberty*. From this side the white hull number is visible. The Israeli commander, [illegible] his mistake, calls off the attack and reports to his commander. Rescue helicopters are dispatched to the scene. These are the same Super Frelons which will be used to rescue the sailors who survive the Egyptian attack on the Israeli destroyer *Eilat* in a few months.

This scenario is what I believe actually happened. There is no requirement to ascribe questionable motives to either side. The argument that the Israelis should have communicated the presence of the *Liberty* from the surveillance aircraft to the torpedo boats in the course of some eight hours falls flat in the face of the U. S. Navy's being unable to deliver the order to the *Liberty* to remain 100 miles from the coast. That message was sent with a considerably longer lead time.

Identification seems to be just as much a problem for the crew of the *Liberty*, or else Dr. Smith has a terrific imagination. The description of helicopters laden with armed troops is calculated to raise the image of the heroic rescue of the *Mayagues* by landing armed marines on her deck. No pilot that I know would dream of trying to set down on the deck of the *Liberty* as she was then. She had a 10° list, was covered with a forest of antennas, and was obscured by smoke and fire to boot.

James M. Eames Jr. Research Papers

among all the services to establish a large number of new grades, involving special training and skills, which would require commensurate remuneration and serve the double purposes of providing personal incentive and an approach to financial security.

Making such an individual's extra work not him pay more closely aligned to the civilian community will make the individual think more about staying in the service. It will also give the junior man a willingness to serve under people who have been rigorously tested and found competent to hold their positions.

Such a program would give the Coast Guard a better opportunity to evaluate its enlisted people and allow the service to be selective in not only its recruiting but also its reenlistment programs.

"Memories of a Marine"

the P. Manigault, pp. 20-21, November 1979 *Proceedings*

Captain Carl H. Amme, U. S. Navy (Retired)—Peter Manigault's tribute to Bob Heinl is the kind of honest praise that many admirals and generals would have envied.

There is one thing lacking: Mr. Manigault did not mention Heinl's greatest contribution, his *Proceedings* article, "Special Trust and Confidence" (May 1956). This piece made us all aware of the damage that "Micky Mouse" rules and regulations can have on the *esprit* of the officer corps.

It would be a great service to a new generation of readers if you would republish Bob Heinl's spirit-lifting *de force*. When it appeared, I made it required reading for every officer under my command.

EDITOR'S NOTE: *Copies of "Special Trust and Confidence" are available upon request.*

H. F. Wiese—A beautiful tribute to an *excellent man!*

I knew Bob Heinl on Parris Island in 1940, and he was one of the wittiest and most intellectual people I've ever known. I don't normally like Yale and Harvard graduates, being a Naval Academy graduate myself, but I make some exceptions, and Bob Heinl was one of them.

"The Violation of the 'Liberty'"

the R. K. Smith, pp. 62-70, June 1978, S. C. Trover, pp. 90-95, September 1978, N. Polmar, p. 88, October 1978, Y. Nissan, pp. 111-115, November 1978, V. L. Brownfield and P. E. Tobin, pp. 106-107, December 1978, W. L. McGonagle and A. Friendly, p. 86, January 1979, D. Tapp, p. 96, February 1979, D. H. Robinson, pp. 90-91, June 1979, F. G. McGuire, pp. 96-97, August 1979, K. Tolley, pp. 26-27, September 1979, L. Wetherburn, p. 91, December 1979, L. L. Pavlovi, p. 24, January 1980 *Proceedings*

Charlie Cucnavitch—As a member of the ship's company during the Israeli attack on the USS *Liberty* (AGTR-5) on 8 June 1967, I found Richard Smith's article very interesting. However, it seems to me that he is mixed up on one minor point and failed to mention one important action.

I was a radarman second class at the time, senior petty officer in the operations division, and was on the bridge in CIC at the time of the attack. We had just secured from a general quarters drill. It was our practice to keep the radar set on a range of 25 miles, periodically run it out to 40, and then return it to 25 miles. After the drill, I went into the radar room and ran the set out to 40 miles. At 30 miles, I found high-speed surface targets. They were the torpedo boats. I informed the captain, and he said, "it looks like we're going to have visitors." This was not unusual. Along the coast of Africa, we were accustomed to having local naval patrol boats come out to look us over. On this day, airplanes had been looking us over closely all morning, so it seemed natural that, whoever it was, would send out surface craft at some point.

It was at this time the attacking planes appeared. They did not attack from astern as Dr. Smith indicates. Instead, they buzzed us from astern at masthead height and without firing. They flew on ahead of us, split off in different directions, and climbed away. It was like watching an air show display. It was in this split second that the captain hit the general quarters alarm. Then the planes came back, this time from ahead and across the bows of the ship. On these passes, they let us have it.

Meanwhile, we were watching the torpedo boats on radar. When we changed course, they changed course to intercept us. We knew that they were after us. At this time, everyone assumed the attackers were Arab.

As the torpedo boats closed with our starboard side, one of our [illegible] manned by Tony Quinteros opened fire on them. They were in V formation. I saw smoke suddenly burst up on the leading boat and it swerved to its left. As it swerved, we take evasive action, the boat to it. It also veered to the left, as if to avoid a possible collision. I am certain that the center



One of the three Israeli torpedo boats which attacked the Liberty is pictured passing the U. S. Navy ship during the assault.

boat took a few hits and that it did not launch a torpedo. It is my guess that the center boat's action spoiled the aim of the boat to its left, because the torpedo from this boat was seen to run across our wake.

It is my opinion that this action probably saved the ship. Otherwise, we would have had three torpedoes put into us instead of one. We would all be on the bottom of the Mediterranean today, and instead of wondering if the attack was a "mistake" or not, the world would be arguing about who sank the *Liberty* with all hands.

EDCHRISTON'S RECOLLECTION IS FAULTY. HIS MIRST SAW THE BOATS AT ABOUT 15 MILES, NOT 30. HIS PROBABLY MEANS 30,000 YARDS, NOT 30 MILES. JL

James M. Eastwood Research Papers

force structure is discussed in general terms, such as the popular argument that since the actual use of force is no longer credible, an inexpensive navy can be designed specifically for political suasion. The U. S. Navy, on the other hand, has maintained that war-fighting missions of sea control and power projection are essential to having credibility in political suasion and presence. Modern circumstances require increased flexibility and distributed offensive power in a navy.

The authors say that "neutralizing Soviet influence will likely involve a great deal more than naval power." This is very true, and it is unfortunate that Nathan and Oliver do not pursue this theme further. For the future of the U. S. Navy as a means of preserving the security of the nation is inextricably interwoven with other forms of suasion: violent and nonviolent, political, and economic.

The primary strength of this work is the assembly into one short, readable volume, of some very important foreign policy and domestic and bureaucratic factors that shape the environment in which naval strategists must function.

Conspiracy of Silence: The Attack on the USS *Liberty*

Anthony Pearson. New York: Quartet Books, 1978. 179 pp. Illus. $9.95.

Assault on the *Liberty*: The True Story of the Israeli Attack on an American Intelligence Ship

James M. Ennes, Jr. New York: Random House, 1980. 229 pp. Illus. Map. Append. Ind. $12.95 (210.35).*

Reviewed by Daniel Bladuck

Mr. Bladuck was employed in the U. S. intelligence community for ten years, including six years as a civilian in the Department of Defense. He holds a bachelor of arts from the University of Maryland with emphasis in Middle Eastern studies. Mrs. Bladuck, who served in the Department of Defense as a writer and editor for eight years, collaborated with her husband on this review.

At approximately 1435, 8 June 1967, I turned to Chief Melvin D. Smith, master-at-arms on board the USS *Liberty* (AGTR-5) and wearer of a standard military-issue helmet, and said, "Smitty, I wish that there was room in that helmet for both of us." A split second later, an Israeli torpedo penetrated the ship's hull and exploded in our compartment, killing 25 of the approximately 30 men there—including Smitty.

In the almost 15 years since that day, I have waited for some enterprising writer to tell the true story of one of the most obvious international cover-ups in recent history. Finally, not one but two efforts have been made to expose what actually happened and to offer some explanations to the tantalizing questions of why our supposed ally Israel would attack an unarmed and clearly identified U. S. ship in international waters, and why our government would not only accept Israel's lame and obviously false excuse but then would actively cover up the truth, going so far as to edit [illegible] reports and control crew [illegible] contacts with the press.

A speculative approach to the incident is taken by British journalist Anthony Pearson in *Conspiracy of Silence*. Pearson, an investigative reporter, draws on second- or third-hand sources and his contacts in British Intelligence to develop a theory of why it happened. This theory involves a widespread conspiracy involving the United States, the Soviet Union, and Israel.

Unfortunately, Pearson's research seems sloppy. Even some of the most easily researched facts are incorrect. Some are minor (e.g., Allen Blue was not a major); yet other facts betray a basic lack of understanding of the whole operation (e.g., the *Liberty* was off the coast of Sicily when Israel attacked the Arabs and was nowhere near the Sinai; Pearson's "Big Ear" super-spy antenna was actually a sophisticated communication apparatus used to establish direct contact with the United States). These errors cast suspicions on the rest of his story. Pearson seems to fill in the gaps where his sources do not provide sufficient concrete information, and always in a manner designed to heighten the terror, excitement, and readibility.

Pearson does support the conclusion that the attack was no accident or mistake on Israel's part but rather a conscious decision at the highest levels of the Israeli Government, and he does detail the in-depth cover-up by the United States which extended from the White House down through the State Department and to the Navy Department. But his imagination seems to take flight as he begins to include the likes of the KGB and explores the possibility of Soviet participation in the whole affair.

His conclusion that the United States participated so fully and eagerly in the near total whitewash of the incident because of the close collaboration between U. S. and Israeli intelligence services in their desire to predetermine the outcome of the Middle East situation, while certainly plausible, is not fully supported by the evidence he presents. And it certainly is not the only possible reason.

One interesting aspect noted in both books was the presence of a U. S. submarine near the *Liberty* during the attack. In fact, this is the first time I had heard of the sub story. The presence of a submarine seems curious in light of the shallowness of the water, yet the evidence appears to support that contention. (During the attack and while we were loading classified material into weighted bags, we were concerned that the bags could be easily retrieved.) Pearson's suggestion that the sub was there in response to a U. S. declaration to the Soviets that we would punish Israel if it were to use nuclear weapons against the Arabs seems rather farfetched.

The strength of Pearson's book is that it goes beyond the event itself and attempts to explain it in terms of international politics and global strategy. It is provocative in that it raises some important questions about U. S. foreign policy, particularly in the Middle East, and what we are willing to sacrifice to protect "friends."

A better book is *Assault On The Liberty* by James M. Ennes, Jr. Ennes was the electronics officer on board the *Liberty* at the time of the attack. He spent the remaining years of his naval career in positions where he was able to compile information, check out

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opinions, and generally increase his knowledge of the attack. His book is a terrifyingly accurate recounting of the entire journey—taking the reader from a routine cruise off the western coast of Africa to Rota, Spain (where I joined the crew) and on into the eastern Mediterranean. Ennes has done his homework well. His facts are well documented, and his clarity of writing brings them together in a totally readable fashion. The reader gets a feeling for what it was actually like on board this ship—from the dull activities of a normal day to the unsuspecting observation of the Israeli reconnaissance flights for seven hours on the 8th to the utter terror and confusion as the shells began to hit.

Ennes' treatment of the actual attack is awesome. It is something that could have been written only by someone who has witnessed not just broken bodies but bodies being broken, who has seen the carnage of napalm and antipersonnel [illegible] ping and tearing, who has smelled the cordite and the gasoline fumes trapped inside a buttoned-up, [illegible]-out, and listing ship, and who has spent the better part of [illegible] hours in a mess space converted to serve as a combined operating room, recovery room, and for many, living room. As I read his description, the memories came back all too vividly—of that torpedo; the surge of water rushing in through the 40-foot hole; the momentary panic as I had to pull my foot out of my shoe in order to free it; the yell at the others to "cool it and we'll all get out" as [illegible] started to scramble up the side of the damaged ladder; the order to "prepare to abandon ship" as a life jacket was thrust at me; the effect of shock which prevented my being able to put the jacket on; and finally, the seeing of the living and the mental exercise of trying to figure out who was missing.

I believe that Ennes wrote this book for a number of reasons, not the least being a desire to expose and, in a way, right the grave disservice done to the brave ship and her valiant crew by the Israelis and the U. S. Government. He writes of the cover-up from the vantage point of one who was made part of the cover-up and explores the hows and whys extensively and thoughtfully. He carefully discusses the pressures exerted by the U. S. Navy on the survivors to say nothing, the editing of facts and statements from the court of inquiry findings, and the obvious distortions of truth by the Israelis that went unchallenged by our government. He offers conclusive evidence that a cover-up did occur and, according to the acknowledgement in the book, is being perpetuated to this day by our State Department.

Ennes' explanation as to why the Israelis attacked—to prevent the United States from having prior knowledge of a planned Israeli assault on Syria, the knowledge of which might have resulted in U. S. pressure to call off the operation—is not only reasonable but is virtually the only military explanation. The question Ennes does not explore fully is why the U. S. Government would accept Israel's excuse and then perpetuate a cover-up. This is perhaps the only disappointment in the book. Ennes offers the explanation (drawn from a White House staffer) that President Johnson was anxious to end the war before the Soviet Union stepped in, and that L.B.J. could not afford a confrontation with Israel. Besides, the internal investigation by Clark Clifford did not indicate a deliberate, premeditated attack. Still, the line begs the question of why, when evidence to the contrary was turned up, it was suppressed. But Ennes set out to deal in facts and not conjectures. And he succeeds admirably.

To understand what really happened on board the Liberty, *Assault on the Liberty* is the book to read. Ennes clearly and graphically tells the story without embellishment and with a minimum of speculation.

Manning the New Navy: The Development of a Modern Naval Enlisted Force, 1899-1940

Frederick S. Harrod. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1978. 367 pp. Illus. Append. Bib. Ind. $18.95 ($17.00).*

Reviewed by Vice Admiral William P. Mack, U. S. Navy (Retired)

A 1937 graduate of the Naval Academy, Vice Admiral Mack retired from active duty in 1975. Among his personal assignments were two tours in the Officer Distribution Section of the Bureau of Naval Personnel, a tour as Superintendent of the Naval Academy, and three years as Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Manpower and Reserve Affairs.

The book's title is a story in itself. The average reader will wonder why a book published in 1978 and purporting to talk about the "New Navy" basically completes its account in 1940. The author tells us that the development of the "New Navy" was indeed completed essentially in 1940 and that there have been no significant changes since. Admiral E. R. Zumwalt's supporters will find that the changes he made in the social area are considered relatively insignificant when compared with the radical and all-encompassing changes made by Secretary of the Navy Josephus

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could bring to bear the precision-guided munition warheads of the SSN's long-range missiles. Further intensification would find the hardened SSN and her nuclear-capable armaments ready again. No other weapon system in the world confers upon its nation this kind of flexibility.

Gunboat diplomacy? Perhaps. But that may be better than a foreign policy resting on an "ignore or destroy" military capability.

"The Violation of the 'Liberty'"

(See R. K. Smith, pp. 62-70, June 1978; S. C. Tower, pp. 91-95, September 1978; N. Polmar, p. 98, October 1978; Y. Hirano, pp. 111-113, November 1978; V. L. Bromfield and P. E. Tobin, pp. 104-105, December 1978; W. L. McGonagle and A. Friendly, p. 88, January 1979; D. Tapp, p. 86, February 1979; D. H. Robinson, pp. 70-71, June 1979; F. G. McGuire, pp. 96-97, August 1979; K. Tidby, pp. 24-27, September 1979; L. Wetherbee, p. 91, December 1979 Proceedings)

Lloyd C. Painter—I was the *Liberty*'s officer of the deck at the moment the attack began, and I can assure your readers that an accurate, informed account of the affair has yet to be published.

In the first place, the pre-attack reconnaissance was much more thorough than our government has admitted. Thirteen reconnaissance orbits were made before the attack started, and some of the aircraft passed directly overhead at altitudes of less than 200 feet. The attack that followed was much more carefully coordinated than our government has said, and it lasted longer and was more intense than the American public has been told. There is an abundance of evidence that the Israelis knew they were attacking an American ship, and that our government knew and suppressed the true story.

Until now, most accounts of the attack have been based either upon conjecture or upon the official court of inquiry report which hides more than it reveals. Fortunately, the story will soon be told. I was recently privileged to read the uncorrected galleys of a new book by a fellow *Liberty* officer who was on the bridge with me when the attack started, and who has spent more than ten years digging out the facts. James Ennes' *Assault on the Liberty* will at last reveal what *really* happened to our ship. It is an astonishing story. I recommend the book to anyone interested in this subject.

EDITOR'S NOTE: *We plan to publish a review of* Assault on the Liberty *in the March issue. The book has been made a Naval Institute Book Selection and is advertised on page [illegible] of this issue.*

"Navy Guns"

(See R. Bonner, pp. 123-127, August 1979; J. J. Mahely, p. 17, October 1979; H. M. Olson, pp. 177-78, November 1979 Proceedings)

Norman Polmar—Mr. Olson observes in his kind comments about my columns that I offer no answers to the question of which ship-class the major caliber light-weight gun (MCLWG) should be placed upon. I have several recommendations, and have conducted studies for the Navy on this question as well as having written several articles. But the MCLWG project is dead. Discussions of which ship to arm with it are only of academic interest today, as are proposals to bring battleships back to active service. I believe that both concepts have great merit.

The realities of Navy fiscal considerations, manpower limitations, and the current administration's attitude toward naval forces mean that naval gunfire support in the 1980's and probably beyond will be limited to a relatively few 5-inch guns.

Finally, with respect to the cruel table attributed to "Marine Corps Doctrine," I can assure Commander Olson that the Marine Corps has "done its homework," and there is ample analysis and experience to back up the numbers. Unfortunately, the numbers were also based on part—not what the Marine Corps preferred was attainable. Space limitations prevented me from addressing the subject in more detail.

"An LVT for the Battlefield"

(See D. [illegible], pp. 66-71, November 1979 Proceedings)

Major Alfred D. Baily, U. S. Marine Corps—As a tank/tracked landing vehicle (LVT) officer, I find the article of great interest and am in sympathy with Major Grandy's views.

There is lively debate among Marine Corps officers today concerning the future of the LVT in light of increased emphasis on mid-banned warfare in land and desert environments. The LVTP-7's current design, with its high silhouette, thin armor, and limited firepower, does not compare favorably with many armored personnel carriers or infantry fighting vehicles of other countries which have features optimized for land combat against sophisticated anti-tank weapons and missiles. The Soviet Union's infantry fighting vehicle, the BMP-1, attracts great admiration in this respect. It carries eight infantrymen in a low-silhouette hull, while mounting a 73-mm. smooth-bore gun firing a fin-stabilized high-explosive anti-tank round capable of penetrating 300 mm. of armor at over 1,000 meters range. In addition, a launching rail for the "Sagger" anti-tank guided missile is installed on the 73-mm. gun tube enabling the BMP-1 to launch the tank-killing "Sagger" wire-guided missile to an effective range of 3,000 meters. Firing ports are provided for the infantry, and the vehicle has a

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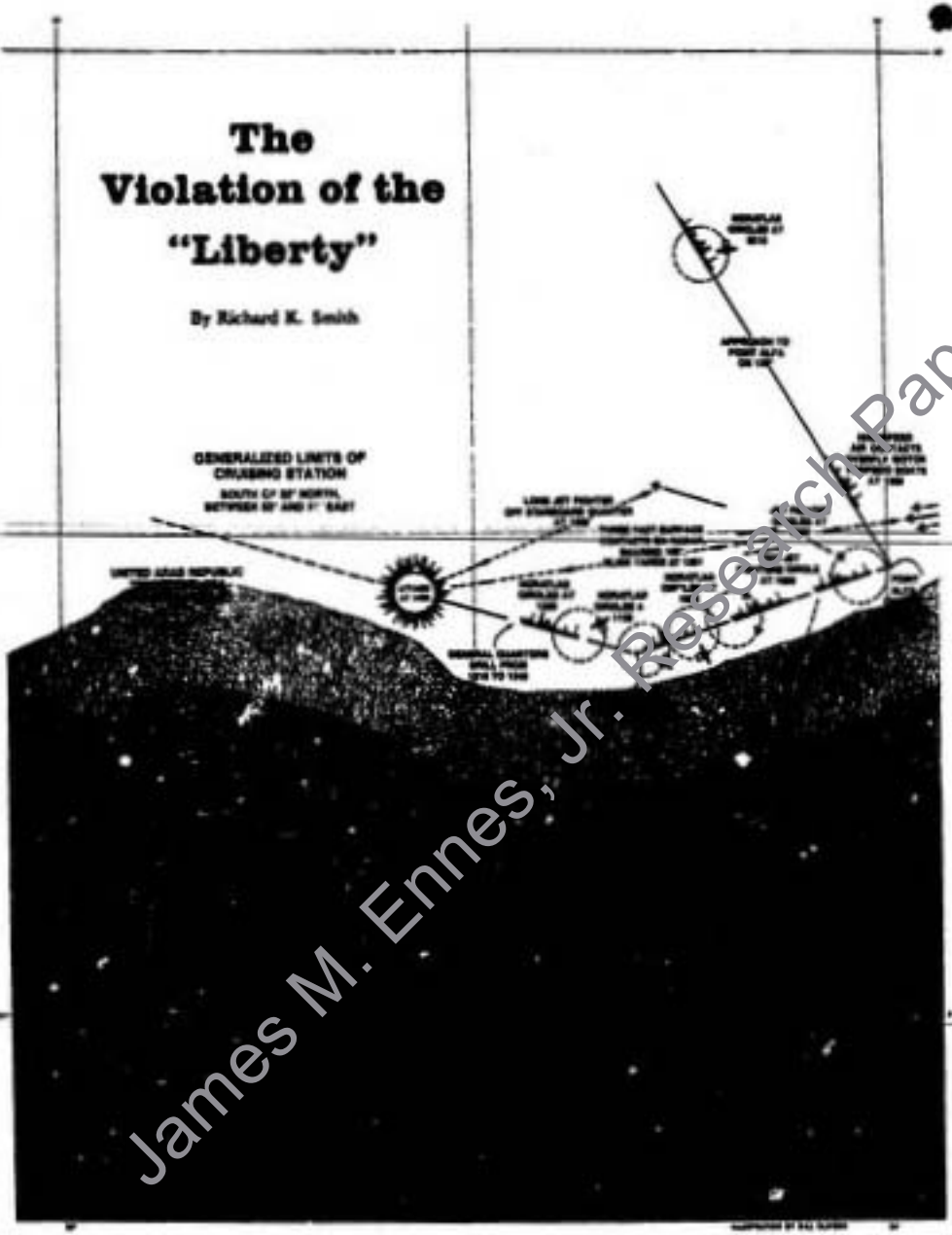
Captain W. Ennes, Jr. Research Papers

The Violation of the "Liberty"

By Richard K. Smith



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At 1405 on Thursday, 8 June 1967, the U.S. electronics intelligence ship *Liberty* (AGTR-5) was steaming at a leisurely five knots, 15 miles offshore from the Egyptian town of El Arish on the Mediterranean coast of Sinai, when she was attacked by Israeli fighter-bombers. The attack continued for seven minutes, leaving eight of the ship's crew dead or dying, more than 100 wounded, and the ship riddled and burning.

FOURTEEN minutes later, the *Liberty* was attacked by three Israeli torpedo boats which raked the ship with gunfire—killing another four men—and then launched torpedoes. One torpedo hit a communications compartment, multiplying the *Liberty*'s dead to a total of 34. Within 30 minutes of the torpedo attack, two helicopters carrying armed troops appeared alongside, and two jet fighters loitered in the sky astern as if poised for strikes. As suddenly as it had started, everything stopped. Israel said it was a "mistake." Thus ended the Navy's bloodiest "peacetime" international incident of the 20th century.[1]

The *Liberty* was one of eight merchant-type ships which were modified between 1960 and 1966 to perform electronic intelligence missions.[2] Built in 1945 as the SS *Simmons Victory*, she was in mothballs off and on from 1948 to 1965 before being converted to naval service. She was commissioned in December 1964 at the Puget Sound Naval Shipyard, then proceeded the following spring to her new home port, Norfolk, Virginia. Though nominally under Service Squadron Eight, her operations were in fact directly controlled by the Joint Reconnaissance Command, part of the Joint Chiefs of Staff organization.

Classified as a "technical research ship," the world understood her mission as "research in communications and electromagnetic radiation."[3] This was a marvelous oversimplification of a vast spectrum of passive collection activities. The ship was usually manned by 20 officers and 300 enlisted men; about 100 of the latter were communications technicians. In the summer of 1966, the *Liberty* initiated a series of cruises along the west coast of Africa between Dakar and Capetown, showing the flag, making goodwill visits, and presumably studying the waves en route. On 1 May 1967, the *Liberty* made departure from Cape Henry under the command of Commander William L. McGonagle with 19 officers and 295 men on board. This was her first cruise to Africa.

Meanwhile, years of poison in the Middle East had heated up to a new boil. On 16 May, Egypt evicted a United Nations peacekeeping force (which had been watching the Egyptian-Israeli border since 1957) and began an unprecedented military buildup in the Sinai peninsula. Israel refused to accept the U.N. force on its side of the frontier and gave indications of preparing for a preventive war. The Eastern Mediterranean suddenly became a logical place to deploy a ship of the *Liberty*'s unusual capabilities.

At 0945 on 24 May, the *Liberty* was in the port of Abidjan, Ivory Coast, when she received orders to get under way immediately for Rota, Spain, whence she was to proceed to the vicinity of Port Said, Egypt. The rest of her African cruise was cancelled. On the morning of 1 June, the *Liberty* moored in Rota and took on 380,000 gallons of fuel, miscellaneous stores, and some vitally needed spare parts for her TRISCOMS. The TRISCOMS (technical research ship special communications system) was a radio device, experimental and quite exotic in 1967, which could transmit messages from most of the distant areas of the world to the United States by bouncing its signals off the moon. Otherwise, the ship's data collections had to be sent via select relay stations ashore, a process which consumed many hours instead of a very few minutes.

Within six hours of her arrival, the *Liberty* was ready to sail but was held at Rota until three civilian technicians from the National Security Agency could be flown in from the United States. When they were finally on board, she got under way on the afternoon

[1]For footnotes, please turn to page 70.

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of 2 June and during the next five days made her best speed (17 knots) for the Eastern Mediterranean. While the *Liberty* was steaming off the south coast of Sicily on the morning of 5 June, Israel launched preemptive air strikes against the air forces of Egypt, Jordan, and Syria and destroyed them on the ground. At the same time, Israeli ground forces invaded the Sinai and swept westward to occupy the east bank of the Suez Canal. This was the third Arab-Israeli War in 20 years. It lasted six days, ending in a cease-fire to which Israel agreed with great reluctance.

A vital part of Israel's war plan was preventing the rest of the world from knowing about its military victories until they could be presented together as a political *fait accompli*. After two or three days, this news blackout created great anxieties among the civilian population of Israel, but it was more important to keep foreign powers in the dark. The Israeli leaders feared superpower pressures for a cease-fire before they could seize the territory which they considered necessary for Israel's future security.[4] Any instrument which sought to penetrate this smoke screen so carefully thrown around the normal "fog of war" would have to be frustrated.

At about 0300 on 8 June, the fourth day of the war, the *Liberty* arrived on her designated station which was bounded by 33° and 34° East longitude, by the 32nd parallel to the north. As for the southern boundary, Egypt claimed a territorial sea of 12 miles, Israel only 6 miles, so the *Liberty* had orders to approach no closer to shore than 12.5 and 6.5 miles respectively. From the center of this cruising station, an arc of 250 miles encompasses Damascus, most of Jordan and the Sinai peninsula, all of the Nile delta including Cairo, and all of Israel. In her first hours on station, the *Liberty* was moving inshore toward the coastal town of El Arish to obtain visual bearings which would allow her to retire with accuracy to a more discreet distance.

In their blitzkrieg of 5 June, the Israelis had used "dibber" bombs to crater the paved runways of Arab air bases and thus render them unusable. The runways at El Arish were spared because the Israelis planned to overrun the base and use it themselves. By the time the *Liberty* arrived, the former Egyptian airfield, which is inland from the sea, was functioning as an advanced Israeli air base.[5]

Shortly after daybreak on 8 June, the *Liberty*'s combat information center reported a slow-moving air contact on radar to Ensign John D. Scott, the officer of the deck. Around 0515, he watched the airplane circle the *Liberty* three times and fly away toward Tel Aviv.[6] The airplane was a French-built Nord 2501 Noratlas transport. Until President Charles de Gaulle imposed a Middle East arms embargo on the eve of the Six-Day War, France was Israel's principal supplier of military hardware. The Israeli Air Force operated a dozen Noratlases. A twin-engine cargo plane with its tail group carried on twin booms similar to an American C-119 "flying boxcar," it was distinctive to the eye even at great distances. In the Six-Day War, the Israelis employed their Noratlases not only in troop carrying and battlefield resupply but also in maritime reconnaissance.[7]

Meanwhile, the engine room called for permission to blow soot from the boiler tubes. Ensign Scott went out on a wing of the bridge to look at the flag in order to determine the wind's direction and force. The flag, a standard ensign of 5 by 8 feet, was flying from one of the starboard halyards of the huge steel tripod mast which towered like an oil driller's derrick almost 100 feet above the flying bridge. At 0553, Scott changed course to 190° and gave permission to blow tubes.

At the moment of the *Liberty*'s course change, it was 0553 Zulu (Greenwich Mean Time) in U.S. military command posts the world over and 2353 Eastern Daylight Time on 7 June in Washington, D.C., where the position of the *Liberty* had been of some concern for at least five hours. At 2350Z (1950 EDT), more than five hours before the *Liberty* arrived off El Arish, an officer of the Joint Reconnaissance Center in Washington phoned the headquarters of the Commander in Chief, U.S. Naval Forces Europe (CinCUSNavEur) in London with an oral order to have the *Liberty* stay clear of the coasts of Egypt, Israel, and Syria by 100 miles. The telephone order was followed up by a message from the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

There was nothing extraordinary in this, because earlier on 7 June, Commander Sixth Fleet, acting upon orders from the Joint Chiefs of Staff, ordered that all of his units should stay clear of belligerent territory by 100 miles. This order was a political reaction to the Egyptian accusation that Sixth Fleet aircraft had participated in the Israeli air strikes of 5 June. Because the *Liberty* might be understood—or misunderstood—to be an exception to this order, it was felt necessary to be certain she was included. Although the ship might prove to be a minor political embarrassment, no one imagined she was in danger.

At 0800, the watch changed. At 0850, a jet fighter circled the ship and headed off toward shore. At 1030, two jet fighters circled the ship twice and flew off toward the south. The jet planes were flying high enough that [illegible] national markings could not be seen, but ever [illegible] the morning of 5 June the skies over Sinai had been the exclusive property of

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After the attack on the Liberty, above, the Israelis claimed they mistakenly thought their target was the Egyptian El Quseir, a much smaller, much older Egyptian vessel, shown at left in a photo taken when she was a transport called El Fawzia.

Israel. At 1056, the Noratlas appeared again and flew four slow circles around the *Liberty*. It reappeared overhead at 1126 and again at 1220. Lieutenant James G. Ennes, officer of the deck, noted that on each overflight it circled for about ten minutes and did not make any attempt to signal the *Liberty*.

Meanwhile, at 1117, Commander Sixth Fleet, acting upon the orders of CinCUSNavEur and the JCS, had prepared the message for the *Liberty* which directed her to move 100 miles offshore.

During the lunch hour, most of the off-watch officers and crew spread themselves around the decks to soak up a bit of sun. Lieutenant George H. Golden, the chief engineer, was lying in a deck chair from which he watched the Noratlas fly directly overhead. Assuming that the crewmen of the Israeli aircraft were looking down at the *Liberty* in these moments, what they saw was a large merchant ship, its decks littered with a hundred or more half-naked bodies staring sightlessly at the sky. It was not a scene that suggested menace. The chief engineer's eye also inspected his stack for smoke and caught on the flag flying from the bridge mast. At lunch Golden had remarked to Lieutenant (junior grade) Malcolm Watson that he wished they were flying their 7 by 13-foot holiday ensign which provided twice the area for identification.

The *Liberty* carried more conspicuous identification than her national ensign. Victory-type hulls festooned with antennae were rare commodities, limited to the *Liberty* and her sister USS *Belmont* (AGTR 5). And the big "GTR 5" painted on her bows and the sides of her stern was unique among the world's ships. Very few of the world's navies paint the "pennant" numbers of their ships on bows and stern, much less with white paint backed up by black shading to accentuate the white. The numeral "5" on the *Liberty*'s bows was almost 10 feet tall, freshly painted only a few weeks before and quite distinctive at distances between ships of two miles in good visibility. And on this day off El Arish the visibility was excellent.

Lieutenant Golden's mind turned to the general quarters drill the captain had planned for after the lunch hour. Commander McGonagle was well aware that his ship's assignment to the Eastern Mediterranean posed significantly greater hazards than the cruising conditions off somnolent West Africa. The *Liberty*'s "armament" was only a figure of the expression. It consisted of four .50-caliber machine guns, two on the forecastle and two aft of the deckhouse. They were on open mounts which did not even have splinter shields.

The *Liberty*'s only real defense was effective damage control. On this day, the day the Arab-Israeli War began, the captain circulated a memo among his bridge and combat information center personnel which emphasized that ". . . maximum effort must be made to minimize personnel/material damage, safeguard the watertight integrity of the ship, and continue performance of primary mission." And he added, ". . . it is better to set GQ [general quarters] in doubtful cases than to be taken by surprise; take immediate action as may be required by the situation, then advise me of what steps have been taken."

At 1310, the *Liberty*'s general announcing system sounded with "This is a drill! This is a drill! General Quarters! All hands man your battle stations . . ." This was the *Liberty*'s third GQ drill within four days. All aspects of the drill went well except that it took four minutes and 45 seconds to set Condition Zebra, the ship's maximum condition of watertightness. Commander McGonagle regarded this as excessive and gave his crew members a brief lecture over the announcing system. He called their attention to a great tower of oily black smoke boiling up into the brilliantly blue sky about 20 miles west of El Arish. It was grim evidence that their ship was in a potentially dangerous location. He insisted that they had to be a team of "heads-up ball players."

The GQ drill was secured at 1350. The captain

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checked the ship's position by radar. She was heading 283°, a shade north of due west, as she had been since 1132. The *Liberty* was 14 miles off the shoreline. At 1400, lookouts reported jet aircraft to the north, and the captain went out on the starboard wing for a look with his binoculars. There was a single jet fighter about 5 miles off the starboard quarter at 5,000 feet and paralleling the track of the ship.

The airplane did not appear menacing, but the captain was uneasy. He called to Lieutenant (junior grade) Lloyd C. Painter, the officer of the deck, "You'd better call the forward gun mounts." The guns were not fully manned, but lookouts were being kept at the stations. Meanwhile, Ensign Malcolm O'Malley, the junior officer of the deck, was searching the fringes of the radar screen for a distinct bearing on the low and almost featureless shoreline when fast-moving contacts rushed onto the screen at 082°. He reported, "Lloyd, I think I have three contacts here . . . ." But Painter was looking through one of the forward portholes on the bridge and cranking a telephone, trying to alert men on the forecastle gun mounts. Because of peculiarities in the telephone circuit, this exercise was always frustrating.

In this same moment, Commander Sixth Fleet's message ordering the *Liberty* to move offshore by 100 miles had just arrived at the U.S. Defense Communications System's radio station near Asmara, Ethiopia, and was about to be retransmitted to the Naval Communications Station in Greece for relay to the ship. It was a message that did not arrive aboard the *Liberty* until 10 June, when it was hand-delivered to the captain at Malta.[9]

On board the *Liberty*, most attention was focused on the "decoy" jet fighter cruising to starboard. Painter was still trying to "crank up" the gun stations. O'Malley was watching the three fast surface contacts when he saw additional high-speed "targets" rush onto the screen, pass over the original contacts, and speed toward the center of his radar display. The new blips which seized O'Malley's eyes were jet planes moving at almost 9 miles per minute, dashing in at masthead height from astern.

Before O'Malley could utter a word, a terrific explosion shook the port side of the bridge from amidships. Painter was looking directly at the starboard gun mount when it erupted in a flash and disappeared in a cloud of smoke. In the same instant, everything on the bridge seemed to dissolve into ripples of boom-boom-boom-boom-boom as dozens of rockets ripped through the deckhouse. Commander McGonagle ran in from the wing of the bridge, hit the general quarters alarm, and called the crew to battle stations over the general announcing system. Then he lunged across the wheelhouse to jangle the engine order telegraph to full ahead, then flank speed.

The air attack battered its way through the ship from 1403 to 1410. The planes crisscrossed the ship about every 45 seconds, first with rockets and napalm, then strafing. One napalm container hit the port side. Two others were seen to miss the ship and fall into the sea, and it may be presumed that others were dropped and missed. The airplanes were French-built Dassault Super-Mystère B.2 fighter-bombers, which possessed a supersonic dash capability and were similar in performance to the U.S. Air Force F-100. Armed for a low-level attack mission, each could carry about two dozen large-caliber unguided rockets. When the rockets were expended, each plane had two 30-mm. cannon to bring to bear. Trained to attack small, maneuverable targets such as tanks and armored vehicles, it was with the greatest ease that the Israeli pilots butchered the large, slow-moving, and defenseless [illegible].

The Israeli aircraft ordnance designed to penetrate the armor of tanks, punched right through the *Liberty*'s 2½-year-old shell [illegible]. Ripping through two or three bulkheads and into the heart of the ship's living spaces, the projectiles exploded in compartments and passage ways with devastating effects upon human flesh. When examined in a shipyard, the *Liberty* was found to have 821 holes large enough for a man's fist, and 164 of these were in the vicinity of the bridge. Besides these holes there was fragmentation damage which exceeded reasonable count.

The seven-minute air attack left eight men dead or dying and more than 100 wounded, 50 of them seriously enough that they were completely out of action. And the ship was afire at three different points. In the first 60 seconds, the ship's executive officer and operations officer were killed, and all of the senior deck officers were put out of action. The helmsman on watch was seriously wounded, and the man who replaced him was killed. The third helmsman, although wounded, managed to remain at his station until the end of the attacks.

The radar was shot away, and combat information center was useless. Most of the ship's radio transmitting equipment was badly shot up or put in temporary disarray. The antenna systems were badly damaged. The interior communications room was a shambles. The only internal communications working were the sound-powered telephones, and not all of those circuits were undamaged. Worst of all, the gyro compass was shot away, leaving only a jittery magnetic compass, and the rudder angle indicator

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Liberty's medical officer, explained it:

> "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 conn and the helm and through the night calling every change of course, was the thing that told the [wounded] '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."

At 0700 on 9 June, the *Liberty* rendezvoused with the destroyer *Davis* (DD-937), and shortly thereafter the *America* appeared on the scene. After spending 18 hours on his bridge, Commander McGonagle finally went below.

The *Liberty*'s scores of wounded were shuttled to the *America* by helicopter, and the most critically wounded were flown off the carrier by C-1A Trader logistics planes to Athens for further air transport to the naval hospital in Naples. Commander McGonagle was not among them. He remained on board his ship until she was dry-docked in Malta, and it was he who took the *Liberty* home to Pier 17 at the amphibious base, Little Creek, Virginia, where she moored on 29 July.

During the action of 8 June, the *Liberty*'s crew was certain that their attackers were from one of the Arab states. At that time, the relations between the Arab states and the United States were at a desperate low, and during the Six-Day War diplomatic relations were ruptured. However, for all the men of the *Liberty* knew, World War III had begun. When they discovered that their attackers were in fact Israelis—ostensible friends—they were baffled, then angry, and finally bitter. And through the bitterness of more than ten years has been asked, "Why?"

Israel claimed that the 10,000-ton, 459-foot *Liberty* was mistaken for the ancient Egyptian troopship *El Qassir* of 2,640 tons, 270 feet long, and which had a radically different deck plan and silhouette. Indeed, it is likely that the Israelis just picked out the Egyptian ship which most resembled the *Liberty*, even though this was a remarkable exercise in imagination. And the Israelis attempted to make much out of the allegation that the *Liberty* was not flying a flag, which was nonsense—until the Super-Mystères shot it away.

Most knowledgeable persons wondered how the unmistakable silhouette of the ubiquitous Victory ship, not to mention the *Liberty*'s unusual antenna arrays, did not make for immediate recognition.[13] These elementary factors led some American news media to speculate immediately that the attack may have been deliberate.[13] The U.S. Government accepted Israel's apology. The Israeli explanation was rejected. On 27 May 1968, Israel paid $3,325,500 in compensation to the next of kin of the 34 men killed.[14]

Two weeks later, in a muted ceremony in the Washington Navy Yard, Secretary of the Navy Paul Ignatius decorated Captain William L. McGonagle (promoted since the attack) with the Medal of Honor. By then, Captain McGonagle was prospective commanding officer of the new ammunition ship *Kilauea* (AE-26) which was on the eve of her commissioning. And a few days later in Norfolk, the Silver Star was awarded to Lieutenant Maurice H. Bennett, who had taken over as the ship's communications officer and labored below decks during the attack, and to Ensign David G. Lucas who had functioned as executive officer, operations officer, officer of the deck, quartermaster of the watch, lookout, messenger, and hospital corpsman during the attack.

Engineering personnel are often overlooked when decorations are awarded, but not on board the *Liberty*. The Silver Star was awarded to Lieutenant George Golden and to Chief Machinist's Mate Richard J. Brooks, the latter being in charge of the engineering watch during the action. In spite of dreadful circumstances in the machinery spaces, these men kept the "heart of the ship" in working order, and thus held the *Liberty*'s survival in the realm of possibility.

Lieutenant Richard F. Kiepfer, the medical officer, was also awarded the Silver Star. The fact that 170 Purple Hearts were awarded among the *Liberty*'s complement provides an idea of the problems faced by Dr. Kiepfer and his two corpsmen. Other decorations were awarded, two of them posthumously. Captain McGonagle himself traveled to Cedar Rapids, Iowa, to present the Bronze Star to Virgil L. Brownfield, who had been his telephone talker on the bridge during the attacks.[15]

As for the *Liberty*, her only unusual aspect was the extraordinary communications equipment in her Number 3 hold, most of which was especially manufactured for her mission. And it was destroyed by the Israeli torpedo. The *Liberty* could not be economically repaired, and on 28 June 1968 she was decommissioned. The officer who closed out her log was David Lucas. In December 1970, the Navy turned the *Liberty* over to the Maritime Administration, and she was sold to a ship breaker for $101,666.66. Towed away to Baltimore's Curtis Bay, she was finally reduced to scrap in 1973.

In the meantime, on 28 April 1969, 22 months

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after the attack, Israel paid $3,566,457 in compensation to those men who were wounded.[18] This was obtained only after the claimants retained private legal counsel, the latter taking a substantial part of the award. Although the United States submitted a claim of $7,644,146 for the material damage inflicted upon the *Liberty*, the government of Israel has refused to pay it.

The whole Israeli attitude toward the *Liberty* incident has been strangely callous. Americans in Israel at the time of the attack remarked with some surprise that no Israelis of their regular acquaintance saw fit to offer their personal regrets about the unfortunate attack upon the *Liberty*, even by way of offhand conversation.[17] These Israeli attitudes make an interesting contrast to the only comparable incident which has occurred within recent years, the attack upon the USS *Panay* (PR-5) 30 years before.

On 13 December 1937, the gunboat *Panay* was strafed, bombed, and sunk in the Yangtze River by Japanese dive-bombers during the initial weeks of the confused "China Incident" which four years later became an aspect of World War II. Three men, including one civilian, were killed; a dozen were seriously wounded. Many individual Japanese called upon the U.S. Embassy in Tokyo to express their personal regrets; many others telephoned. Japanese schools took up collections for the survivors and next of kin. The admiral in charge of operations in China and the air officer who commanded the squadrons that took part in the attack were relieved of their commands. And Japan remitted its monetary compensation on 22 April 1938, less than five months after the incident.[18]

If there is a timeless lesson to be relearned from the savage violation of the *Liberty* it is that nations do not have "friends." They have only interests. An elementary lecture on this subject was given 182 years ago by George Washington in his farewell address. His words are every bit as valid today as they were in 1796, and perhaps a bit more so. They deserve the review of every American and the special attention of officers serving with the Sixth Fleet.[19] In any given set of circumstances nations are guided to action by what they perceive to best serve their own interests. They do not act in terms of the [illegible] oversimplified caricatures with which Americans and their news media like to personalize and sentimentalize the iron politics among nations.

Whatever euphoric sentiments may seem to be at large in the farrago of foreign relations, the grim fact remains that there is such a thing as *Raison d'Etat*. In a clutch, nations act upon it. Its execution usually leaves hurt feelings. On occasion, it spills blood.

Dr. Smith spent more than 12 years (including two as a Naval Reserve officer) at sea as a marine engineer. He holds bachelor of science and master of arts degrees from the University of Illinois at Urbana and a Ph.D. in history from the University of Chicago. He is the author of *The Arabian Aliens and Naves: Flying Aircraft Carriers of the U.S. Navy and the Japanese Giving Force Across: The U.S. Navy's Transatlantic Flight of 1919*, both Naval Institute books.

[1]Except as noted, all data herein are taken from the *Liberty's* court of inquiry, the testimony, appendices, and exhibits of which run to 600 some pages, and the deck logs of the *Liberty*, *America* (CVA-66), *Saratoga* (CVA-60), *Lenin Reid* (CLG-4), *Davis* (DD-937), *Maury* (DD-[illegible]), and *Papago* (ATF-160).

[2]See J.A. Culver, "A Time for Victories," *United States Naval Institute Proceedings*, February 1977, pp. 50-56, and [illegible] recorded comment by H.L. Holthaus, September 1977, pp. [illegible].

[3]Raymond V.B. Blackman, editor, *Jane's Fighting Ships 1965-66* (Great Missenden, Bucks., England: Sampson Low, Marston & Co., Ltd., 1965), p. 394.

[4]Zeev Schiff, *A History of the Israeli Army* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1974), pp. 159-160.

[5]"Blasted Arab MiGs Clutter Base in Sinai," *Aviation Week & Space Technology*, 14 August 1967, pp. 92-93.

[6]Except as noted, all times used herein are Brava, i.e. local time off El Arish.

[7]"Novelistes Fare Rapid Supply Missions," *Aviation Week & Space Technology*, 17 July 1967, pp. 49-91, 93, 96.

[8]Australia and China are two nations whose navies use systems virtually identical to that of the U.S. Navy, including large block numerals on both sides of the [illegible]. It was, however, unlikely that any Australian or Chilean warships would be in the Mediterranean that day.

[9]The American news media subsequently made much about messages to the *Liberty* being "misrouted," etc., but these accounts are terribly garbled and produce a substantial perversion of the truth. Given the time frame in which everything occurred, there is no way in which the "move off" message could have reached the *Liberty* before the attack except by way of high-precedence "flash," but there was no reason to use that precedence until after 1403 Brava.

[10]One of the most remarkable aspects of the Israelis' "error" is that they jammed U.S. Navy communications frequencies, then claimed they thought they were attacking an Egyptian ship.

[11]Micha Limor, "Israeli Navy Man Describes Attack on the Liberty," *The New York Times*, 7 July 1967, p. 3.

[12]For editorial comment, see "Death on the Liberty," *The New York Times*, 10 June 1967, p. 32.

[13]"Sinking the Liberty: Accident or Design?" *Newsweek*, 19 June 1967, p. 21.

[14]*U.S. Department of State Bulletin*, 17 June 1968, p. 799.

[15]"Honor Medal Awarded To Skipper of Liberty," *Navy Times*, 26 June 1968, p. 2. "Hess Travels To Give Medal," *Navy Times*, 31 July 1968, p. 2.

[16]*U.S. Department of State Bulletin*, 2 June 1969, p. 473.

[17]"Damage to Ship Described," *The Evening Star* (Washington), 16 June 1967, p. A-3.

[18]Hamilton Darby Perry, *The Panay Incident: Prelude to Pearl Harbor* (New York: Macmillan, 1969), pp. 195-196, 220-222, 233.

[19]Reprinted in Henry Steele Commager, editor, *Documents of American History*, 6th edition (New York: Appleton, Century, Crofts, 1958), pp. 169-175.

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The battered Liberty limps into Valetta, Malta, on 14 June 1967 for temporary repairs following the attack. At the waterline is the hole caused by a torpedo from an Israeli boat. Her hull and superstructure are pockmarked with holes from air attacks.

mechanism was out of commission. The helmsman could have no idea of how much rudder he was applying. The only instrument on the bridge that still worked was the fathometer. This was fortunate because there was shoal water only a few miles off the port bow.

In those same 60 seconds, Commander McGonagle received an ugly shrapnel wound in his right leg. It spurted blood which transformed the leg of his trousers into a crimson wick which trailed blood across the deck as he rushed from one wing of the bridge to the other, directing firefighting parties through his phone talker, taking photographs of the attacking planes for the record, calling orders to the guns as long as they were manned—and conning his ship.

Ensign David G. Lucas was alarmed by the captain's blood-soaked trouser leg, so he whipped off his belt and applied it as a tourniquet. This took some time, and then the captain was up and around again, but with increasing pain and increasing hazard to his well-being. In spite of this grievous wound, Commander McGonagle didn't leave the bridge until after 0700 on 9 June.

The *Liberty* was still fighting fires when, at 1424, three motor torpedo boats were sighted five miles off the starboard quarter. These were the contacts Ensign O'Malley spotted initially at 1401. Commander McGonagle realized that the Israeli air attacks had shot away the U.S. flag. Signalman Russell O. Davis ran up a new hoist and ran up the big 7 by 13-foot holiday ensign.

At 1430, one of the motor torpedo boats flashed a message to the *Liberty*, but it could not be read because of all the smoke from fires burning on the lower weather decks. In any case, the *Liberty* had no means of reply because the air attacks had destroyed her 24-inch searchlights. There was a 6-inch Aldis lamp on the bridge, but the air attacks had damaged feeders and receptacles on the bridge. Moreover, circuit breakers supplying the bridge had opened, and repair parties had been too busy fighting fires to reset them.

The French-built torpedo boats were of the Israeli Reshef class, 62-tonners capable of 42 knots. They bore in on the *Liberty* at high speed and raked her decks with 20-mm. and 40-mm. guns. Four more Americans died in this hail of steel.

At 1431, the captain passed the word over the announcing system: *"Stand by for torpedo attack, starboard side!"* One torpedo was seen to pass 75 yards astern. But at 1435, another torpedo hit the ship in Number 3 hold which was immediately forward of the machinery spaces and enclosed the *Liberty*'s special communications compartments.

Twenty-two Americans died in those communications spaces.

The concussion of the torpedo's explosion knocked open the main circuit breakers in the engine room, and all power was lost. The air attacks had knocked out the emergency diesel generator. The *Liberty* was dead in the water. Below decks, scores of men in damage control parties worked in a stifling darkness to establish flooding boundaries, shore up weakened decks and bulkheads, plug holes and cracks, and as-

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Commander William McGonagle, commanding officer of the Liberty, points out some of the topside damage caused by the Israeli air strike on his ship. Inset: Following promotion to captain, McGonagle was awarded the Medal of Honor in 1968.

sist a new parade of bloodied men with broken bones, collapsed lungs, and blown-out ear membranes to the dressing stations on the upper decks. And in the engine room machinist's mates and boilermen labored by flashlight to make their plant come alive again.

Meanwhile, the torpedo boats broke off from attack and retreated astern of the *Liberty* as if waiting for the curtain to go up on a third act of the attack. At this moment, the curtain had indeed gone up on a new act. During the attacks, the *Liberty*'s radio operators had labored at great hazard to their lives to get off a message report of the ship's ordeal. The ship's own radio communications were wholly separate from the complex of "mission-oriented" systems below decks. The *Liberty*'s radiomen worked in a radio central which had one of the biggest fires on the ship burning on the weather deck outside, and one bulkhead of their compartment was unmistakably hot. The air attacks had damaged the main transmitter. An auxiliary had to be set in and tuned. Antennae had to be repaired. Meanwhile, rockets and 30-mm. shells were bursting around the radiomen.

When transmission became possible, they were sent against intense jamming.[18] In spite of this, by 1420 the *Liberty*'s operators had gotten off an attack message to the Sixth Fleet. By 1430, there was enough of a stir in the fleet's radio traffic to suggest to those monitoring those frequencies that something unusual had happened. The carrier *America* (CVA-66) launched four A-4 Skyhawks armed with Bullpup missiles, the *Saratoga* (CVA-60) launched four attack planes with a fighter cover, and both carriers launched a cloud of F-4B Phantoms to cover the fleet just in case. The pilots flying to the *Liberty*'s assistance were "authorized to use force including destruction as necessary."

At the time that the alarm was ringing through the Sixth Fleet, the Israelis hurried into diplomatic channels to announce their mistake. The Sixth Fleet's airplanes were recalled. At 1503, one of the Israeli motor torpedo boats came abeam of the *Liberty* and signaled in English: "Do you need assistance?" The printed record says the *Liberty* replied "negative" or "no thank you." Other sources say that Commander McGonagle leaned over the wing of his bridge and shouted "*Go to Hell!*"[19]

Within four minutes of this exchange, two French-built Sud 321 Super-Frelon troop-carrying helicopters appeared alongside the *Liberty*, straddling the ship to port and starboard, one forward and the other aft. And two jet fighters were seen loitering astern of the ship, as if on call for a second strike. The helicopters hovered as if they did not know what to do next—as if they had not got their cue. They were not there for rescue work; they were carrying armed troops. Neither made any attempt to signal the *Liberty*. And as conspicuously as they had appeared, they mysteriously departed.

The men of the *Liberty* did not know it yet, but the torpedo attack of 1435 was the last attack. Power was regained by 1453, and the *Liberty* limped off to the north at eight knots. She had a 10° list from the tons of water in her flooded communications spaces. Steering had to be done from the emergency station aft and by magnetic compass, both of which were awkward. For more than an hour, the torpedo boats buzzed around the ship, occasionally making threatening high-speed runs on the *Liberty*. From time to time, unidentified jet fighters circled the ship.

At 1841, a Sikorsky S-58 helicopter with Israeli markings approached the ship. Commander Ernest C. Castle, the naval attaché to the U.S. Embassy in Tel Aviv, was on board. He dropped a note and indicated he wanted to come aboard. But under the circumstances this was scant identification, a landing was inexpedient, and Commander McGonagle waved the helicopter away.

The captain continued to conn his ship. At sunset a chair was rigged for him on the port wing of the bridge so he could conn the ship through the night by keeping one eye on her wake and the other on the north star. He could have gone below for detailed medical attention to his wounds, but his ship and his men were more important, and he refused to leave the bridge. As Lieutenant Richard P. Kiepfer, the

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"Assault on the *Liberty*"

(See U. Blalock, pp. 108-109, March 1980 *Proceedings*)

Dorsal F. Keogh—Like Mr. Blalock, I too, have wanted nearly 18 years to see the true story of this vicious attack come to light. Mr. Ennes is to be highly commended for his excellent and long-awaited book. I share his hope that this book might prompt Congress to reopen an investigation of this shameful affair. However, I do not expect this to happen—especially with an election coming up.

Indeed, the deliberateness of the attack which even included the use of napalm and the shooting up of the *Liberty*'s life rafts to eliminate the problem of survivors, must certainly must have been an "open secret" throughout the Navy and on Capitol Hill all this time. What concerns me now is how this book, published more than four months ago, has been so blatantly ignored by all facets of the press (excepting the *Proceedings*), TV, and radio media. It seems incredible that a firsthand account of an all-out attack on a noncombatant U. S. vessel by a nation so long in America's debt, financially as well as politically, is not deserving of mention in such publications as *The New York Times*, *Newsweek*, *Time* magazine, etc. Surprising as it may seem (or is it?), the book has not even made the book review sections of such publications which ordinarily leap at any opportunity to publish an expose. Even "Watergate" pales next to the *Liberty* attack. After all, nobody died at Watergate.

It is equally surprising to me that a major publishing house like Random House had the guts to publish this book but appears to have done very little to publicize it. An expose such as this would certainly be a best-seller if the American public were even aware of its existence. It is even difficult to find the book in most bookstores (being here in New York City. Most people I know who sought the book finally had to have it specially ordered from either the publisher or the Naval Institute. Perhaps a second book should be written. This one could be called the "Cover-up of the Book on the *Liberty* Cover-up."

"A Sea-Based Interdiction System for Power Projection"

(See J. J. Moore, pp. 101-106, November 1979, M. F. Hamilton, pp. 74-78, January 1980, J. J. Hagen and F. W. Jackson, pp. 74-79, February 1980 *Proceedings*)

Captain H. W. J. R. Bergbauer, Jr., U. S. Navy—What better platform exists than the battleship (modified) to demonstrate our capability to counter the hostilities that are the natural result of the superpower nuclear parity? Aegis and Harpoon/Tomahawk would find their optimum placement on such a vessel. A little deck/hangar space diverted to AV-8s/LAMPS would pay extraordinary dividends.

Contingency defining us this day and age will require, more than ever, that the Navy be prepared to go in harm's way with a probability of success sufficient to represent a credible force. Our battleships are tailor-made to accept the modifications necessary to perform this role.

Lieutenant F. J. Koch, Jr., U. S. Naval Reserve (Retired), U. S. Navy Shipboard Engineering Liaison Officer—Let us lay to rest once and for all the myth that the USS *Missouri* (BB-63) was limited to 19 knots as a result of the grounding on Thimble Shoals.

I had the pleasure of serving on the BB-63 from December 1948 through early 1952. This period included the "grounding," as well as the fleet deployment to Korea. As a former auxiliary, main, and boiler division officer, and later as a qualified engineering officer of the watch, I can testify that the ship made 32 knots and better on several occasions requested in support of carrier launch/recovery operations during the Korean conflict.

The proposals currently under review by the Navy to reactivate the *Iowa* class should have the support of all professional Navy people. The U. S. taxpayer shelled out hard-earned dollars to preserve these ships for future emergencies and contingencies. I submit that the rainy day has arrived, and we would be well served to get on with the program.



It took five tries to pull the Missouri off Thimble Shoals in Hampton Roads in 1950. But contrary to long-standing rumors, the grounding did not limit the ship's speed to 19 knots.

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are more a function of our poor use of the SM-1 than basic design limitations of the system. Lack of personnel training in the tactical use of the SM-1 and poor quality control on the manufacture of system components are the leading causes of SM-1 failures in the fleet. Empirically, those ships which train system operators and technicians and are able to keep their equipment "peaked" perform better at engaging all types of air targets. No amount of SM-2/Aegis sophistication will help a ship unsuccessful at training or maintenance.

Overall, Captain Lacouture is to be complimented for outlining the problems in our antiair warfare because of gaps in our hardware. The points he makes concerning our shortcomings in electronic warfare and electronic countermeasures must be taken seriously, and his positive comments on the E-2C/F-14 combination deserve seconding as well. It is on this topic, however, that the hard reality of fiscal limitations must be faced: the high price tag of the F-14 ensures we will probably not be able to afford as many of these "high-mix" aircraft as we would like to. Similarly, Captain Lacouture's proposal to build more *Kidd*-class guided missile destroyers and convert the existing *Spruance*-class destroyers to DDGs is fiscally impossible. In view of the practical constraints on our procurement efforts, our goal must be the effective use of *all* battle group assets (including the *Spruances* and frigates which Lacouture apparently has little regard for) in a well-coordinated defense that considers all possible threats to the force.

"Assault on the *Liberty*"
(See D. Blalock, pp. 108-109, May 1980; and D. E. Keough, p. 81, June 1980 Proceedings)

Virgil L. Brownfield—Donald Blalock has done an outstanding job in his review of this classic, all graphically told story of what happened that day. Little did I know how much that day would change my life and blemish the history of the United States.

I was on the bridge during much of the attack that day. I remember well seeing my shipmates fall to their deaths and suffering the pain of being wounded myself in this useless battle. It has been hard all these years to obey the orders given to say nothing to anyone about the attack. And I've spent much time trying to forget, but I can still smell the awesome odor of death and hear the screams of pain.

After the attack, *The New York Times* quoted me as saying there were only three strafing runs on the ship. I remember surviving three without being injured. I was also quoted by another paper as saying the 75-minute attack only lasted 30 minutes. Did I say this in the shock of what happened or was this also part of the cover-up? The cover-up that has kept the American public from finding out what really happened.

Less than a year after the attack, I left the Navy to pursue a civilian career. My frustration and bitterness over the way the incident was handled led me to make this decision. I was born and raised in the United States and was proud to serve my country. Now my morale is much lower, and I worry about this nation's interests. Everyone in Washington appears to be taking care of himself, and no one is taking care of the country. That's a broad statement, but I feel we were sold out. No one came to our rescue. I suppose the hostages in Iran are the only Americans who know how it feels.

Even though much time has passed since the *Liberty* incident, my shipmates and I are still hoping for a serious congressional investigation of the attack and the cover-up.

Master Chief Petty Officer Stan White, U. S. Naval Fleet Reserve—I am very happy to see this story published. I was working for Mr. Ennes as his electronics division chief at the time the *Liberty* was attacked. The *Proceedings* is to be complimented on the fine review of an unpopular subject. Congratulations!

Gip D. Oldham, Jr.—It has been gratifying to learn of your efforts to bring light into a dark area . . . that event of 13 years ago has been covered up far too long. There is a close parallel between the *Liberty* cover-up and another, that of the so-called "Lavon Affair." Though they were 12 years apart in time, the same Israeli names are involved in both attacks against the United States by Israel. Both were aimed at throwing the blame on the Egyptians, and the "Lavon Affair" was successful for a few years.

In the "Lavon Affair," no Americans were killed, though they could have been. It involved Israeli and Egyptian Jews firebombing U. S. government installations in Egypt, leaving evidence to incriminate Egyptians. This happened in 1954-55 when the United States and Egypt were getting too friendly to suit Israeli tastes. The United States accepted, at least publicly, the Israeli cry of frame-up when the culprits were caught, "surrendered" to Egypt, tried, and convicted.

At the time CIA report lists an unconfirmed report that then Israeli Defense Minister Moshe Dayan ordered the attack on the *Liberty*. Several years after the "Lavon Affair," the Israeli government revealed that Minister Lavon had been "set up," a paper had been signed with his name authorizing the firebombings in Egypt. Lavon had claimed until his death that he knew nothing about the affair, though the signature tagged it with his name.

In the early 1960s, the Israeli government discovered that, indeed, Lavon had been framed. It developed that the signature was a forgery, and that either Dayan or another was the culprit. This was to have a scapegoat in case the deal "blew," as it eventually did.

That "Lavon Affair" contributed to the breaking of relations between the United States and Egypt, to the Egyptians having to turn to the Russians, and to the Red foot getting in the Mideast door.

E. N. Katz—I found Mr. D. E. Keough's comments concerning the publication of the book disturbing, and to encounter these remarks in the June 1980 issue of the *Proceedings* even more disturbing. He implies that there is a conspiracy to cover up the

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book concerning the attack on the *Liberty*. This conspiracy supposedly involves the government and the media. Lack of availability of the book at general bookstores and a lack of reviews by the media (*New York Times, Newsweek*, etc.) are cited as supporting evidence. Are books reviewed by the Naval Institute for a very specialized audience normally found on the best seller lists or normally reviewed by general circulation newspapers and magazines? I would think not! What is the availability of other books reviewed and selected by the Naval Institute? A very plausible approach by Random House would be to distribute the book to bookstores that have the market potential for selling such a book, with book orders being taken elsewhere. There is no cover-up!

"The Reasons They Give. . . And the REAL Reason"

(See W. T. Brown, pp. 46-47, June 1980; J. L. MacMichael, pp. 21-22, July 1980; D. P. Mongelo, pp. 23-24, August 1980 Proceedings)

"Our One True Strength"

(See P. J. Glavez, p. 86, June 1980; J. L. MacMichael, pp. 21-22, July 1980; D. P. Mongelo, pp. 23-24, August 1980 Proceedings)

Lieutenant Commander Richard H. Parnell, U. S. Navy—Lieutenant Brown indicates there is a general reluctance to voice the pay issue in letters of resignation. Perhaps this is the case, but paragraph 3.b. of my own resignation reads as follows:

"Another reason (for my resignation) is the loss of income I have experienced over the past six years. Despite a promotion and longevity increases, pay raise caps and inflation have effected a 15% decrease in my spending power during this time. As would be expected, my family has grown over the same period. The promotion I received increased my job responsibilities and commitments. Frankly, it does not make sense to receive less money for doing more work and having more responsibility. But, that is precisely what has occurred over the past six years. I do not find this pay situation fair to me or my family, and thus, I shall rectify it by finding a different profession."

Poor, inadequate, or less than fair pay is an enervating problem. It saps an organization's ability to compensate in other ways when the basic desires of the people for the quality of life simply are not being met. So, with 15 years of service, a lot of patriotism still intact, and a less than happy countenance at the state of the Navy, I am taking permanent leave partially because of this one problem.

Ocean Systems Technician Third Class Robert K. Brooks, U. S. Navy—Lieutenant Brown's gross annual income is approximately $22,000 or $1,900 per month. Thus, he makes about twice the U. S. income per capita, and he receives free medical and dental care. I really wonder if he could do much better in a civilian-related job.

Military service has been and always will be, in all aspects, a responsibility which demands sacrifices of the service member and his family. I believe the reason why military service members are leaving the military in large numbers is because money is the only medium the military wants to reward them with, and it even advertises this fact. There is much more to military service than take-home pay, and the military should start realizing this side of the story.

"An Alternative to Appeasement"

(See R. M. Katz, pp. 58-62, June 1980 Proceedings)

Ensign Robert K. Morris, U. S. Navy—Let us not exaggerate the role of the U. S. Navy in Third World security. The fleet can establish a presence. The fleet cannot undertake covert operations as well as the CIA, nor can it rush as many troops to a crisis as rapidly as the Air Force. Mr. Katz's ideas on the naval role in interception of Soviet support are well considered, but the belief that that role can replace closer diplomatic and military relations with our clients requires a heap of faith from the rest of us. Alcibiades—the premise of his strategy and recent presidential policies—is no alternative to appeasement.

"Oman: The Next Crisis?"

(See R. A. Stewart, pp. 97-102, April 1980; T. W. Bond and G. W. Loveridge, pp. 21-22, June 1980 Proceedings)

Lieutenant Commander William A. Nardini, U. S. Navy—Captain Stewart provides an interesting assessment of Oman's potential to fall victim to a putatively Soviet-sponsored invasion by the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen (P.D.R.Y., South Yemen). However, if this attack is so likely, especially since the downfall of the Shah of Iran, then why has it not occurred? Captain Stewart hints at the reason when he notes, "the relative inaccessibility of the border region between the two countries," "the vast stretches of desert [within Oman] . . . for which trained soldiers such as tanks are poorly suited." A British diplomat familiar with monitoring events in South Yemen recently remarked to me that "wherever one goes, the tribes are cut off by a desert or a bloody hill." In short, this terrain would prohibit a conventional armored invasion, and if such folly were attempted, the massive pre-attack preparations required would obliterate any element of surprise.

A second reason why South Yemen has not attacked Oman is because neither Aden nor its strong supporters—Moscow and Havana—desires or could even afford to launch such an invasion. The U.S.S.R. has roughly 85,000 troops bustling indecisively in Afghanistan and maintains several thousand advisers in Angola, Ethiopia, and South Yemen. Cuban troops in these same countries total nearly 40,000. These Soviet advisers and Cuban troops are used primarily to assist Moscow's beleaguered clients in the consolidation of their repressive and unpopular regimes. In Ethiopia alone, there are more than 15 active opposition/liberation movements, spawned by Chairman Mengistu's subhuman policies. South Yemen, despite copious Soviet, Cuban, and East German military assistance, has been

(Continued on page 119)

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Recruits are, first of all, individual people. We have spent thousands of dollars convincing them, as individuals, that honorable service will meet their needs. They do not expect, nor do they desire, to be treated like "assets" in a manpower model, no matter how sophisticated or how convenient it is for administrators. We must begin to understand that the personal transformation we desire is not a function of curricula alone but rather a product of a total environment.

Today's recruit soon learns that outstanding behavior begets little response and that the only way to change the course set by a preplanned impersonal classification and assignment system is to break rather than conform to rule. Even in the benighted "Old Navy," the company honor man was allowed to choose any "A" school he wished. A program as simple as that encouraged strong performance rather than the acceptance of minimal standards . . . or worse. The credo which begins "I am an American fighting man . . ." which memorization painfully enumerates is a meaningless bit of prose in a curriculum which does not teach how to fight as an individual or how the Navy fights as an organization.

Our present system fails to approach the goal of motivating recruits. That job is left to providence and the next commanding officer. Civilians become recruits, recruits become sailors, sailors reenlist. Recruit training is a critical element of that process. Cut to death by bookkeepers and thoroughly confused by "experts," it has lost its effectiveness.

The experience, initiative and imagination of career petty officers, unencouraged and unheeded, are given full weight in designing a new curriculum. The petty officer instructors now in use must be utilized to recruit training as modified to parallel operational conditions. Actual battle-ship training or simulation must replace classes. The school atmosphere must be changed. Above all, the many tasks and objectives must be measured against the single clearest target set by Commander Cole: *to make sailors.*

"Assault on the *Liberty*"

(See D. Blalock, pp. 108-109, March 1980; H. F. Keough, p. 89, June 1980; V. J. Bonaventura & White, to D. Oldham, F. H. Kase, pp. 21-23, September 1980 Proceedings)

Admiral Thomas H. Moorer, U. S. Navy (Retired): Chief of Naval Operations, 1967; Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff, 1970-74—Every American should read *Assault on the Liberty*, which is told so well by James Ennes. Not only does his account set forth the bravery and dedication to duty of many fine young Americans caught in a most difficult position not of their own making, but it also tells a story of political intrigue and cupidity to a large degree why the facts in this very sad case have not been fully passed on to the American people.

The attack on the *Liberty* by Israeli aircraft and ships could not possibly have been a case of mistaken identity. The ship was savagely strafed and fired upon as well as torpedoed in good visibility while she was flying the American flag at a clear silhouette that could not possibly have been mistaken for a ship operated by the Egyptian forces. While it is too late to correct the suppression of this attack and what is its impact on the events of the time, nevertheless this book sets forth in clear terms the story of a very sad event in our history. Why did the press, which was keen to arrive in exploding detail on greatest detail, give this matter such perfunctory attention?

C. *Ireland*—Mr. Ennes's clear-sighted account of the *Liberty*'s cruelly exposed another skeleton in America's closet. Details of this and other still-unpublished aspects of Israel's 1967 invasion of Egypt, Jordan, and Syria are not available under the Freedom of Information Act. Obtaining Ennes's book is not easy: weeks passed before I located a bookstore willing to sell an "under-the-counter" copy.

I denounce the attack on the *Liberty* in my book, *Rope of Sand: America's Failure in the Middle East* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1990), but it was in print before I could complement the information I'd received from other sources with Ennes's eyewitness story. I have, nonetheless, disclosed other aspects of this sordid affair that explain why the *Liberty* cover-up continues.

Every American should know about Israel's attempt to sink the *Liberty*. We are outraged because Iranians unlisted our embassy and seized hostages, the White House called their captors an act of war. They are alive and presumably well, but Iranian courts have been requested to ensure that compensation will be paid. What of the *Liberty*'s dead, wounded, and survivors any less entitled to those measures? Was Israel's attack on the *Liberty* not an act of war?

The Camp David accords would have been unnecessary had not Israel's forces [illegible] America's tacit agreement in the 1967 attack on Egypt [illegible] induced President Johnson [illegible] to ensure that Israel unconditionally withdraw to its 1949 line.

Mr. Katz's disclaimer of a cover-up in the September issue cannot erase history.

This brings me to Mr. Oldham's letter in the same issue. I was in Cairo in November 1954 to fulfill President Eisenhower's promise of military aid for Egypt, in return for its prior agreement that the Suez Base would be available if Turkey (a NATO member) or any Arab state were attacked by Russia. Israel's firebombers had by then strained Egyptian-American relations. Unprovoked Israeli attacks on Egyptian troops in Gaza and Sinai were left Nasser with no alternative but to accept Russia's arms offer or risk a revolt by his own officers. Israel's 1956 invasion of Egypt cleared us base rights for 24 years.

My report of Egypt's pledge to use American arms for defensive purposes only was somehow "lost" in the Pentagon—no copy can be found. These were the days when our definition of "defensive purposes" would have terminated arms aid to Israel for its (still-continuing) invasions of defenseless Lebanon. Secret deals, cover-ups, and political blackmail continue!

James M. Ennes, Jr. Research Papers



While the technical/operational evaluation of LAMPS III is scheduled to commence this month, the Navy is requesting funds for more SH-2F LAMPS Is. Pictured are the major LAMPS III elements—the SH-60B Seahawk helicopter and the new frigate, USS McInerney (FFG-4).

to meet the Navy's ASW objectives, the decision to buy new SH-2Fs to fill this requirement is wrong.

The SH-2F is an adequate helicopter for its stated mission. However, it is based on 1950s' technology and has experienced three major model changes since it was introduced in 1960. These changes have upgraded the aircraft from an 8,800-pound, single-engine utility bird to a 12,800-pound, twin-engine ASW platform. Because of the model changes, the airframe has almost no room for continued growth. It is not at all unusual for aircraft flying ASW missions to leave the flight deck over maximum gross weight and with center of gravity limits exceeded.

A full load of sonobuoys and fuel necessary for hot ASW prosecution will put the helicopter over these allowable limits. In addition, the last 162 was built in 1965, so it is certainly nowhere near state of the art in design, maintainability, reliability. Direct maintenance manhours per flight hour typically exceed 20 with a good maintenance crew and that does not count the additional time required for corrosion prevention, washing, etc.

As a former LAMPS pilot, I think the helicopter community is caught in a squeeze between the surface people and the folks who run the air navy. The ship drivers don't care about which helicopter they get, as long as they get enough to fill their decks. On the other hand, my impression is that NavAir folks do not want to be bothered by helos. They're so busy with "go-fasters" that they're willing to take an antique they know rather than something new and better. A lot of people liked the F-4, but I don't think there would be any real support for reopening the F-4 production line.

"Thinking About the Future of the Navy"

(by V. Turner, pp. 50-53, August 1980; W. V. Kennedy, p. 101, October 1980; D. J. Kenney, pp. 124-127, November 1980, *Proceedings*)

Commander Harlan K. Ullman, U. S. Navy, Commanding Officer, USS Dupont (DD-941)—I would propose that any definition of the Navy's strategic rationale must expand upon Admiral Turner's requirement for "sea-control" and include the specific task of threat or neutralize Soviet forces even in their home waters. And, as a maximum operational and deployable force posture, we should maintain sufficient forces in the Atlantic and Pacific to threaten simultaneously, *if we choose*, one main Soviet operating base, such as Kola or Petropavlovsk, in each of these oceans.

From both geopolitical and tactical perspectives, maintaining our ability to threaten Soviet forces even in their homewaters would be enormously important. First, the Soviet response would continue to place budget priority on defense of their homeland. Given the absolute necessity accorded that mission by the Soviets, it would not be surprising to see resources diverted from exploiting opportunities elsewhere. Second, such a capability provides the United States with a direct linkage between conventional and strategic nuclear levels of conflict. And, from the Soviet view, the uncertainty of predicting how the United States might use that linkage if war were initiated reinforces the deterrent value of that threat. From a U. S. perspective, [illegible] strategic rationale could be readily supported by a reasonable force requirement, providing us with the necessary capabilities while remaining within reasonable expectations of the [illegible] of our budget. In addition, the type of capabilities required for threatening Soviet maritime power with destruction would include sea-lane defense and projection of power ashore in other areas. These tasks, however, would have to be approached consecutively and not simultaneously because of the size of our Navy.

"Assault on the *Liberty*"

(by D. Blalock, pp. 108-109, March 1980; D. F. Krough, p. 85, June 1980; V. L. Brownfield, S. White, G. D. Oldham, F. H. Katz, pp. 21-33, September 1980; T. H. Moorer and W. L. Eveland, p. 85, December 1980, *Proceedings*)

Eliot H. Sharp—I've read quite a few sea stories, but in my 77 years I've never read one as gripping as James Ennes's *Assault on the Liberty*. I've followed that story for many years. Mr. Ennes has written a book I regard as terrifying in its vivid descriptions and as terrifying in its implications of the cover-up by our government for purely political reasons. It makes the Watergate cover-up seem like a Sunday school picnic. Every American should read it and learn what an "ally" can do when its interests are involved.

(Continued on page 77)

James M. Ennes Jr. Research Papers

BOOKS

BY RICHARD BRODERICK

Twin City Reader 29 Sept – 6 Oct 82

Controversial *Assault*

Ennes has no facts, only theories, to explain why Israel attacked the Liberty or why the U.S. government chose to hush up the affair.



IF ANYONE KNOWS ABOUT THE VAGARIES of the media, mass and otherwise, it is James Ennes.

The former naval officer is author of *Assault on the Liberty*, a fast-paced albeit thoroughly researched account of the attack on the USS Liberty by Israeli warplanes and torpedo boats in 1967. Published by Random House in 1980, the book received glowing notices when and where it has been reviewed and stirred up considerable controversy — usually a publisher's dream. It has also gone through a respectable four printings and 75,000 copies.

Nonetheless, because of a series of mysterious distribution and promotion problems, Ennes finds himself, two years after publication, out on the hustings trying to sell books through personal appearances like the one last week at the University of Minnesota.

Ennes was officer of the deck on the Liberty, the ill-fated spy ship that was strafed, supplanted and torpedoed by Israeli forces on June 8, 1967. As deck officer, Ennes was in a position to monitor all reconnaissance, weather logs and navigational information toward the boat that day.

On that afternoon 15 years ago — three days after the onset of the Six Day War — the USS Liberty was steaming along at a leisurely [illegible] knots about 11 miles off the Gaza strip in International Waters. Onshore, Israel had virtually destroyed the air forces of its enemies while they were still on the ground and was one day away from its assault on the Golan Heights. A 12 knot wind crossed the Liberty's deck, making the US flag stand out straight from the flagpole.

During the day, Israeli planes made close to over inspections of the Liberty. While some new members expressed alarm, the captain of the ship assured them that, with the flag and other clear markings, there was no danger. Everyone was relieved when a ship's radio operator reported that one of the Israeli pilots had radioed back to his command headquarters that the USS Liberty was an American ship.

Inexplicably, beginning at 2 p.m. and continuing for the next two hours, the USS Liberty was machine-gunned, torpedoed amidship, napalmed and left dead in the water by one of America's closest allies. Thirty-four officers and enlisted died in the attack, another 171 were wounded. But if a deliberate and unprovoked attack by Israel seemed strange to the surviving men of the Liberty, what happened next was stranger still.

Within hours of the attack, the U.S. government accepted Israel's apologies and explanations that the matter was a case of "mistaken identity" — a virtual impossibility as far as Ennes is concerned. Before the ship and survivors had reached Malta the day after the attack, they were warned not to speak with anyone pending a Court of Inquiry. That same Court of Inquiry issued a report which included none of the information in the ship's weather or reconnaissance logs, said the attack lasted only a few minutes, and that proper identification of the Liberty was imposed [illegible] the U.S. flag "hung limp from the [illegible] on a windless day.

When the inquiry was over, the men of the Liberty were informed that they could now talk to the press — but only if their accounts of the incident agreed with the official version of events. If not, they could either remain silent or face serious consequences.

Ennes was unwilling to accept this travesty of a report. For the next ten years, he tirelessly researched the incident, interviewing crew members, obtaining government documents through freedom of information suits, tracking down various theories as to why the attack took place.

Since 1980 when Random House published his book — their lawyers having pronounced it the most thoroughly-documented manuscript in company history — Ennes has encountered a lot of difficulties in getting *Assault on the Liberty* to the public.

After an initial refusal to review the book, *Liberty* was named an "editors' choice" by *The Washington Post*. *The Hartford Courant* called it "the most important book of the year." It has received glowing reviews from publications across the country, a personal endorsement by former Admiral Thomas H. Moorer and many other honors. Despite this, Ennes has had to endure hostile interviews questioning his personal motives in writing the book. He's learned of his book mysteriously disappearing from stores, of distribution "problems" that he believes are deliberate acts of sabotage.

"Book orders have mysteriously disappeared between the publisher and stores," he relates. Ennes, who lives in Seattle, recently received congratulations from a wholesaler handling his books. The reason for the glad tidings? The wholesaler informed Ennes that his book was about to come out in paperback. A quick check with Random House revealed that no such edition is being contemplated.

"I asked the wholesaler the source of his information," Ennes says. "He told me it came from an order from Random House. I called them about it. A few days later they called and told me that they'd questioned their clerks and [illegible] them knew anything about the matter. And that was that.

"I don't think there's any conspiracy. But if one of the thousands of enthusiastic supporters of Israel who've all been told my book is anti-Semitic is a clerk at Random House and an order for this terrible book comes across his desk, that order is likely to get lost."

That determination to silence a "terrible book" has caused problems with both radio and television interviews. An interview on *Good Morning America* was cancelled at the last minute without explanation. Last Sunday, the same thing happened at WIND radio in Chicago. Out in San Francisco, the announcement of a forthcoming appearance by Ennes on a radio talk show brought some 500 angry calls as well as two death threats against the show's host. Here in town, Ennes had the date of an appearance on KSTP radio's Dick Pommerantz show changed and the time whittled down to a frosty 12-minute encounter in which Pommerantz implied that the book was good only for giving solace to bigots. The book is not stocked by any stores in town, but can be ordered from *Books In Print*.

Ennes has no facts, only theories, to explain why Israel attacked the Liberty or why the U.S. government chose to hush up the affair. But he does think the way things worked out was a little sad — not only because of the slight to 34 men killed under fire, but because the cover-up has done a disservice to the very country it seemed intended to benefit: Israel.

"Maybe the saddest comments received on the book are from devout Zionists," he says. "They write me very politely and say, 'I support Israel and have a hard time believing what you say — can you give me proof?' I send them the book and they write back and say, 'All right, I believe it. But I'm sorry, because if Israel got away with something like the Liberty, then they're going to keep pushing until they lose the support of the American public.'

"That's what I think is happening today. Israel is losing our support." □

James M. Ennes, Jr. Research Papers

U.S., Believing Egypt -- not Israel -- Attacked the American Liberty ship in 1967, ordered Nuclear-Equipped Planes to Cairo, Almadina learns

Officer of ship attacked by Israel says reporter on U.S. carrier told him of grim American response considered in 1967 episode

-- David Watson, Washibgton Bureau

Former U.S. Naval officer James Ennes, who was on board the ill-fated USS Liberty in 1967 when Israel attacked it, has told our correspondant that a little-known detail of the attack has just been confirmed.

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Ennes, who several years ago authored a good-selling book on the attack of June 8, 1967, said that he had over the years heard rumors that the U.S. sent nuclear-bomb-equipped jets over Cairo after believing its ship was attacked by Egypt. But is was not until very recently that he discussed the allegation with Harry Staphos. Staphos, a correspondant for United Press International (UPI), was on board the American aircraft carrier America at the time of the attack on the Liberty.

"(Staphos) was struck immediately by how this attack was being covered up," Ennes said he was told by the reporter recently. The authorities on the huge aircraft carrier, as soon as the news of the attack came in, ordered all 27 reporters on board into a room and wouldn't let them out until the Liberty thing settled down," Ennes told Almadina.

"But (Staphos said) as soon as he heard something was going on, he ran down and looked for the nuclear-armed aircraft that he knew were in a 'ready' status on the America's flight deck. And he said those planes were launched. [redacted] he asked the flight

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crew where they went, and the flight crew told him those planes had been targetted against Cairo."

Ennes recalls that there have been several other similar stories that have surfaced over the [redacted] years since the 1967 incident. All support the idea that the U.S. believed the attack on the Liberty was by Egyptian planes. "I mentioned it to Joe Meadors, one of my shipmates who was flown wounded into Greece after the atack," Ennes said. "And he said when he got to Greece, some of the [redacted] Navy people took him over and showed him an airplane -- probably an A-6 -- with an atomic bomb underneath. And they told him that these airplanes were sent off the America to bomb Cairo, because they thought it was the Egyptians that had attacked the Liberty." And Ennes' shipmate was then told that when the planes returned to the aircraft carrier, the pilots found they could not land with the atomic bombs on the ship's deck, so they landed them in Greece. There are, claims Ennes, some 7 different reports alleging the same basic thing.

As surprising as this information is, Ennes told Almadina, it may not be completely shocking. While he agreed with our c

James M. Ennes, Jr. Research Papers

correspondent that it may have been somewhat of an overreaction for the mighty United States to be willing to make war on Egypt with nuclear arms over the attack on one ship, he said, "it could well be that all they (the U.S.) were doing was putting the planes into the air with the contingency target of Cairo." By this he means that the jets with the atom bombs were launched, flew around Cairo for awhile, and awaited further instructions. "That's the most I can imagine happening in a situation like that," Ennes says, somewhat troubled BY THE IMPLICATIONS OF THE U.S. RESPONSE.

The reason why the UPI reporter Harry ~~Staphos~~ Stamos did not reveal this information earlier, Ennes says he was told, was that STAMOS was involved in an earlier nuclear-related story. Sometime in the mid-1960's, the U.S. lost a plane that had on board nuclear bombs. The plane fell into the sea. ~~Staphos~~ Stamos covered the story, Ennes said, and was told repeatedy that no nuclear-armed American aircraft were lost. This was despite Staphis' knowledge that the U.S. Navy was trying to recover them.

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"He said that because of that (experience of official denials) [redacted] and other experiences, he wanted to have someting more than his own eyewitness experience to report as news."

Ennes said that he had asked similar questions of various high-ranking officers in the Navy, such as the Commander of the Carrier America, "and they won't answer my letters at all." He says that one reson he suspects they don't want to talk to him, is that "this story is a bit bigger than I had suspected in the past. I suspect the bomb story may be exactly the reason (the military authorities) won't talk to me, period." Ennes has been seeking in vain discussions with the naval leadership on a range of issues relating to the Liberty attack.

Readers ingrested in the most comprehensive -- and controversial -- account of the Liberty incident to date, will soon be able to purchase Jmes Ennes' book in the kingdom. Assault on the Liberty, [redacted] in addition to being a gripping eyewitness description of Israel's murderous assault on the U.S. ship, also discusses the "cover-up" of the affair

James M. Ennes, Jr. Research Papers

[redacted]

by the American government in the 16 years since the attack. 34 Americans were killed in the incident and 171 injured.

Ennes says that interested readers may obtain copies of his book through Khazindar, the distribution service that handles all English-language periodicals for the kingdom. Unfortunately, the Ennes book is as yet unavailable in Arabic.

end

James M. Ennes, Jr. Research Papers

Assault on the Liberty, James M. Ennes, Jr., Random House, New York, 1979, reprinted 1982, 288 pages, index, $12.95

Assault on the Liberty tells of the ordeal of a U.S. Navy ship attacked by Israeli aircraft and torpedo boats in international waters in the Eastern Mediterranean during the 1967 Six Day War. Thirty-four crewmen were killed; scores were seriously injured. The author, a crew member, tries to prove that the coordinated attack was not accidental. He also faults the Johnson Administration and the U.S. Navy for participating in a cover-up.

Ennes gives a good description of life on an intelligence-gathering ship. He claims that *Liberty*, a converted WWII victory ship, had a hard-drinking, but efficient crew. He carefully lays out the substantial pre-attack reconnaissance carried out by the Israeli Air Force during the forenoon watch while he was officer of the deck. He claims that this recon is not covered at all in the later Navy Court of Inquiry. Incredible communication failures may have played a part in the tragedy. At least five messages which would have directed *Liberty* to withdraw to a point one hundred miles to the west were never received.

The author claims that there were numerous attack runs made by Mirage fighter bombers and Mystere jet interceptors. He states that rockets, cannon and napalm were used. Thirty-five minutes after the cannon, rocket and air attacks *Liberty* was hit by a torpedo launched from one of three motor torpedo boats. Initial response by the two carriers in the Med was timely. Four F-4 Phantoms were launched from USS *America*. They were almost immediately recalled by Sec.Def. Robert S. McNamara. The author makes quite a point that the recall was because the F-4s were nuclear armed. A closer investigation by the author would show that Navy F-4s did not have nuclear capability. A full twelve-plane launch of recce aircraft was returned to the carrier because Israel admitted the attack and had apologized.

The author concludes the book by detailing the cover-up. He makes a good case that the U.S. was less than forthright in telling the facts to the public. His description of the Israeli attack from the receiving end are graphic. An excellent book.

James D. Ramage,
RADM, USN(Ret)

The Luftwaffe: Editors of Time-Life Books; America in the Air War: Edward Jablonski; Flying the Mail: Donald Dale Jackson, Time-Life Books, Alexandria, VA 1982, each book has 176 pages hardbound, illustrated, indexed, $14.95.

By now the Epic of Flight series has successfully established a pattern. Each volume has an attractive combination of art work, fine photographs and an enjoyable text written in the style of popular history. Taken individually, or as a set, they provide a good introduction to aviation history, enriched with anecdotes of events and personalities.

The natural limitation of texts written to fit a set size and format is that they may add little to what has been published by specialized books on each topic. Each title, of course, must be evaluated separately as to a career, and The Hook has been trying to do this as the volume appears.

The Luftwaffe is credited to no author, but to several editors, and features the drawings of John Batchelor, whose military art has brightened many books. Accuracy of the text has benefited from consultation with Dr. Edward Homze.

After a few photographs of the prewar period, the story begins with the first Ju 87 attack in Poland, and proceeds rapidly through Germany's air victories and defeats from 1939 to 1945, including short reviews of the Battle of Britain, the leading German fighter aces, the war in the East, and the final defeat in the sky over Germany itself.

America in the Air War is a history of the Army Air Force in battle from Pearl Harbor to Hiroshima. The text by Edward Jablonski, author of several successful air war books, includes highlights of the AAF's wartime leaders, and tells the stories convincingly with the help of many fine Batchelor art and many photos.

[illegible] an experienced aviation [illegible] expect, and we do get an [illegible] account. On page 122, however, we are told that Mutton uncovered the B-26 wing spars "at the insistence of the Senator's Truman Committee." One would like to see documentation for this, since the Air Force itself ordered the change early in the war.

The presentation that the stingy pre-war Army Air Corps budgets can be blamed on isolationist public opinion has been made before, but is open to question. Actually, the Air Corps had a rather glamorous public image, the main obstacle to its growth being the conservatism of the Army's General Staff, which wanted to concentrate its funding on time-tried ground systems.

Flying the Mail by Donald Jackson gives a fine picture of the days when the first mail was carried by airplane. There were a few experiments in 1911, and then in 1918, the Army Air Service and the Post Office attempted to operate regular service. The immediate post-war years had DH-4s operating regular routes across the entire country. Gradually as better aircraft appeared mail carrying became routine. The air mail scandal of 1934, when the Air Corps, suddenly discovered that it was unprepared to do the kind of all-weather flying needed to [illegible] mail operations, is described.

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212 975 5289

Richard C. Hottelet, CBS news in NYC UN correspondente.

did commentary on assault on the liberty. response he got was [redacted]

"it was harsh but it was really only a handful of letters. I was called a dirty bastard for raising the subject and that sort of thing. I expected a great volume, but after I got those first letters, nothing more happened. that sort of thing I just throw away. i didn't keep any.

RCH said he will send the text of his broadcast to me.

CBS
NEWS
A Division of CBS Inc
524 West 57 Street
New York, New York 10019
(212) 975-4321

24 May 1983

Dear Paul,

Enclosed is broadcast on the Liberty which you asked about.

Best regards,

Dick Hottelet

James M. Ennes, Jr. Research Papers

3 Feb, 198

This is Richard C. Hottelet sitting in for Dan Rather, reporting with news and commentary.

Yesterday a US Marine in Beirut drew a pistol to stop an Israeli tank detachment from racing through a checkpoint. It was not the first potentially violent encounter between the Americans in the multinational peacekeeping force and the Israelis. It was just the latest.

And it sends mind and memory streaming back to another more serious incident. To 1967 -- and the Six Day War -- and what happened to the USS Liberty.

The Liberty incident -- in a moment.

FIRST COMM. :60

June 8th 1967. The fourth day of the Six Day War between Israel and Egypt. A lightly armed American ship, the USS Liberty, cruises international waters about 15 miles off the Sinai. The afternoon bright, the sky clear, the sea calm.

And then -- an attack. Israeli planes rake the ship with rocket and machine gun fire. Israeli PT boats launch torpedoes. One hits its mark, tearing a 40 foot hole below the Liberty's water line. The attack lasts half an hour. When it is over 34 American officers and crewmen are dead. 75 are wounded.

The Liberty incident occurred 16 years ago but is a mystery still. Israel called it an accident. The Liberty was approached and failed to to identify herself, they said moreover she was not clearly marked.

Weeks later a US Navy Court of Inquiry said the Liberty was properly marked. A big US flag flew at her masthead, her name was stenciled on her stern. The court produced evidence that Israeli spotter planes had repeatedly flown over the Liberty the morning of the attack.

Many officials in Washington believed that what happened to the Liberty was no accident. It has long been conceded that the ship was on a US intelligence mission. It has been speculated that it may have intercepted military and political information embarassing to the Israeli government, which ordered the Liberty sunk.

The Liberty Story -- and the incidents in Beirut -- seem related by an equivalence about where responsibility lies. But there is at least one significant difference.

The incidents in Beirut between US marines and Israeli forces do not come against a background of amity but of suspicion -- a conspicuous lack of trust between the White House and the White House and the Begin government. A former senior American official told us today, "I clearly think something bad is going to happen -- and it may be very dangerous and very harmful not only to US - Israeli relations but also to hopes for a mideast peace as a whole."

Now this message :30 COMM. RCH CBS News.

James W. Ennes, Jr. Research Papers



The village water tower stands amid the damaged and destroyed buildings of Barneveld (AP Laserphoto)

Veteran wants truth told about atta

Melanie Mader
Staff Writer

Stan White will never forget June 8, 1967. It's a day about which he'd "like to hear the truth told."

For 17 years White and about 240 surviving crew members of the USS Liberty, a "spy ship" once stationed off the coast of Egypt, have quietly observed the anniversary of their involvement in the "Six Day War" between Israel and several Arab countries.

On June 8, 1967, while the Liberty was preparing to gather [illegible] information about the war, it was attacked by Israel. Thirty-four of its 294 crewmen were killed and [illegible] injured.

There were [illegible] news reports about the incident. [illegible] White, president of the USS Liberty Veteran's Association, said the United States has soft-pedaled the incident because Israel was an ally. It's time, the Rapid Citian says, for the truth to be known.

"I want people to know about the ship, how it happened and the cover-up that's gone on," he says.

White was [illegible] Master Chief Petty Officer on the Liberty, where he took care of radar and radar equipment. He was repairing communications equipment, which beamed signals from the ship, to the moon and on to the White House, when the Israelis attacked.

"When I got elected president of the Liberty Association, I said I'd do anything I could," White said. "I'll keep trying to get the facts told. There's a lesson to learn here."

James M. Ennes Jr., another crew member, has written a book about the incident, "Assault on the Liberty."

Ennes says the United States knew the Liberty would be attacked, that continued efforts to warn the ship were botched by poor signals from U.S. Navy headquarters in London and that the Israelis attacked the spy ship on purpose.

In his book Ennes says the Liberty was stationed off the west coast of

James M. Ennes Jr. Research Papers

For the most part, this ittle community is gone'

RNEVELD, Wis. (AP) — Tom and thy Mauger were asleep in their me about 1 a.m. Friday when the tor- do struck. They found themselves d their bedroom flying through the , waterbed and all.

"We were upstairs in the bedroom d we ended up under the roof, I ess," Mrs. Mauger, 38, said. "I don't ow how far we went."

In those few moments, their com- unity of 600 people in southwestern Iacoustn had become a heap of rubble. least nine of their neighbors had en killed and as many as 150 had been jured, 57 of them badly enough to be pt in hospitals.

Mrs. Mauger, who is nine months regnant, suffered no more than a rained ankle, and her husband had ly cuts and bruises.

Steve Johnson, 22, of nearby ngeway, escaped without a scratch rom the second-floor downtown apart- ent where he was visiting friends. He scribed the twister's roar as "a sound e never want to hear. It was just five minutes of hell."

Hospital officials said some of the in- juries were miraculously minor; others were the worst imaginable.

Disaster workers spent hours freeing some of the injured from the remains of their homes. In some cases, there was nothing at all left of some houses. All that remained of the town's modern Lutheran church was its steeple. The Roman Catholic church was gone, too.

The entire business district and near- ly all the homes in Barneveld were destroyed.

Gov. Anthony Earl, who toured the storm-struck area by car and helicopter Friday morning, said he was humbled by the devastation.

"It makes us recognize how frail all things human are," Earl said.

Earl sought prompt federal disaster aid, saying, "There are many, many people who are going to need long-term help."

No damage estimate had been issued by Earl's office.

The storm, which took the roofs off barns for miles around and also struck the communities of Black Earth and Mazomanie, shattered hundreds of dreams in Barneveld. Some survivors stood dazed amidst the wreckage; others sobbed.

"They just don't know what they're doing right now," said Iowa County Sheriff Nicholas Basting, who knew most of the victims. "They're at a loss for words."

But many of the survivors also went to work clearing the debris, and some said they had many reasons to be thankful.

"We had just gotten our little girl out of her bedroom. We're nuts, we did that," Mrs. Mauger said. "We're thankful we're alive."

One of those [illegible] was 3-year-old Matthew [illegible]. His mother, Susan, said he [illegible] when a door flew off [illegible] the two of them as they tried to get down to the basement

[illegible] continued on page 2

ck on USS Liberty



Stan White

Africa when it was called on to spy dur- ing the war. While the ship was in inter- national waters, Israeli airplanes made several observation flights and then at- tacked the Liberty with machine guns, cannons, rockets and a napalm bomb. The ship radioed for help, but it took two hours before the U.S. Navy received White House permission to defend it, Enzes said.

White has written several letters to Israeli presidents and the Commander in Chief of the Navy about the attack, asking for an explanation, but the answer is always the same — it was an accident.

Israel says it mistook the ship for a fleeing enemy vessel and gave letters of identification it thought were Russian.

But White says the Israeli plans were flying too low to miss the American flag and ship markings.

Afterward, the government told us not to say anything about the attack unless the story was cleared by them," White said.

The crew was eventually told they could talk to the press, but give only in- formation reported by a United States Court of Inquiry that investigated the attack, Enzes wrote. The investigation was limited, he said, because important witnesses were not allowed to testify.

Liberty continued on page 2

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DON: THIS ROUGHLY TYPED TRANSCRIPT WOULD BE GOOD FOR A SUPPLEMENT, APPENDIX OR ADDITION IF THERE IS SPACE.

Jim

①

TRANSCRIPT: ADMIRAL MOORER'S SPEECH USS LIBERTY REUNION JUNE 1982

MOOREP Page one

Ladies & Gentlemen I want to point out to you that, like my dear friend and mentor, Admiral Burke, I find myself in the [redacted] very enviable position now that I am no longer trying to get promoted, I'm not trying to get appointed, and I'm not trying to get elected. So I find myself in the delightful position of once again having inherited the rights guaranteed by the first amendment.

It is certainly a moving experience and a distinct honor for me to have the opportunity to meet with this wonderful group. Because you represent what American is all about, and when people question the ability of the youth of this land, I always remember the Liberty and how you performed under almost impossible conditions. By Gosh You are one group of fellows who know what we mean when we say, "Don't give up the ship."

I'm very sorry that Captain McGonagle is not here, to participate in this very moving experience and moving meeting. You're not really an organization. You were just magnetized into assembling here because of the common experience and the common beliefs you have. Now I'm very pleased as I tell you to be here. [redacted] Because [redacted] terrible ordeal. I have never been willing to accept the Israeli explanation that it was a case of mistaken identity. (standing ovation)

I say that because of, first, the fact that I have spent a large amount of time during my lifetime, and during my service to the Navy, in searching for and identifying ship. Thousands and thousands of [redacted] hours in war and peace, and I know what it takes and what's involved in recognizing a ship at sea. And certainly the Israelis are--I think it's fair today perhaps the most professional fighting men--in the world today. They're fighting all the time. They just bombed Beirut yesterday. So I cannot accept the fact that their pilots do not know how to identify ships. And so there must have been some other motive which I am confident some day will be made public.

But take a look at the situation. The weather was good. The Liberty was flying a five foot by eight [illegible] flag. And the United States flag does not resemble in any way any flag of a[illegible] the nations that were involved in the Israeli war. Our great flag stands o[illegible] where it is impossible to confuse it with any other flag. It is a very special flag.

Next, the Liberty was one of a kind. And certainly the Egyptians had not one ship that even closely resembled the superstructure of the Liberty. If I were taking a course in ship identification I guarantee you I would always make an "A" when I was asked to identify a ship that looked like the Liberty.

She wasn't very pretty, but God knows she had a heart.

Now let just go through some of the minutes of the day. According to the Israeli report, as a matter of fact it began at five o'clock in the morning when a report was received that the beach at El Arish was being shelled. So there you were involved in shore bombardment. Next thing that happened you were reported as being a destroyer. Well they gave that idea up and shortly after that you were reported as being two ships--not one but two this time. And then the torpedo boats were sent out to investigate and reported you were making 30 knots, and I know the chief engineer will be surprised as hell about that. Well that being the case, no one stopped to verify what a ship that looked like the Liberty was doing making 30 knots, and the Israeli headquarters ordered the attack. And at two o'clock in the afternoon as you all recall so vividly you were strafed and also bombed. Well, shortly after that along come the torpedo boats. And they released five torpedoes, one of which I believe received a hit. And the torpedo boats commander was ordered to circle the ship and do a little more identification. And it was then reported

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that you were an Egyptian supply ship, although my exposure to Arabic is such that I don't know how in the hell you can confuse Arabic with English. Arabic is, you know, it's kind of wavy. And then finally, you may or may not know this, but you were finally reported as Russian. And that must have scared the hell out of Israel. And then it was all over.

So you can take some satisfaction in remembering that you had all kind of capabilities. If we had more ships like the Liberty today we wouldn't have any concern about the Russian Navy because one minute you engaged in shore bombardment, you looked like a destroyer, you looked like an Egyptian supply ship, you looked like a Russian ship, you looked like two ships, you made 30 knots, and on top of that you sent out all kind of recognition signals that indicated to the Israelis at least that you refused to identify yourself.

Now the fact that, having sustained that kind of damage, under the leadership of your Captain, you were able to navigate and to steam your ship backto safety is a great, great tribute to every one of you.

I knew several of the young men on that ship, particularly young Steve Toth, whose father and I played football together at the U.S. Naval Academy, and I had known him since the time he was born, and consequently I have the same personal feeling for this crew that you obviously also have.

I know your anxious to ask the question: How could this happen? You would be amazed that many people in the United States have never heard of the Liberty. And in my opinion there was an intentional effort by the United States government to make sure that they didn't hear about the Liberty. Because at that time we were in the Vietnam war, and the policy and the procedures used towards public relations at the time was that we're going to downplay everything, that we have to mark time by downplaying the Israeli war and we don't need any more publicity about a mess like this. That's my opinion. I can't necessarily prove it, but I have other indicators coming to me at the same time that made me draw that conclusion.

I should say also in tribute to you that in light of the capabilities of your ship, which was a converted merchant ship, an old ship, that of course had only the very minimum capability for damage control, and only very small guns, 40mm or 50 caliber, that you proved once more that when a military force gets attacked, the power to resist does not require the power to overwhelm on the basis of a systems analysis study before the battle starts.

You didn't have a chance. But the reason you survived and the reason you came out of it was because you had the heart.

Now that is about all I have to say on the subject. I want to say that I am humble in your presence. The nation owes every one of you a great debt of gratitude. And I believe the time will come when you gentlemen will get proper recognition.

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Philip Geyelin Page One

Introduction by Don Blalock

Philip Geyelin has covered international affairs, he was with the Wall Street Journal for twenty years covering international activities, he is familiar with the Middle East. He covered the invasion of the Sinai in 1956. He was in Beirut when the Marines went in there. He covered Baghdad when there was a coup in '58. He covered Vietnam in the '60s. For a twelve year period he was the editor of the editorial page of the Washington Post, which gets a heck of a lot of scrutiny from a lot of people in this town. He is currently a syndicated columnist. He is the editor in residence for the Johns Hopkins School for International Studies in Washington. He was also a Marine.

Good Evening:

To be invited to participate in the first reunion of the survivors and their wives and friends and family of the attack on the Liberty, to commemorate those who lost their lives and to celebrate the gallantry of all hands is no ordinary honor.

It was said of one of the previous engagements in the Pacific in WWII, the battle for Iwo Jima, that uncommon valor was a common virtue. The same can be said of the performance of the crew of Liberty. The only difference is the uncommon cloud of conspiracy, deception, and even denigration that has covered those who were lost and even those who survived the full measure of recognition they so richly earned.

It is a privilege for me to play even a small part in the process that serves, I hope will continue to serve, to establish [redacted] the most important missing ingredient in the story of the Liberty--the truth, the truth that gives meaning and purpose to sacrifice.

I might just add my gratitude for your invitation on strictly personal terms. In WWII I did serve in the Marine Corps, starting as a private and mustering out as a 1st Lieutenant. Never in my wildest imaginings did I ever dream of getting equal time with an admiral, or speaking at all in the presence of two admirals who have had distinguished careers that have reached as high as a United States naval officer can go. I can see why you're listening to Admiral Moorer. I envy anyone who can speak as eloquently as he did extemporaneously. We journalists only know what we think when we see what we write. I'm sorry to tell you I have written this speech.

[redacted] to make a few remarks about the diplomatic and political ramifications about the attack on the Liberty. I will try not to take too long.

I profoundly think that the politics and the diplomacy of the affair[redacted] of the USS Liberty come down in the end quite simply to the tormenting missing ingredient: truth. When do governments tell it? When and why do they not? What does it do to the strength of our democratic system and to the effective functioning of a free society when they don't. I saw it comes down quite simply, because I see no purpose in laboring the question of whether in this instance we have at least a large part of the truth. Admiral Moorer has spoken eloquently to that point. You above all have the evidence of your senses. As eye witnesses, you know how little we yet have been told officially of the truth, and how much that was said, and is still being said, officially, is untrue.

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The question is not whether but why, fifteen years after the fact, we do not have and cannot get from those [redacted]--and there are many--in a position to know, [redacted] a credible explanation of how this seemingly senseless engagement came about. Why is it, for example, that when I asked a responsible and I believe a truthwurthy official at the Israeli Embassy just a day or so ago [redacted] to prepare for this evening for some possible enlightenment I found the Israeli government still holding to the official line put forth without elaboration by an Israeli government four prime ministers ago that it was an innocent mistake.

More to the point, I think, is the question why we cannot get from our own United States government an admission that whatever else may be said or can't be said about the Liberty, Israel's explanation is simply not believable.

As one of your members said to me, there would be less trouble today and we would have been less angry and frustrated at the time if the United States had forthrightly dismissed the Israeli explanation as unacceptable and inconsistent with the plain facts, and had demanded reparations. It is perfectly clear that beyond that the mission of the Liberty was intelligence gathering, that it involved sensitive aspects bearing on national security, and that it could not be publicly discussed. Instead, our government reflexively signed on to the Israeli line.

Perhaps it is because I am a professional journalist and because I was not there as you were, I find the performance of my government harder to deal with in its way than the performance of the Israeli government. Having had some experience as a journalist with coverups, I find the American coverup in many ways more offensive than the Israeli coverup.

In just the last day or so we have witnessed another demonstration of the impulses yet that drive Israel, the instinct to shoot first and ask questions later, to strike hard at the first faint perception of a threat, to exact in reprisal not an eye for an eye, an arm and a leg.

It is not my purpose here to examine the origins, the causes, or all the rights and wrongs over the years that lie behind the Israeli [redacted] condition, the sense of a state of seige as a state of mind. Suffice it to say that it is not un-understandable or even entirely without some justification. It is an unhappy fact of Israeli life, this beleaguerment, in an atmosphere of hatred and violence, and for most of the 33 years of Israel's existence in almost total hostile encirclement. I don't [redacted] this as any justification for any particular Israeli act, and still less for the attack on the Liberty. I would offer it not so much in mitigation as in explanation, given the particular circumstances of the Six Day War as set forth by Jim Ennes in his brilliant book, the Assault on the Liberty. His theory, which ties the attack on the Liberty with the Israeli [redacted] intention to move against Syria, would still of course not be justification for a sustained effort to destroy a noncombatant [redacted] U.S. naval vessel flying the flag and bearing the markings of Israel's staunchest ally. But it is at least an explanation, an explanation that I think ought to remove the case of the Liberty from consideration as a case of an isolated outrage, or an entirely aberrational act, and place it, for whatever comfort it may give, in this context.

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waves of bombing attack
It has to be seen, I think, in the context of yesterday's attack on the PLO's facilities in Beirut which has cost as many as 45 lives, including a good many civilians in the vicinity, in retaliation for a terrorist attempt on the life of an Israeli diplomat in London, however reprehensible that may be.

It has to be seen in the context of the bombing of the Iraqi nuclear reactor, and in the earlier bombings of Beirut which took several hundred lives. In this sense the story of the fate of the USS Liberty properly understood and properly told, would add its considerable weight on the side of serious, selfless exertions to stabilize that incendiary region that are imposing on both sides of the Arab Israeli conflict and the imperatives of peace. And that is just the point. The right balance may never be struck. The necessary conditions will never be achieved if the one great power capable of performing the odds-broker's role cannot bring itself to address the problem honestly. There lies one of the essential lessons of the Liberty -- The lesson that, if it had been permitted to be learned at the time, or could yet be learned, could give real meaning to that sacrifice.

of the matter
I am emphatically not suggesting that if the truth were to be laid out by the United States government as it has been laid bare to the best of his extraordinary ability by your shipmate Jim Ennes that the proper conclusion would be to blame Israel for all or even most of the tension and the tragedy that have been the mark of the Middle East for so long. But what I am saying is that a calculated, conspiratorial coverup, the nature and degree of which we have seen needs no elaboration does no service to the end to the needs of Israel, nor to the domestic political interest that it was intended, presumably, at the outset to serve.

Secretary Rusk concedes that the attack on the Liberty was outrageous. He concedes that it was not the work of "trigger happy local commanders." Mr. Rusk offers a diplomatic motive for the coverup. He sees a serious policy question involved in blowing the episode up into a major confrontation between Israel and the United States. I do not question his sincerity or diplomatic grounds, but the interests of diplomacy, I suspect, are secondary to the interest of others and in domestic politics, to the interest not of the Navy, not of the Defense Department not of the military, nor the civilians. Much more important, with due respect to Dean Rusk and a good many others dedicated public service I would question profoundly whether a conspiracy to obstruct truth ever serves the interest of diplomacy or any public policy in a democracy over any stretch of time. It is sometimes said that truth is the first casualty of war. Perhaps so. But if that is so (we've got) a poor way to serve the interest of national security while preserving the principles of a free society that we are trying with our diplomacy and our defense efforts to secure. For if truth is the first casualty, trust becomes the second. And when public trust becomes a casualty, when credibility collapses, and the public and the people cease any longer to believe in their leaders, not even the worthiest policies can be sustained. The system fails. We have more than enough and all too vivid evidence of this in the 60s and 70s. I do not dispute the need for the government to suppress information, even to dissemble in the heat of crisis. I am talking about the sustained, consistent toll of lies. It may work for a time, but we have the memory of Watergate and yes, even Vietnam, to tell us of the dangers of telling the American people things that no reasonable person among us can be expected over time to believe. Yet in the tragedy of the Liberty truth, official truth, remains suppressed, but for no interest that can any longer be related to national security. Perhaps we can learn nothing from the truth that would be strictly applicable to the contemporary scene. Nothing specific, such as how best to conduct electronic espionage. But that is not the point. It is no more the point than in the case

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of Vietnam. Yet I am one of those who value what others see as rehashing the past, not for what Vietnam may tell us about how to deal with El Salvador. Those analogies never really work. But because the truth liberates us from the frustration if not indeed the rage of having [redacted] to live with suspicions and distrust and unresolved antipathy.

So I congratulate you and your effort this weekend to keep alive and strong the memory of the USS Liberty and to widen as best you can the public knowledge of the event that brings you here tonight. In so doing you not only honor a gallant crew, those who were lost and you who survive, you also serve a cause without end, the preservation of the most precious commodity in an open society, the faith of a free people in their government. Thanks you.

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DISCUSSION:

Q. Do you think this would generate any interest in the Congress to go back into the Liberty tosee if they're going to find out anything we don't know.

Gr[illegible] I don't know. I don't have a whole lot of faith in the Congress's ability to go back and examine the past. They seem to be having enough trouble with the present. I would hope so. I would think it would be timely and justifiable if it was done in a spirit of genuine inquiry, if it would lead to the kind of honest inspection of what went wrong or what went right and what we might learn from it, but the Congress I'm afraid is an overburdened body at best, and I have an awful feeling that they've got enough trouble without going out to look for more.

M[illegible] I agree fully about the current pressures on the Congress. Of course there is your presence here, and if under good guidance you get a lot of publicity, the Congress might respond, but their first reaction today ~~because they overwhelm (and they can't~~) would be to put such a problem as this, which is 15 years old, on a back burner.

E[illegible] Some people here may not know but Senator Adlai Stevenson before left the Congress he made a serious personal attempt to reopen the Liberty investigation. He held a press conference and told UPI in a story that was nationally published that he was running into obstacles because the pressure from the Israeli Lobby made it difficult to look into a matter such as this. He nevertheless went in with a serious attempt to do it, he got no support from his colleagues. He did mention again publicly that one of the unsettled matters included a 14 million dollar claim for the loss of the ship. Sixty days after his statement Israel agreed to pay six million dollars for the loss of our ship. The State Department issued a statement saying that this closes the issue of the Liberty and that is the last we have heard about it.

B[illegible] Senator Jeremiah Denton did place into the Congressional Record a statement recognizing what happened to the LIb erty in relation to memorial day. so some of them had a little bit of exposure, but it's going to take a lot more.

Rowley: I did write to Senator Adlai Stevenson. He did say he wanted to be here, but he is running for governor of Illinois right now and he very co rtiously (?) declined because he is running for governor right now.

Blalock" Another who would like to be here is Pete McCloskey. He is running for the senate out in California right now. He's a good guy to Californians.

Lamkin: Our Captain was given the Congressional Medal of Honor,not in the White House by the President, but in the Washington Navy Yard. Th's was the highest award in the nation, normally given in the White House. This is a coverup. Secondly, I heard a radio talkshow about the Liberty in the last year. I came up on the air without giving my name and gave some facts and figures. I was called a liar. Within 20 minutes five phone came in. I was called anti-Semitic, racist, XXX, outright liar, the ship shouldn't have been there, one lady said they should screen their calls to keep nuts like me off the air. Well let me tell you something. Because of those people and that kind of people, I will not give it up. (big round of applause)

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DISCUSSION: [redacted] (p2)

Mr. I just want to verify what you said. It's been my experience in Washington... I was Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff for seven years and my recollection is that the prsentation to Captain McGonagle of the Congressional Medal of Honor wasthe only one that was not made by the Presidetn of the United States in the White House. I didn't like it. We tried to change it. We were unable to do it. and I'm surprise that they didn't present it underneath the fourteenth street bridge.

Q. How many people knew when he got the MOH. I didn't. Hands? (few hands)

Lewis: I received a personal invitation from Captain McGonagle two hours before the ceremony. To my knowledge no invitations were sent.

Rowley: I didn't, and I'm a member of the VFW. And I asked my local post why no invitations were received. The people in my area are very, very military, and not being invited was an embarrassment. And it was an embarrassment to ask my local post why it was not given in the White House.

Blalock: There are a lot of things to be embarrassed about, not by us but by the people in charge.

Moe Schafer:
[redacted] I'd like to ask the admiral what we can do to stir up, what steps we can take individually to make something come of this so that we can leave here Monday and start fighting.

Mr. I think that in our present system there are two things you can do. In the first place, you come from all over the United States and consequently you have a very broad scope of contact, and I would suggest with much confidence you'll get a response, but the first thing to do is to try to be sure thjat your local paper is aware of what is going on this evening. Many of you said you didn't know that Captain McGonagle got a medal of Honor. I'd suggest that this time you make sure your local paper is aware of what went on here tonight. And I suggest that you do this in order that [redacted] your local Congressman know what went on here [redacted] tonight. So my primary advice to you is when your congressman comes home buttonhole him or even make a trip over to where he happens to be and insist on talking to him, and of course the more of you you can get together the better that will be. It doesn't do any good today to write a congressman. If ever there was a complete waste of time that's it. I'm dead serious about this. During the Suez Canal debate Senator Randolph of West Virginia the morning of the vote had four of these grocery carts the ladies push around the grocery story, four of them stacked full of letters waiting outside his office that he didn't have a chance in hell of ever seeing. And furthermore, if you write a letter to a congressman and one of his staff reads it and doesn't agree with what you have said, well that congressman is not going to see that letter. So the only way you can really make your point [redacted] is eyeball him. Grab him by the lapels and talk to him.. That will be the most effective thing you can do. When they have a recess and come home, well get him. Get so you know the people who raise money for him, and the people who run their campaigns, and go to them too, and so, look, if you want me to support that boy of your you had better get him to pay attention to this. Because this is what it's come to in our society. We have a government of the people, by the people and for the people, but the people don't really participate. And if you really want to have an impact, in my opinion, that's the way to do it. If you want to have a government of you and by you and for you, you had better talk to these congressmen yourselves. That's my number one advice.

G. I find myself agreeing with Admiral Moorer more and more very time he speaks.

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Interview: The USS Liberty Wouldn't Sink; the Survivors Won't Go Away

On June 8th, at the height of the 1967 war, Israeli jets and torpedo boats attacked USS Liberty, a Navy intelligence ship, off the coast of Egypt, killing 34 and wounding 171. Wishing to conceal its preparations to attack Syria, Israel had warned the US that unless it was moved the ship would be attacked. A series of misrouted communications left the Liberty a sitting duck for an assault that—judging from the use of napalm and the destruction of life rafts—was calculated to leave no surviving witnesses. Assistance from the 6th Fleet was not forthcoming and the US accepted Israel's excuse that the attack was an accident, accepted Israel's payment for damages, and has sought ever since to suppress contradictory evidence. Now, 18 years later Liberty survivors continue to insist that the truth be told. The following interview with two of the ship's officers was conducted in March 1985 by **Israeli Foreign Affairs**. *James M. Ennes, Jr., a lieutenant and officer of the deck at the time of the attack during which he was gravely wounded, is the author of* **Assault on the Liberty**,* *the definitive account of the attack and subsequent coverup. George Golden, also a lieutenant and the only Jewish officer on board, was decorated for his heroism that day.*

Q: The Liberty story was resurrected by two Israeli military correspondents, Zeev Schiff and Hirsh Goodman. Writing in September's *Atlantic Monthly*, they claim to have new information and to be countering an upsurge of "Remember the Liberty" publicity. Do you think there was enough momentum generated by the bumperstickers they mention to inspire the article, or was this an Israeli response to *Assault on the Liberty*?

ENNES: Actually, I think the whole *Atlantic* thing is simply an overreaction to the few successes we have had telling the Liberty story. If you look at the *Atlantic* story, it says Israeli intelligence thinks that the bumperstickers were the work of Arab propagandists. That's silly. The bumperstickers were printed by a survivor of the Liberty at his own expense and distributed mostly by him. He runs a plumbing supply business in Hicksville, New York that he has named the Liberty Plumbing Company and he's put a little Liberty Museum in the entry way. As far as I know he doesn't even know an Arab.

Q: George Golden, how do you respond to charges that the bumperstickers are Arab propaganda?

GOLDEN: I fully disagree with that statement. I feel that what we're doing is a bunch of good [illegible] bumperstickers, t-shirts and so on; there's no real hate now towards Israel.

Q: Do you have any idea how many bumperstickers were printed?

ENNES: Somewhere between 500 and 1,000.

Q: Schiff and Goodman have their article on what they say are classified Israeli documents; have they revealed anything new at all?

ENNES: They revealed nothing substantive that's new. The important thing to recognize about the Schiff-Goodman story is that their so-called new evidence is a report by an Israeli judge by the name of Yerushalmi which is still withheld from the public at the request of Israel. But it's been leaked and published years ago. I have printed it myself and distributed hundreds of copies, because I'm convinced that anyone reading it carefully can recognize it as simply an unsatisfactory piece of work. They have taken that same document selectively, without releasing it in full to the public and said "Here's proof that it was an accident". The report was analyzed by the State Department and it was dismissed as utter balance in 1967.

Now, what they do contribute that is new is to give us some of the names of pilots and MTB-boat commanders and other principals that had not previously been published. But the shocking thing about their whole supposed expose is that none of their sources are available.

Q: The *Atlantic* did inspire a whole new round of press stories. Do you think that any of them cast any new light on the situation or advanced your own quest for the case to be readdressed?

ENNES: It put some of the material before a large American public. The net effect of the *Atlantic* story, when combined with the Associated Press analysis of the *Atlantic* story, which came out the last week in October, was very very much in favor of those of us who say the attack was deliberate. It completely destroyed everything Schiff-Goodman had to say.

Q: What are the most important discrepancies?

ENNES: Most of these are pointed out in the Associated Press article—exactly the points that Liberty survivors have made for years: the Israeli view simply doesn't make sense for several reasons and is inconsistent with sworn testimony of Liberty survivors† and Liberty's log, and is contrary to simple things like the laws of physics.

The *Atlantic* article said they sent the boats out to investigate a report of shelling from the beach—an erroneous report. They say they picked the Liberty up at 1:41 from 20 to 25 miles away, which is physically impossible. They had no such radar range.

In fact, we first started being reconnoitered by Israeli aircraft when we were about 150 miles off the coast. They were training their missile guidance radar on us. You just don't aim those things at friendly vessels and the supervisor on duty didn't believe it was an Israeli airplane that was doing it and it was never reported. But they were out there following us all night long, six or eight hours before the attack.

They say that they thought we were going at 28 knots and their top speed was 28 knots and they couldn't catch us, so the boats called in the aircraft. Well the State Department pointed out that the time between the time they say they sighted us on radar at 1:41 and 19 minutes later when the air attack started, is not time enough to do all the things they said they did in those 19 minutes.

They claim that the aircraft were ready faster because they diverted two jets that were returning from a patrol over the Suez. Well the attack started with 3 jets, not 2. I saw them; they were fully armed. They had 18 rockets hanging under each wing. I cannot believe that 2 jets, or 3 jets returning from extended patrol in the Suez in that hot shooting war are going to return to their base without having fired a shot. I was on the

*The Assault on the Liberty, by James M. Ennes, Jr., Random House, New York, 1979, would have, according the [illegible] said 5 times the 20,000 copies it did, had it not been subject to an unusual numbers of "horror stories". An article by Cheryl A. Rubenberg, "Proclaraeli Influence on the Media and US Middle East Policy," detailing the "difficulties" of Ennes' book appears in *Midwest Monitor*, March 1985 (from AAUG, 556 Trapelo Rd., Belmont, MA 02178

† The Transcript from the Liberty Board of Inquiry is available for about $80 from the Navy Judge Advocate General or the Government Printing Office

James M. Ennes Jr. Research Papers

bridge of the ship and those airplanes didn't come from Suez, they approached us from the northeast, from Haifa or Tel Aviv.

They tell us the air plane dropped to a low level and the lead pilot circled the ship twice and his second in command circled once. That's absolutely untrue; they didn't circle at all they came right in and made a 150° turn and started firing. They say that they looked us over and saw no flag, no marking at any time. They say that they could see our machine guns. We had a little Thompson submachine gun, it has a barrel about as big around as your thumb and maybe three feet long. They say they could see that but they couldn't see our 5 x 8 foot American flag.

Then they stared at us for a while, picked up the life rafts and took them with their and came back an hour and a half later and said "Do you need help?" It's all very different from what *The Atlantic* has to say.

Q: In the next few months, young people who were born after the attack are going to be joining the Navy. Most of the government officials and the individuals who investigated the attack on the Liberty at the time have retired now, or passed away. What keeps the Liberty survivors going, and how would finding the truth matter now?

ENNES: It's extremely frustrating to have an experience like that in which literally your best friends die before your eyes and for an extended period

I'm an an ex-enlisted man, I was in the Navy for 10 years, worked my way up the ranks."

George Golden Recalls the Attack on the Liberty

All at once there was this loud noise and I jumped up to see if anyone had been hurt. When I got up, in a split second the whole back of the couch was ripped with bullets.

That's when I heard the general quarters and I ran across the hall to go down into the engineering spaces. Rockets were coming through and knocked me two floors down. Then all hell broke loose and it was a matter of having the ship up to speed, all the equipment ready to move as fast as the old baby would go. And then the torpedo hit.

Bullets from the torpedo boats were coming through the side of the ship. I realized that where they were coming was above the water line and I could make all my people crawl on their knees. Then all the lights went off. I knew the plan as well as any of my people, so I asked them all to leave the space, actually felt, at first, that the ship would probably go down, and I wanted them all out of the space. I could handle everything myself.

The rest of that night, after the torpedo boats and planes had left, it was a matter of fighting fires and trying to save people's lives.

From there we headed to Malta. About the second day is when I really got downright nervous; that's when the ship went down somewhat at the bow. I felt that the ship might break in two because of the size of the holes the torpedo had left in the starboard side. I was on the other side of the wall from where it went through. If it had hit where I was it would have broke the back of the ship because the bullets would have cut

Five minutes before the torpedo boats arrived we had lost our 5 x 8 foot flag, so we put up a 7 x 13 foot flag. Really a huge piece of linen hanging there from the highest mast. The Associated Press pointed out that the flag was indeed flying.

They say they asked us to identify ourselves and that we answered "AA. Identify yourself first", "AA" doesn't mean "identy youself first", it means "I would like to communicate". We flashed "USS Liberty, US Navy ship" over and over until the signal man had his light shot up.

They say when they drew closer and saw these big letters on our bow, GTR, which made them think we were Russian, they stopped firing at 2:40. They didn't stop firing until 3:15, until the Israeli helicopter came out.

you think that you are probably going to die. Then the whole thing is over and everybody says so sorry it was a mistake and your own government says you're not allowed to talk to the press about it. You can't even tell your mother about it, but it was a mistake and forget it. A lot of men on the ship had really serious problems, a lot of alcholism and divorces. And then, one day my book came out and I had a lot of these people call me and say "Hey, I feel better for the first time. I feel free to talk to my wife about what happened. And it's taken a tremendous load off my shoulders."

GOLDEN: I don't think it would matter what much now. It's been a long time. But—and I feel that I can speak for quite a few that I know in my

area—we think we've been had. It was a set-up by our government and the Israeli government and we lost a lot of shipmates, both wounded and dead. I think that what we want most—and would probably end up dropping it right after—is for our country to admit that they made a mistake instead of just lying to us. And maybe for some of our widows and our children apologizing to them. I think until something like that happens the Liberty Veterans Association will continue as much as possible to get attention, to let other people know that we're still alive and still wanting our government to say something to us.

ENNES: In the international sense, I think it is important for our government to recognize that these people attacked us on purpose. If my neighbor aims his BB gun and picks off one of my cats once in a while, I need to know it before I put any more cats out in the yard. That's what Israel's doing and the United States is looking the other way, saying "Oh, the raccoon got the cat." But the Israel damn well it wasn't an accident. I think the country needs to be realistic about some of the fanaticism that's in Israel that lead to this sort of thing. ■

The Liberty Veterans Association, which includes supporters as well as survivors, and publishes an occasional newsletter is headed by Stew White who was the senior enlisted man and Master Chief Petty Officer of the Liberty. Inquiries and tax deductible contributions may be addressed to: USS Liberty Veterans Association, Box 100, Canton, South Dakota, 57324.

Ivory Coast Cathedral

A joint Israeli-Ivorian company will build the new Cathedral of the Virgin Mary in Abidjan, capital of Ivory Coast. The Societe Nationale Ivoirienne de Travaux won the $2.63 million contract and will complete work this year. [illegible]

Back For More

Papua New Guinea, which exchanged ambassadors with Israel last year and sealed the deal with the purchase of 3 Arava short-take-off-and-landing planes, has just bought more Aravas. According to Jerusalem Radio (2/5, 2:00) the Pacific island nation faces 'a security problem' from Indonesian West Irian.

Papua New Guinea's prime minister will visit Israel this summer.

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#1

The USS LIBERTY

Remarks: Liberty Memo, Wachst, Sept 1985

Captain Joseph N. Tully, Jr., USN, C O, USS SARATOGA at the time

I assumed Command of the USS SARATOGA relieving Capt. H. F. Lang in October of 1966 and served as such until October 1967, completed the normal six months in the Mediterranean and returned to the US for a partial overhaul prior to the ship's next Sixth Fleet deployment. I as an experienced shipboard officer having spent 2½ years in the S. Pacific, a year as Executive Officer aboard the USS FORRESTAL, the Navy's first "super carrier", and a year in command of USS NEOSHO with the Sixth Fleet.

Upon completion of our overhaul accomplished at Naval Station Mayport and Norfolk Naval Shipyard, SARATOGA departed continentql US for a regularly scheduled Sixth Fleet deployment in the Mediterranean Sea with instructions to conduct a two week training period for ship and airwing personnel near Naval Air Station Sigonella, Sicily. No sooner had we made our first training launch when SARATOGA began receiving radio messages that the Arab-Israeli 6 Day War had begun. Anticipating that the Sixth Fleet would be concentrated to the East, I recalled all aircraft and proceeded on an Easterly course.

Events proved me right and the Sixth Fleet carrier force was concentrated in International Waters, but the carriers were ordered to operate independently which we did for about 2 months. The Carrier Force was then ordered west to the vicinity of Crete and placed in a typical self defense formation. At that time Sixth Fleet Commander, VADM W. E. Martin, assumed tactical command [illegible] and began maneuvering the fleet in typical formations. While conducting these maneuvers SARATOGA received the following message in plain language:

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#2

From: USS LIBERTY (AGTR-5)

To: Any or all USS Ships

LIBERTY UNDER ATTACK BY UNKNOWN ENEMY SURFACE AND AIR UNITS REQUEST ASSISTANCE. (Position given but no longer remembered by me.)

The foregoing was brought directly to the SARATOGA'S Navigation Bridge by the Comnication Officer. I specifically asked him if he had "verified" the authenticity of the message and was assured that he had. As I recall the time as approximately 1045 local time zone. I personally passed LIBERTY'S message via voice radio in plain language directly to VADM Martin and directed my Comnication Officer to pass it to all USS High Commands in the European area plus to the Chief of Naval Operations. Then via the same voice circuit, in plain language, I sent personally the following message:

From: SARATOGA (CVA-60)

To: COMSIXTH FLEET

UNLESS OTHERWISE DIRECTED PAL TO LAUNCH MY READY STRIKE GROUP AT 1100 IN SUPPORT OF LIBERTY. (This Ready Strike Group consisted of 4 F-4 fighters, 4 A4 Fighter bombers, 4 A-1 Fighter bombers, all conventionally armed. To this Group I felt it was prudent to launch 4 A4 tankers.) COMSIXTH FLEET as OTC approved my decision and ordered the other carrier in the Force to launch also and turned the Force into the wind. SARATOGA launched on time. To my surprise USS AMERICA, the other carrier in the Force, did not launch!

SARATOGA'S Strike Group had barely reached the horizon when Commander Carrier Division [illegible] had apparently assumed or been made Officer in tactical command (OTC), recalled them to SARATOGA. He then ordered both SARATOGA and AMERICA to ready similar Strike Groups to be launched in support of LIBERTY in 90 minutes. This was done, and both launched conventionally armed

James M. Ennes, Jr. Research Papers

aircraft on time. These two Groups were also recalled about the time they reached the horison. Shortly after that the Force, having been at sea for a period of two months or more, was dispersed to various Central Mediterranean European liberty ports.

That completed SARATOGA'S activities in the Arab-Israli 6-Day War and other than hearing that ADM Isaac Kidd had been ordered to conduct a Court of Inquiry, which I have never seen, we played no further part in the LIBERTY incident.

James M. Ennes, Jr. Research Papers

Truth on 'Liberty' In Secret Report

By Harrison Horne

Eighteen years after Israeli forces attacked the "USS Liberty" in a calculated attempt to sink the ship and kill its crew, the international Establishment persists in trying to cover up the atrocity.

Since The SPOTLIGHT (April 16, 1976 and subsequently) first exposed the scandal:

- Every man on the ill-fated crew has confirmed the fact that the attack was intentional;
- Three books, one by an officer who survived the attack, have since confirmed The SPOTLIGHT's expose, which was greeted with indignant cries of "anti-Semitism" at the time;
- A copy of a report on the atrocity by an Israeli judge (which is still withheld from the American people at the request of the Israeli government) admits that Israeli forces had identified the "Liberty" as an American ship before the attack.

(However, cooperating in "Operation Big Lie," presided over by President Lyndon Johnson, the Israeli judge concluded that, despite having identified the ship as American, it was "mistaken" for an Egyptian ship.)

A copy of this report has been obtained by The SPOTLIGHT.

The attack, by air and sea, came on June 8, 1967 at the height of the "Six-Day War." Israel had launched a surprise attack on Egypt, destroying its air force on the ground and calling it a narrower borders, on pain of losing the billions in American taxpayer dollars that propped up the new state.

If America's leaders became aware that, after destroying the Egyptian armed forces in 1967, Israel would seize more Arab territory on the West Bank, U.S. pressure might be applied to stop the aggression. It was the billions in American tax dollars that had made Israel one of the strongest military powers on Earth, and certainly the dominant force in the Middle East.

SECRET FINDING

The still-secret finding by Israeli Judge Shaw-Aluf I. Yerushalmi was dated July 21, 1967—six weeks after the attack. Israel "requested that this be treated on a restricted and confidential basis," wrote Eugene V. Rostow, then under secretary of state for political affairs, in a memo transmitting a copy to his superiors dated August 1:., 1967. It is still withheld from the American people.

An "information memorandum" from Carl F. Salans, which detailed numerous discrepancies in the Israeli judge's report that further demonstrate the attack was deliberate, was dated to an under secretary of state September 21, 1967. It was long classified as "top secret." When the seal was ripped away by the Freedom of Information Act, the State Department merely refused to provide the document—being "unable to locate it" and "being unaware of the document," among other ruses.

Nevertheless, The SPOTLIGHT has obtained a copy. Among the discrepan-



Shot full of holes from a premeditated Israeli attack days earlier, the "USS Liberty" sits in a safe harbor.

The "Liberty's" name "was clearly painted in English on her stern," Salans countered. "That the 'Liberty' could have been mistaken for the Egyptian

clothes warning him not to talk to the press—this, before his wounds were treated beyond what could be done during the tumult of combat.

James M. Eames, Jr. Research Papers

...-emptive strike." After gaining ...able oil fields in the Sinai, Israel was ...ing troops on the West Bank and ...a Strip for more expansionist ven...s.

...ELI MOTIVES

...he "Liberty" was an intelligence ..., lightly armed and conspicuous, in ...rnational waters. Sources within the ...eli government, the American CIA ... State Department have since deter...ed Israel's motive for wanting the ...berty" and her entire crew to sink: ...e one of its many earlier ventures, in ...7, Israel had seized the Suez Canal. ...sident Dwight Eisenhower ordered ...el to withdraw behind her then-

...ties found by Salans are these:

- The Israeli report said the "Liberty's" speed was 28-38 knots. Actually, it was five knots.
- Israel said a ship was reported in the area at 6 am and again at 9 am. Actually, Israeli planes flew over the "Liberty" at 5:15, 8:50, 10:30, 11:26 and 11:45 am and again at 12:20 and 12:45 pm.
- The Israeli judge said that the American flag was not displayed and the ship could be confused with an Egyptian vessel, "El Kasir." Actually, the flag was displayed and extended in the breeze, according to all testimony of the "Liberty" crew.

supply ship 'El Kasir' is unbelievable," Salans added. " 'El Kasir has one-fourth the displacement of the 'Liberty,' roughly one-half the beam, is 180 feet shorter and is very differently configured. The 'Liberty's' unusual antenna array and hull markings should have been visible to low-flying aircraft and torpedo boats."

- Israel claimed that the ship it "thought" was "El Kasir" was doing 30 knots. This should have ruled it out because "El Kasir's" top speed is 14 knots, as published in "Jane's Fighting Ships" and surely known to Israel during a "pre-planned" war with Egypt.
- The Salans analysis also takes note of findings by the Israeli judge that the "Liberty" had been identified by Israel but numerous cases of messages being delivered by not received explained the "mistake."

TRUTH WILL OUT

The fact that the cover-up was complete until The SPOTLIGHT's initial, in-depth expose nine years later is explained by the extraordinary steps taken by the American government and its subservient, Establishment press to suppress the truth.

Each crewman was warned to keep his mouth shut and not give any interviews. James Ennes, an officer who survived, had a typical experience, which he related in his book. While lying in a stretcher deposited on the deck of a [illegible] ship, he was, by his own account, greeted by an American in civilian

The crew was dispersed around the globe and all were warned to be quiet. Some, after leaving the Navy, soon began to tell their story. Others, even after leaving, were still so intimidated that they waited years to speak out.

The fear of forfeiting promotions and pensions, of drawing unattractive assignments, and even death was imposed on some crewmen (SPOTLIGHT, April 16, 1976 and subsequently).

Even now, the Establishment press tells as little of their story as possible.

INCREDIBLE SURVIVAL

The attack killed 34 American seamen and 164 more were wounded as wave after wave of Israeli planes bombed the ship, dropped napalm that burned the deck and tailors, while torpedo boats [illegible] holes in the hull.

Planes from a U.S. aircraft carrier responded to the "Liberty's" appeal for help, but were recalled in flight before they reached the scene of the attack. According to "Liberty" crewmen, the aircraft carrier commander's order, sending the planes, was countermanded by a higher U.S. authority. Later, the planes were sent out again and were allowed to continue to the "Liberty's" position. By that time, however, the Israeli attack force had left the scene.

Had the "Liberty" been sunk, as intended, and the crew silenced forever, it could have been blamed on the Egyptians. But, with the crew's incredible survival, the truth cannot be buried at the bottom of the sea. ●

James M. Ennes, Jr. Research Papers

Top Brass Request Probe of 'Liberty'

By The SPOTLIGHT Staff

Adm. Thomas Moorer (retired), saying Israel had deliberately attacked the "USS Liberty" on June 8, 1967 in an attempt to sink the ship and kill the crew, called on the U.S. government on December 11 to investigate the incident.

"I cannot accept the explanation of 'mistaken identity'," Moorer said. "It was impossible to mistakenly sink the ship. It was the ugliest ship in the Navy."

Until The SPOTLIGHT revealed that the attack was deliberate, in its historic "first" of April 26, 1976, the explanation of both governments that the attack, in which 34 Americans were killed and 171 wounded, had been a "tragic accident" had gone unchallenged.

Since then, a steadily increasing number of newspaper stories and two books—one by a survivor—detailing the overwhelming evidence that Israel knew the was attacking an unarmed American vessel have appeared. However, the U.S. government has remained silent.

Moorer said the matter had been covered up by both governments for 18 years and he wants to find out "why Israel would take such action against the only nation in the world that makes Israel possible."

As an example of Israeli influence on America, Moorer recalled the case of the late Gen. George Brown, "who was taken to the woodshed by the president [Gerald Ford] because of his remarks about the Israeli lobby having influence."

Brown was fired after remarks he thought were off the record were taped and given to the Washington "Post."

"Is the life of an American or an Arab cheap when it comes to the interests of Israel?" a reporter asked.

"I deplore all the killing in the Mideast," Moorer responded.

Moorer was asked if there was a connection between the case of Jay Pollard, an American accused of spying for Israel, and his new demands for an investigation of the "Liberty" attack.

"The main connection is the word 'apologize'," replied Moorer. "In both cases, Israel apologized—and that's supposed to fix everything."

Moorer said the investigation should determine who gave the orders for Sixth Fleet planes going to the aid of the "Liberty" to turn back in mid-air. He noted that fewer men would have been killed and maimed had the planes not been diverted.

Moorer recounted the major facts that rule out any mistake: It was a clear day; the U.S. flag was extended in a breeze; the configuration of the "Liberty" was unusual and the boosters and gunboats were at such close range, while recon-

[illegible] the ship and during the hours of the attack, that there could be no mistaken identity.

"They hit all four machine gun [illegible], all the lifeboats and could shoot people off of ladders," said survivor Joe Lemons. "And they're trying to say they couldn't see the flag?"

"We want to know why Israel attacked, why the cover up and to make sure it never happens again," Lemons said.

Asked why there had been no congressional investigation, Moorer answered:

"How would I know? Why don't you ask them?"

Telegrams asking for an investigation were sent to the secretaries of state and defense, the FBI director and [illegible] general.



[illegible] Ambassador to Qatar Andrew Killgore, president of American Educational [illegible] at a press conference in Washington, above, to call on the government to [illegible] the Israeli attack upon the "USS Liberty." Killgore, center, is flanked by Adm. Thomas Moorer (retired), left, and James Ennes, right, author of a book on the [illegible]. Below, the "Liberty" is pictured after the unprovoked Israeli attack, in which 34 American seamen were killed and 171 wounded.



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THE NUSSES

A Tragic Mistake And a Rebuilt Life

On an autumn day in 1966, Joanne Nuss went to her parents' house on North Race Street to say goodbye to her brother, Tommy Thornton. He was to ship out on a sailor suit to her, a tow-headed [illegible] nearly 12 years her junior at 22; he had been in grade school when she married Tom Nuss in 1955 and began having babies. He had grown up an easy and open young man, the sort who, as her husband said, laughed when it was time to laugh and cried when it was time to cry. The passion of his life was his Martin guitar; he was born to make music, not war, but he had joined the Navy to stay out of the draft, and he was about to sail for the Middle East aboard the electronics spy ship USS Liberty. The good news was that the Mediterranean wasn't Vietnam; the duty, otherwise, was not secret that Tommy couldn't talk about it, even to Joanne. She gave him a kiss and a squeeze. The soft-core soap operatics of "Peyton Place" were droning on, forgotten, on a TV set in the background. "Be careful," Joanne told Tommy, and then he was gone.

She was dusting a bedroom one day six months later, half listening to the Jefferson Airplane singing "Somebody to Love" on the radio, when a newscaster broke in with a bulletin: the Liberty had been attacked by Israeli warplanes 14 miles off El Arish in the Sinai and more than a dozen American servicemen were believed dead. It's him, Joanne thought, without having to be told; she began crying and saying her rosary. The two Navy officers who came around to her parents' two-family house on North Race Street a few days later only confirmed what her premonition had told her. It had been a tragedy of errors, in Jerusalem's disputed official version; the Liberty had strayed too close to the fighting in the midst of the Six Day War between Israel and the Arabs and had been mistaken for an enemy vessel. The census of the dead had risen to 34, and Tommy was one of them.

They buried him in Ferncliff Cemetery on a pretty summer day, warm but not oppressive. A soldier played taps. The honor guard folded the flag that had draped the coffin into a tight triangle and gave it to Tommy's parents. They watched the casket being lowered into the ground. It had never been opened, presumably to spare the family the knowledge of what high explosives hitting a ship can do to a man. The gesture left the Thorntons with a little tangle of doubt, a desperate fancy that maybe, just maybe, the boy in the box was somebody else. In their hearts they knew it was Tommy. A lawyer came out from the East a while afterward to try to persuade Ray Thornton to join a lawsuit against the government of Israel. He wouldn't sign; it seemed to him so fitting when his boy had given his life serving his country.

For years thereafter, the family kept Tommy's Martin guitar, a relic of the son who did not come home from somebody else's war. But one day it came to Ray Thornton that his grandson Chris Nuss ought to have it. Chris, the eldest of Joanne's five children and in his 20s, had moved into the other half of the house on North Race Street, paying his grandparents $90 a month rent. Chris had made a bad mess of his life in his teens, in the years when the raging national drug epidemic had infected Springfield's high schools. He had progressed from liquor to pot to acid to speed; he somehow stumbled through the haze to collect his diploma, [illegible] he looked in a mirror and knew it every time he looked in a mirror and saw a hollow-eyed 105-pound



Tommy, with his guitar, knew for music

shadow of himself looking back.

He understood then what his parents had been trying helplessly to tell him for years—that he had to get hold of his life and rebuild it from the ground up. He quit drugs and drink, except for an occasional beer at a party. He became a vegetarian, his worst surviving vice the mayonnaise he slathers on a whole-wheat pizza. He took a job days at Hart Industrial Products and enrolled in school nights to study nursing. Joanne would come by to help him with his math. He took up yoga, martial arts and running, 13 miles on his lunch hour and more on weekends. He had dropped out of church; he went back. And he learned the guitar, working at it as Tommy had before he went away, accompanying himself on folk songs—soft songs, mostly, with a message.

It might have been the echo of Tommy that moved Ray Thornton to call Chris over one day; it may have been a grandfather's admiration for the way his grandson had come back from the ruins of his life. He disappeared upstairs, then came down with Tommy's dusty old guitar case and handed it over to Chris. It became a center of his life as it had been in Tommy's. In his new life, his long-distance running often led him among the graceful, shaded slopes of Ferncliff Cemetery, a green and spacious place with an ambience more of memory than of death. On his runs there, Chris Nuss usually paused for a moment at Tommy's grave, to pray and say hello and thanks.

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THIS ARTICLE WAS COMMISSIONED BY 1984, WAS
AMERICAN LEGION MAGAZINE IN 1984, WAS
THEY REJECTED BECAUSE THE SUBJECT WAS
DEEMED "INAPPROPRIATE" FOR THE MAGAZINE.
IT WAS LATER ACCEPTED BY THE - THE
RETIRED OFFICER AND PUBLISHED
IN JUNE 1985. JL

The Israeli Assault on the USS Liberty

By James M. Ennes, Jr.

From my position as officer-of-the-deck on the bridge of the USS Liberty, thirteen miles at sea, I had for several hours been watching the coastline near the Arab-Israeli border, alert to some visible sign of warfare. This was the fourth day of the third great Arab-Israeli war—soon to become known as the Six Day War. Yet, except for an occasional low-flying airplane and, once, an explosion and smoke fire in the coastal village of El Arish, the scene seemed placid. From here it was hard to realize that men were dying.

Officially USS Liberty was a "technical research ship," a 455 foot, 10,000 ton "mobile base for research in communications and electromagnetic radiation." However, newsmen and governments everywhere knew "research" as a

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pseudonym for "intelligence." To them we were an electronic "spy ship," and we were not always welcome. We would soon learn that in this area at this time a "spy ship" was not welcome at all.

Our country was officially neutral in this war. Israel—widely considered America's best friend in the area—controlled the sky and most of the ground. Since before midnight we had been circled regularly by Israeli warplanes, so we were certain the Israelis knew who we were. Some of the Israeli airplanes came so close that sailors waved to the pilots and could see the pilots waving back.

For extra safety, I had ordered our wind-torn flag replaced by a new one which stood out, clearly visible in a twelve knot breeze. And we felt reassured when our radio intercept operators heard the Israeli pilots reporting to their headquarters that they could see our American flag.

Warning

After a brief noon-hour break, I returned to the bridge at 1:00 p.m. for a General Quarters exercise. "Be alert," Captain William McGonagle warned over the ship's general announcing system. "Respond quickly to all emergencies. We are operating near a very hot war where anything can happen."

We knew that was true, but by now most Liberty crewmen felt that we were out of danger. When the drill ended an hour later, off-duty men filed onto the sun-drenched weather decks with towels and swimming trunks. We began to look more like a passenger liner than a naval vessel.

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Air Attack

Meanwhile, on the bridge, Lieutenant Lloyd Painter had assumed control of the ship. Almost immediately he received an urgent report from radar: "Three high speed surface craft approaching from starboard quarter, range 16 miles, speed 32 knots."

Painter glanced at the bridge radar repeater and called McGonagle: "Captain, you gotta look at this. I never saw anything move so fast!"

Then another report from radar: "Now I've got three high performance aircraft, same range and bearing, closing fast."

No one was alarmed. By now we had been reconnoitered eight times in daylight by Israeli aircraft, and this looked like another routine visit. I summoned Chuck Rowley, a cryptologic technician who also served as the ship's photographer, and together we climbed one deck to the signal bridge, the ship's highest platform, to try to take some pictures of the approaching aircraft.

Unseen, the lead airplane had made a left turn and was approaching from dead ahead, all guns blazing. Exposed men felt heat, surprise, and confusion as two dozen or more rockets from the airplane tore large holes in the heavy deck plating below us.

Sunbathers ran naked for safety while men in the gun mounts received direct hits that threw them high into the air. All the men around me dropped, many badly hurt by rocket fragments. I was thrown against a railing and remained standing on one leg, my left leg broken above the knee by a tiny rocket fragment.

Captain McGonagle, although badly wounded early in the attack, raced around the bridge defending the ship, directing messages to our seniors, and coordinating the efforts to survive. Once I saw him walk through a wall of

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flame; he seemed to ignore rocket and cannon fire and even napalm as he fought to protect his ship in a performance that earned him a well-deserved Medal of Honor.

Despite heavy jamming of his frequencies, Chief Radioman Wayne Smith broke through the jamming within nine minutes to reach the carrier Saratoga with an authenticated, acknowledged call for help. For reasons unclear, help never arrived.

When our regular 5' by 8' American flag was shot down, Signalmen Joe Meadors and Russell David hauled up an oversize 7' by 13' flag. Still the attack continued.

When a helmsman fell, Quartermaster Frank Brown took the wheel and died there. Ensign David Lucas helped move Brown's body, then took the wheel himself. When gasoline stored on deck burst into flame, Lieutenant Commander Philip Armstrong tried to release the burning drums into the sea; the effort cost him his life. When the ship's doctor, Richard Kiepfer, spotted two helplessly wounded men on deck, he tucked a man under each arm and carried them through gunfire to safety. Every man outdid himself, and still the attack continued.

Thirty-five minutes into the attack the torpedo boats, sighted earlier, came into their firing range. The aircraft pulled away. Russell David rechecked the oversize flag, saw it flying freely, and then switched on a 12" signal lamp. "USS LIBERTY, U S NAVY SHIP" he flashed to the approaching boats until he was hit by gunfire and his lamp disabled.

"Standby for torpedo attack, starboard side," warned the bridge.

In the main engine room, Lieutenant George Golden took over several jobs at once as he ordered his men to safer ground, expecting to die here.

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McGonagle saw a torpedo pass close astern. A near miss. Petty Officer Rick Aiuetti heard one pass below him "sounding like a motorboat" as he stood near the forecastle. Two more torpedoes passed safely, unseen. And a fifth, apparently launched from a mere 550 yards, made a direct hit on the ship's intelligence spaces. George Golden survived, but the torpedo instantly killed 25 fine young men.

Liberty assumed a heavy list to starboard as the engines stopped and part of the ship filled with water. The boats, meanwhile, circled the ship, firing on firefighters and anything that seemed to move.

Soon the general announcing system echoed the order that every sailor dreads: "PREPARE TO ABANDON SHIP." Rubber rafts dropped into the water, but the torpedo boats moved closer and fired upon the empty rafts. Lloyd Painter, who had helped move wounded men near the lifeboat stations, now helped move them back below, away from the still-marauding torpedoes.

The firing stopped seventy-five minutes after it started, possibly because of the threatened arrival of Sixth Fleet air power. Still another hour passed. Finally, the torpedomen moved closer to the ship and signalled "DO YOU NEED HELP?" The reply was a rude one. Thirty-four men were dead or dying, 171 wounded from a 294 man crew.

Crew Forbidden to Talk

One of the first messages to arrive from Washington instructed survivors to discuss the attack with no one. Courts of Inquiry were being held in both countries, and both reports would be swathed in secrecy.

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The American report, except for a declassified segment released to the press, remained top secret until forced out nine years later under the Freedom of Information Act. Its testimony reveals most of the scenario described here.

The Israeli report remains classified today, withheld from Americans at the request of the Israeli government, although a copy was leaked in 1980. That report informs American government leaders that the attack was a tragic result of a series of errors on both sides. According to the report: torpedomen investigating an erroneous report of a shore bombardment erroneously judged Liberty's actual 5 knot speed to be 32 knots; because of the misjudged high speed, torpedomen erroneously classified Liberty as an enemy warship and called in the aircraft; attacking aircraft conducted three, low-level, pre-attack identification runs, but erroneously concluded that the target was an Arab warship when they failed to see a flag or other markings; torpedo boats also failed to see a flag and asked the ship to identify itself; Liberty refused, according to the Israelis, and sent a signal meaning "identify yourself first." Extensive morning and noon-hour pre-attack reconnaissance described by crewmen "may dismissed as exaggerated," says the Israeli government, which says there was no such reconnaissance.

The Conflict Remains

For years, Liberty survivors and other interested Americans have asked both governments to re-investigate the matter in order to resolve the discrepancies between what survivors say happened and what the Israeli government has reported. So far, they have been ignored. But there is powerful support for survivors' claims that the attack was no accident.

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Dean Rusk, who was Secretary of State when the ship was attacked, says simply, "I have never believed the Israeli explanation."

Former National Security Agency Deputy Director Louis Tordella adds, "I believe it was a deliberate attack."

Former Central Intelligence Agency Director Richard Helms agrees. "To say that this was an accident is drawing a pretty long bow in view of the evidence," says Helms.

And former Joint Chiefs of Staff Chairman Admiral Thomas Moorer states his case even more strongly: "It's ridiculous to say this was an accident. There was good weather, she was flying the U.S. flag and the planes and torpedo boats attacked over a long period of time. I think Congress should investigate the incident, even now 17 years later."

Yet, officially, the USS Liberty matter is closed. No government agency is willing to reexamine the evidence. It deserves to be reexamined.

--END--

ABOUT THE AUTHOR: James Ennes retired from the United States Navy in 1978 after 27 years of enlisted and commissioned service and is the author of Assault on the Liberty (Random House, 1980). He works full time as an author and freelance writer and serves as historian for the USS LIBERTY VETERANS ASSOCIATION, a group of men who survived the attack. For more information about the USS Liberty, write to Stan White, President, USS LIBERTY VETERANS ASSOCIATION, Box 169, Cavour, SD 57324.

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Published by Americans for Middle East Understanding, Inc. Room 771, 475 Riverside Drive, New York, NY 10115

Vol. 17, No. 2 May/June 1984

The USS *Liberty* Affair

By James M. Ennes, Jr.

Seventeen years ago, in one of the worst peacetime naval disasters in American history, Israeli air and naval forces attacked the U.S. Navy intelligence ship *Liberty* on the high seas.

From before the story appeared in the American press, U.S. Government public affairs officers went to work promoting a version of the story that was satisfactory to Israel, while representatives of the American-Israel Public Affairs Committee descended on the press and Congress to help keep the story under control. Almost immediately, Jacob Javits in the Senate and Roman Pucinski in the House of Representatives took to the floor of Congress to lament the "tragic mistake" that had directed "friendly fire" toward an American ship.

The campaign was so effective that most American newspapers and all commercial television networks dropped the story almost overnight before even the Secretary of State, Secretary of Defense, Congress, and the President had the facts. Government officials, the press, the people—no one knew what had happened to the USS *Liberty*.

James M. Ennes, who now lives in Seattle, Washington, is the author of Assault on the Liberty.



USS *Liberty*, riddled by Israeli gunfire, limps into Valletta, Malta, for repairs

Even then, at the Government's very highest levels, no one knew for the truth. So he sought out Associated Press reporter Peter Arnett in a Maltese bar while the Navy Court of Inquiry into the incident was still in session and told him what he thought the attack was all about.

The resulting story appeared in newspapers around the world, but it failed to excite the press as Golden had hoped. Instead, it brought further pressure for crewmembers to keep quiet.

Yet, despite the press blackout and the fact that the Israeli Government promptly apologized and called the attack an accident, insiders knew that "American-Israeli allies in the Middle East" had gone to its best to sink a ship that was known to be American. One unnamed official was Secretary of State Dean Rusk who complained bitterly and officially to the Israeli Government. But the complaining voices were never heard by the American public and the official protests were classified top-secret to avoid embarrassing the attacking nation. Publicly the Lyndon Johnson Administration considered the attack on the USS *Liberty* an understandable error in the heat of war.

As officer of the deck aboard the *Liberty* that day, I had a ringside seat. I personally observed the close-range reconnaissance that preceded the attack. I saw the Israeli reconnaissance pilots wave to our crewmen. I talked to my shipmate, Chief Petty Officer Melvin Smith, moments after he intercepted Israeli radio messages in which Israeli pilots informed their headquarters that we were an American ship. I spent a year in military hospitals recovering from injuries received in the attack that followed. And for the next 12 years I probed Government files and interviewed everyone who would agree to talk about what happened to our ship and why our Government looked the other way.

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About This Issue

The story of the USS *Liberty*, like the ship itself, will not, it seems, simply roll over and die.

The Israelis could not sink the *Liberty* even after two hours of trying, first by high-performance jet aircraft, then by slower, more maneuverable jets carrying napalm, then by torpedo boats. They did leave 34 Americans dead and 171 wounded and they did blast a 40-foot hole in the ship's side along with 821 rocket and machine-gun holes. But the ship stayed afloat.

Israel claimed it was a case of mistaken identification. Our Government concurred, and told the survivors to say nothing of the attack other than that it was an accident. Seventeen years later, the story is still news. An organization has been formed by the survivors, whose eye witness accounts belie the Israeli claims; a full-length movie is in the making, and recent books by investigative journalists, privy to previously undisclosed files, have implicated the Johnson Administration in a rude subterfuge.

This issue examines in detail both the assault and the subsequent reaction by our Government and the U.S. media. The author, Jim Ennes, was the lieutenant on watch at the time of the attack and is the author of a widely acclaimed book on the subject.

Before going to press we learned that *Atlantic Monthly*, in a summer 1984 issue, will carry an article on the *Liberty*, reflecting the Israeli side of the story. Hopefully, a serious public discussion, long overdue, will now begin.

Two journalists who have delved into previously classified files dealing with the 1967 Mideast war are Stephen Green and Donald Neff. Their respective books, *Taking Sides: America's Secret Relations with a Militant Israel* and *Warriors for Jerusalem: Six Days That Changed the Middle East*, are reviewed on pages 13 and 14.

Our July/August issue will examine the relationship between water and politics in the Middle East.

John F. Mahoney,
Executive Director

Worldwide Fleet of Spy Ships

In 1967, *Liberty* was the newest and most elaborate of nearly a dozen intelligence-collection ships operated by the American Navy. Newsmen like to call them "spy ships." Akin to the Soviet intelligence trawlers that haunt the Western world, the American counterparts were fewer but larger and better-manned. At least six were at sea at any one time, and, when the tension developed anywhere in the world, the closest ship would be sent to the area.[1]

Thus 13 days before the outbreak of the Arab-Israeli Six Day War in 1967, middle-of-the-night orders from Washington moved the *Liberty* from her usual patrol area on the west coast of Africa to a new position near the scene of the expected fighting in order to report the war's progress.

Unfortunately, the decision-makers in Washington failed to consider that the Israeli Government rarely tolerates "observers," particularly during wartime. This time, Israeli officials were even more sensitive because, among other things, they planned to capture the Golan Heights from Syria despite heavy White House opposition. If the Golan grab was to succeed, it had to be done quickly and in secret before the Americans could interfere.

When war broke out between Israel and the Arab states on June 5, 1967, General David Elazar assembled his troops near Lake Tiberias in preparation for an assault on the Syrian (Golan) Heights, set to begin at 1150, June 8.

One obstacle remained. Israeli leaders had learned, probably through observers in Spain, that the USS *Liberty* had stopped overnight at the U.S. Naval Base in Rota en route to the Gaza Strip. If the ship arrived on schedule, *Liberty* would be within easy radio range of the invasion site hours before the invasion of Syria was to start.

On *Liberty*'s third deck almost a 300 men with earphones, computers and sensitive radio frequency scanning equipment were already recording every radio signal from either side while linguists and other specialists analyzed the results. Everything of conceivable value was relayed instantly to Washington where larger teams of specialists and even more sophisticated computers resulted and re-analyzed the results of *Liberty*'s work. *Liberty* was still far out at sea, but soon she would be in perfect position to [illegible] every detail of the war—including the fact that Israel was proceeding with an invasion against the strongest possible protests of the United States.

And if that were not enough to frustrate the Israeli generals, Secretary of State Dean Rusk learned of the invasion plan more than a day beforehand, possibly from the *Liberty*'s work while the ship was still far at sea. Rusk immediately cabled Israeli leaders demanding that they de-escalate the war and, particularly, that they cancel the plan to invade Syria.[2]

Although Israeli leaders ignored the Secretary of State, they did not ignore the approach of the USS *Liberty*.

Early in the afternoon of June 7, a Central Intelligence Agency observer in the office of the United States Defense Attaché in the American Embassy at Tel Aviv reported to CIA seniors in McLean, Virginia, that Israeli leaders had decided to sink the USS *Liberty* if the ship came near the war zone.[3]

Liberty Ordered To Move

American military leaders took the warning very seriously and immediately issued an order for the *Liberty* to move at least 100 miles from the embattled areas.[4]

The military communications flaws that followed was described by a House Armed Services Investigating

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Subcommittee as "one of the most incredible failures of communications in the history of the Department of Defense." As far as the USS *Liberty* was concerned, the entire worldwide military communication system, indeed the entire United States military command and control apparatus, failed.

Because an American naval vessel was being threatened, officers in the Joint Chiefs of Staff War Room at the Pentagon did not rely exclusively upon the then-antiquated military communication system. Too much was at risk.

Military communications in 1967 depended upon a worldwide series of manual relay stations. Every message was received as a ribbon of punched paper tape, typically from 5 to 20 feet long. Young operators, often with minimal training, were expected to "read" the punched tape, make duplicate copies when necessary, and insert the tape in the proper machine for transmission to the next relay point. The problem was that the system, designed for World War II, could not handle communications in the 1960's. In times of crisis, backlogged message tapes often covered the floor up to the operators' knees.

So, instead of trusting the message system, a Major Breedlove in the Pentagon's Joint Reconnaissance Center placed a trans-Atlantic telephone call to U.S. Navy headquarters in London relaying the order from the Joint Chiefs of Staff to move the USS *Liberty* far away from the Israeli-Egyptian coast.

But because the order came by telephone and because it was not telephoned personally by a senior officer, the London headquarters chose to await a confirming message before taking action. The confirming message, unfortunately, went astray in the communications morass. It was sent not to London but to the Philippine Islands. Twice! Follow-up messages were lost. Repeatedly! Still other messages were delayed by "more important" messages – particularly by a lengthy transcript of a press conference given by Defense Secretary Robert McNamara.[8]

Every military command in the world promptly received those 50 pages of transcript from the press conference, since it was given a speed-of-handling precedence rating suitable for event coverage reports. *Liberty*'s urgent movement orders, however, were given a relatively low urgency rating which caused them to be handled after most other naval messages. As a result, messages which could have saved the ship were delayed, misfiled and not received by the ship.

Careful Examination by Israeli Aircraft

Before midnight on June 7, as *Liberty* passed about 70 miles from Port Said, the first Israeli reconnaissance aircraft began to observe our ship. And from the start they did not act like friendly or even neutral visitors. Instead, they trained their missile guidance radar on our ship as though preparing to fire deadly guided missiles.[9]

Liberty's trained technicians recognized the radar immediately as Israeli and attempted to report the incident to Washington. Unfortunately, a supervisor insisted that the operators must be mistaken. "Israel would never aim guided missiles at an American ship," the supervisor insisted, and refused to sign the report. He had much to learn.

When daylight came, we saw a procession of Israeli reconnaissance aircraft that flew over us at incredibly low level while our intercept operators eavesdropped on the radio conversations between Israeli pilots and their headquarters. By this time I had relieved the watch on the bridge in order to assume the forenoon watch as officer-of-the-deck.

"No sweat, Lieuter ant," Chief Petty Officer Melvin Smith, our leading enlisted cryptologist, whispered to me. "We can hear the pilots reporting by radio that we are American."

"It's good that they are looking us over so closely," Captain McGonagle, the ship's commanding officer said. "They sure can be no mistakes." (In the Joint Chiefs War Room, a green peg marked the location of the USS *Liberty*. The green color signified a neutral vessel. Alongside the peg were the words, "Liberty, an electro-magnetic, audio-surveillance ship of the U.S. Navy.")[10]

In eight hours of daylight we were visited eight times by Israeli aircraft that circled our ship thirteen times, sometimes as close as 200 feet directly overhead.[11] Visibility was unlimited. Off-duty officers in swimsuits waved to the pilots and could see the pilots waving back.

My shipmates relaxed. It looked like the war was over.

At 2:00 p.m. as I was preparing to go below after nearly seven hours on the bridge, radar operators detected three jet aircraft and three motor torpedo boats approaching from the east. Expecting another reconnaissance flight, I stupidly watched the aircraft approach when suddenly a pattern of orange flashes danced the length of our ship accompanied by a deafening roar. Men on the ship's forecastle were thrown high into the air while men around me fell to the deck. My left leg shattered from the impact of fragments from an Israeli rocket.

We were under intense fire, first by Israeli supersonic Mirage jets that momentarily knocked out our four proximity 50-caliber machine guns and disabled all radio antennas, then by slower Israeli Mystique jets that plastered the stack, gun mounts, open bridge and superstructure with an inferno of napalm. Flames were everywhere.

When *Liberty*'s radiomen tried to call for help, they found that all the ship's usual radio frequencies were blocked by a loud electronic sound generated by sophisticated jamming equipment, apparently operated from the jets. Chief Smith tried to find an unjammed frequency, a napalm bomb exploded outside their compartment, incinerating the room and causing paint to smolder within. The space filled with smoke, but the ship's safety depended upon these men and they would not leave their post. Instead, they lay flat on the deck, below most of the smoke, choking in the foul air, calling into their microphones as they continued to search for an unjammed radio frequency. In less than ten minutes Chief Radioman Wayne Smith and his men found a clear channel and got a message through to U.S. Navy listening posts operating near Cyprus about 800 miles away.

On the bridge of the Sixth Fleet carrier *Saratoga*, Captain Joseph Tully received *Liberty*'s call for help and promptly turned his ship into the wind. A tough, no-nonsense skipper, Tully didn't wait for someone to tell him what to do. He started launching aircraft even as he relayed our message to his seniors. But just before his aircraft were out of sight they were gruffly recalled by orders from Washington.

By this time a radio receiver on the carrier's bridge had been tuned to *Liberty*'s distress calls [illegible] on today.

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[illegible] heard frantic calls for help from fellow Americans and knew that the aircraft that could have saved them were now flying under order back toward the carriers.

We may never know the reason, but we do know that the aircraft which might have arrived in time to save American lives were recalled. A radioman who relayed the order reports that it was given personally by Defense Secretary McNamara. Even a fly-over was forbidden while officials in Washington mulled over the fate of the USS *Liberty*.

Meanwhile, after 25 to 30 minutes of intense air attack by a dozen or more aircraft and unobstructed by Sixth Fleet air power, three Israeli torpedo boats arrived to finish the job. Our ship was an easy target.

The boats approached at high speed and fired five torpedoes. Luckily, the first shots went wild. One torpedo passed safely astern, where it missed by a bare 25 yards. Another passed so close ahead of the ship that it vanished under the point of the bow, "sounding like a motorboat" to Petty Officer Rick Aimetti, who stood, astonished, on the forecastle. Two torpedoes passed safely, unseen. And one torpedo made a direct hit on the ship's cryptologic spaces where it killed 25 men and temporarily trapped at least 50 more in the flooded compartment.

When *Liberty* miraculously remained afloat despite severe flooding from a 40-foot torpedo hole, the torpedomen circled the ship at close range, machine-gunning anyone who came on deck. Finally, at 3:15 p.m., it appeared that USS *Liberty* was going to sink. Orders came from the bridge to prepare to abandon ship, and *Liberty* crewmen responded by launching three rubber rafts — the only boats not damaged in the attack. Almost immediately the torpedomen machine-gunned the empty rafts, plucked one out of the water, and set a course for their base at Ashdod.

Liberty was alone, in flames, dead in the water, and sinking. She had no usable lifeboats. Her radios were dead. Thirty-four men were dead or dying and 171 more were wounded from a crew of 294.

Almost two hours after receiving our call for help, U.S. Navy commanders were given White House permission to come to the *Liberty* defense. For a second time that day, rescue aircraft streaked toward the *Liberty*.

game was ending, the Israeli Government summoned the U.S. Naval Attache to report that Israeli forces had "erroneously attacked a maybe U.S. ship" and to offer "abject apologies."

At 1:32 p.m., the torpedo boats returned to ask, "Do you need help?" The reply from the bridge was profane. The attack, after more than two-and-one-half hours, was over.

Inquiry Leads To Inaccurate Report

The cover-up began. *Liberty* sailors were told daily that they could say nothing about the attack to anyone, not even to members of their own families. A Court of Inquiry was to be held, the men were told, and nothing could be said until the Court had completed its work.

But the hearings were limited and some of the most important witnesses were not asked to testify. Lookouts who might have described pre-attack reconnaissance were not questioned by the Court. My sworn statement as officer-of-the-deck was read to the

[illegible] not accepted as evidence or entered into the official record. Vital deck logs were rewritten and most references to reconnaissance were deleted. Evidence that failed to support the Israeli version was often changed, lost or ignored by the official body assigned by the Navy to "inquire into all aspects" of the attack.

Despite the inadequacy of the Court of Inquiry, the final report did contain damning testimony and evidence much of which conflicted directly with the "Findings of Fact" reported by the same Court. Unfortunately, the entire 707 page report was classified top secret and only a 28 page watered-down excerpt was released to the public.

Instead of describing repeated reconnaissance flights as low as 200 feet overhead, the U.S. Government disregarded the crew's sworn testimony and reported publicly that the attack was an understandable case of mistaken identity which was provided by only three distant and casual reconnaissance flights. The Government ignored the ship's logs and sworn testimony that the American flag stood clearly displayed in a 12 knot wind.

Burns from a torpedo blast mark face and arms of Lt. Commander David Lewis



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and reported instead that the flag probably hung limp and indiscernible on a windless day.

Instead of describing a prolonged and carefully coordinated attack in which the ship was under heavy fire for 75 minutes and called desperately for help for another 75 minutes, the U.S. Government reported publicly that the air attack lasted only 6 minutes and that all firing ended when the torpedo boats drew close enough to see the American flag. The American Government repeated Israel's claim that the ship was mistaken for the Egyptian freighter *El Quseir*, but failed to note that *El Quseir*, a rusted-out, 80-year-old horse carrier then awaiting the salvage yard at Alexandria, was a most unlikely candidate for a *Liberty* look-alike.

Meanwhile, the American Government complained bitterly but privately to Israel that *Liberty* was indeed identified before the attack. Secretary of State Rusk officially informed the Israeli Government that the attack was "quite literally incomprehensible [and] must be condemned as an act of military recklessness reflecting . . . wanton disregard for human life."[11] But such candor was only for diplomatic channels. Publicly, the Johnson Administration portrayed the attack as brief, spontaneous, casual, and mistaken — a story they knew to be untrue.[12]

American-Israeli Debate Continues

The *Liberty* crew had been told early in the cover-up that they would be free to talk to the press once the Court of Inquiry report was declassified and released. But this was not to be. When the press blanket was "lifted," the men were told that the Court of Inquiry had reported everything that could be said about the affair. The crew, therefore, could say only what had already been reported by the Court and only in the same words the Court had used.

Omitted from the Government's published version of the Court of Inquiry report were facts that the radios were jammed, that napalm was used, that the life rafts were shot up in the water, that American forces failed to arrive during the two-and-one-half hour ordeal, or anything indicating that the attack was planned and deliberate. No one was allowed to describe the close-range reconnaissance that preceded the attack. Particularly forbidden was any description of the American flag or the steady hoisting that displayed the flag clearly for the Israeli pilots to see.

It was clear from the beginning that such a complex, carefully orchestrated, thoroughly reconnoitered military operation could not have been an accident as Israel claims. The Israeli Government, over the past 17 years, has churned out a fascinating series of "rebuttals" and "official versions," each different and each readily disproven. (See *"The Official Israeli Excuse,"* on pages 13-14.) Meanwhile, several former U.S. Government officials and scores of *Liberty* survivors have stepped forward to support the story. And Government files continue to reveal telling evidence that the United Government knows it was deliberate, that the story was covered up and is still being covered up.[13]

Book Receives Favorable Response

Even before I was discharged from the hospital I started interviewing other survivors. Research for my eventual book, *Assault on the Liberty*, spanned more than 12 years. For much of that time I was a Navy lieutenant commander, stationed in Germany and Washington, D.C. Throughout that period I was in constant contact with other survivors and with officers who had watched the affair unfold from Washington. But documentation was hard to come by because the Government steadfastly denied access to most records that could provide written evidence to support the recollections of survivors. All this changed when the Freedom of Information Act was passed in 1974. For the first time, Americans could demand access to Government information with a reasonable chance of success. Important files could no longer be legally withheld. To be sure, there were delays and foot-dragging. At one point I filed suit in Federal court just to get the Department of State to answer one of my requests under the Act.[14] For two years they had simply ignored my requests. But eventually I gathered proof for most of the story of the attack on the USS *Liberty*.

Although Columnist Jack Anderson and others had speculated in print that the attack must have been deliberate,[15] until now no one had ever presented proof. No one had ever shown, step by step, how the attack was conducted, how the American rescue was mismanaged, how the American Government had covered up the truth, and why the Israeli excuse for the attack was ghastly untrue.

Finally, in January 1980, my findings were published by one of the world's most respected publishers, Random House, in New York.

The reviews exceeded my fondest hopes. The widely-read *Hartford Courant* called *Assault on the Liberty* "a balance between *The Caine Mutiny* and *Mister Roberts* — the most important book you'll read this year." The *U.S. Naval Institute* at Annapolis called *Assault* "probably the most important naval book of 1980." *Military Review*, the professional journal of the U.S. Army, hailed the book as "a meticulous account, unemotional but detailed," while the *Naval War College Review* called it "an informative reading exercise."

People magazine did a two-page spread. Major leading newspapers hailed the book "convincing, provocative, haunting, absorbing, indelible, gripping, stirring, revealing, exciting and fascinating."

The Washington Post ran two book reviews, two news stories, and an editorial on the subject, and gave the book its highest rating, "Classic." Two retired chiefs of naval operations praised the book publicly, as did several leading members of Congress and four Pulitzer-winning authors.[16] Even the independent Jewish press wrote that *Assault on the Liberty* exemplifies "the best traditions of quiet investigative journalism."[17]

Interest soared. I did a two-hour interview with Larry King on his national radio network and about seven hours on Washington, D.C., stations alone. Eventually there were over 150 radio and television interviews, including 12 hours in a series of talk-show appearances on KGO, a powerful San Francisco radio station that is heard in 11 states. The "Radio Reader" at Michigan State University selected my book to read in its entirety on a coast-to-coast radio network — a minimum of 9 hours of air time on each of 44 stations. Most stations broadcast the reading twice.

One would expect that such priceless publicity would sell books. Indeed, four booksellers told me that *Assault on*

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the Liberty was their best-selling title, accounting for over 1,000 sales for each dealer. But these stories were not typical.

Campaign To Discredit Begins

An early disappointment was *Newsweek*. The news magazine had covered the story objectively in 1967 and its "Periscope" column set about doing a story on the book. The story was written, edited and ready to run when, according to Random House Publicity Manager Cheryl Merser, it was pulled moments before press time — supposedly for "better news." It never ran.

Columnist Jack Anderson had written twice about the *Liberty*, once stating flatly that the attack "was planned in advance." Anderson also writes for Random House. But the book I arranged to send to him was received in stony silence. When I called his office I found a hostile staff that did not want to talk about the USS *Liberty*.

The first indication of the likely source of the problem was a report from a newspaper reporter in Washington, D.C., who called to warn of trouble. The Israeli Government, he said, was working hard behind the scenes, particularly in New York and Washington, to discredit my story. I soon learned that he was correct.

The Israeli Foreign Office in Jerusalem, I discovered, had prepared and distributed a four-page criticism of my book. "Errors," said the Israeli Government, "in illogical and unrealistic. His conclusions fly in the face of logic and the military facts." The paper made no attempt to refute my evidence and produced no evidence of its own; instead, Israeli officials simply discounted my story out of hand, ignored the evidence and the testimony of eyewitnesses, and repeated their original claims of mistaken identity. Unfortunately, that was enough to provide ammunition for other spokesmen for Israel.

Soon the American-Israel Public Affairs Committee published a 16-page attack drawn heavily from the Israeli document. Similar language was published by Israeli Consuls General in Chicago, San Francisco and Atlanta. Identical phrases and paragraphs surfaced in "fact sheets" and "background papers" prepared by other pro-Israeli organizations. In one striking case, my name appeared in a published list of "Who's Who in Arab Propaganda" distributed by the American-Israel Public Affairs Committee. (Former Illinois U.S. Representative Paul Findley explores the depth of AIPAC's influence on the Congress and the media in his forthcoming book, *They Dared To Speak Out.*)

Before long, language from the Israeli propaganda mill began to appear in letters to editors and media managers whenever my book was mentioned publicly. Most radio talk-show callers were friendly, but the unfriendly ones invariably used arguments taken from the Israeli literature. In California, 20 members an Oakland B'nai B'rith chapter signed a letter to radio station KQED asking to cancel a scheduled reading of my book. In another case, a statement drawn from the Israeli document was read on radio station KUOW in Seattle by an Anti-Defamation League chairman, and the same statement reappeared word for word 3,000 miles away in a letter to the editor of the *Jacksonville Times-Union* in Florida. A Jewish reader who objected to this organized campaign mailed an Anti-Defamation League circular to an editor of the *San Diego Union* after the [illegible] supported my book editorially.[6]

In the circular, ADL members were [illegible] to be first to mention the USS *Liberty*, but to respond quickly with a rational protest if the subject were mentioned publicly.

Book Orders Disappear

Meanwhile, I began to receive reports that orders for the book were not being filled. Booksellers who failed to receive their order usually assumed that it was out of print and so informed their customers. The book has never been out of print; Random House has reprinted it three times. Nevertheless, many orders vanished without a trace somewhere in the distribution pipeline.

Would-be readers from several states wrote to tell me when they bypassed local retailers to place orders directly with my publisher, an order clerk told them falsely that the book was out of print, or that Random House had suspended distribution to avoid a law suit. In one case a determined New York City reader argued at length with a Random House clerk who insisted that Random House had never published a book called *Assault on the Liberty*.

Random House traced a large order at my request and discovered that all West Coast orders from Ingram Book Company, a major wholesale book dealer, had simply "vanished." Ostensibly, all orders for *Assault on the Liberty* had been "lost" following several important reviews and talk-shows, the manager of the popular Washington, D.C., Pentagon branch of Brentano's bookstore told me that my book was unavailable for months — even though Random House had an abundance of books at that time.

Waldenbooks, a large national chain, dropped *Assault on the Liberty* prematurely from stock despite steady demand.[7] The naval base in San Diego returned a large supply of books to the publisher after a [illegible] at the base filed a complaint.

Even the advertising department of the venerable Washington *Post* may have yielded to the pressure of hundreds of complaining letters and telephone calls in response to the *Post*'s two book reviews and two news stories. According to *Post* military editor George Wilson, "It seemed that every phone in the building had someone calling to complain about our mention of the book." A few days later when Seattle bookseller Karen Smith called the *Post* to place an ad offering to sell *Assault on the Liberty* by mail, the ad clerk warned: "I don't know if we can accept an ad for that book. There have been a lot of complaints that we should not have reviewed such a controversial book."

The ad did not run. Several weeks later, after repeated apologies for unexplained delays and missed publications dates, *Post* Advertising Manager Robert Rawls returned the bookseller's check with apologies for the "foul-up." (Although the advertising department may have folded under pressure, the *Post*'s editors did not. They eventually published yet another review and a feature story about the *Liberty* crew.)

On radio station WIND in Chicago, interest in the subject was so intense that a talkshow scheduled for one hour was extended to three hours while studio phone lines buzzed with callers. Then came the complaints. Two weeks later when I waited near my telephone for a scheduled follow-up interview, the phone never rang.

When I complained to WIND's pro-

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gram director, Tom LaPorte, he apologized grandly. It was a "terrible oversight." It was something that had never happened before at WIND, he assured me, and it would never happen again. He promised to investigate the "inexcusable error" and to call back within the hour to reschedule the interview. He did not call. When I called him, he refused to accept my calls. He did not answer my letters and he declined to discuss the matter with a Chicago citizen who did manage to reach him by telephone. Apparently the truth about the "oversight" was too embarrassing to discuss.

Television Coverage Cancelled

The campaign to suppress the *Liberty* story was probably most effective with the national commercial television networks. A producer for ABC's popular "Good Morning America" invited me to an interview set for March 10, 1980. She said she would invite the Israeli embassy to send a representative to appear with me. Then she phoned the embassy and dropped me cold. Weeks later when asked about guest appearances the ABC computer reported, "Ennes James — cancelled." ABC still will not discuss the reasons for the cancellation.

ABC's late-night news show "Nightline" scheduled a *Liberty* story three times, but cancelled the segment each time. Most notable was in June 1982, when "Nightline" interviewed four *Liberty* crewmen for three hours in the "Nightline" studios and prepared a complete show on the history and circumstances of the loss of the ship.

The program was fully edited and ready to run when, shortly before air time, "Nightline" producer Pat Cullen called me at home to say the *Liberty* story was to be pushed aside temporarily for news of the Israeli invasion of Lebanon. "Don't worry," she told me, "the *Liberty* story is too big to ignore."

Anchor Ted Koppel confirmed that intention a few days later in a letter to a San Francisco viewer. "I cannot now say just when we will be able to air this program," Koppel wrote, "but it is still our intention to do so."

Yet when producers tried to resurrect the aborted story later, they found that the valuable, fully edited studio tape and more than 15 reels of supporting raw film had mysteriously disappeared from the "Nightline's" film library.

At the request of Ira Rosen, producer of the popular "60 Minutes" television series, I spent a week preparing a detailed *Liberty* synopsis, complete with copies of key documents and a long list of suggested guests. Apparently Mike Wallace and Rosen wanted to do the story, but anything as controversial as the USS *Liberty* story needed approval from CBS management. And there the plan died. "Nothing short of direct testimony from a defecting Israeli official will justify doing this story," producer Rosen told me reluctantly.

When NBC News producer Robert Toombs in New York City asked his office for permission to interview a group of *Liberty* survivors for "The Evening News," he was told, "NBC is not interested in the USS *Liberty*." Toombs seemed surprised. The survivors were not. We have seen it all before.

Now a Hollywood company is hard at work writing a screenplay and doing other preproduction work for a full-length motion picture based on *Assault on the Liberty*. Already, theater distribution has been offered both in the United States and in Europe, and some leading Hollywood personalities have offered their support, even though skeptics and nay sayers predominate.

Incredibly, a common response from friends as well as [illegible] will never allow this [illegible]. If that is true, [illegible] backers have divided, then the United States will deep trouble. They are determined to complete the film.



Abraham Weiss, an Hasidic Jew, pickets Israeli consulate in New York to protest the attack.

James Ennes

Liberty Crew and Friends Step Forward

Soon I began to hear from other survivors, most of whom told me they found the book almost therapeutic. The book, they said, relieved a weight from their shoulders; for the first time they felt free to discuss the attack with friends.

One of the first to call was retired Master Chief Petty Officer Stan White, the senior enlisted man aboard the *Liberty*. Stan had helped with some of my research. Now he wanted to help tell the story. Starting with my list of about 40 survivors, he almost single handedly tracked down more than 150 former crewmen and their families.

A few of the men just wanted to forget the *Liberty*. Many were bitter. Most felt that they had been ravaged by an ally and then betrayed by their own Government. Many were frustrated and angry that the "official" story told by both governments was so different from what they had experienced. And nearly every man wanted to help tell the *Liberty* story to a wider audience.

Stan set to work immediately planning for a reunion of the *Liberty* crew.

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A Visit To Washington

A big boost came late in 1980 when I was invited to discuss the attack with then Senator Adlai Stevenson of Illinois. Senator Stevenson quizzed me privately for two hours about the attack, the evidence, and my sources of information. Then he invited me back on another day to be grilled by members of his staff and that of Arizona Senator Barry Goldwater.

While everyone seemed to agree that my story was sound, Senator Goldwater's staff argued (incredibly, I thought) that the matter should not be pursued because "nothing can be gained" by probing this ugly matter.

Senator Stevenson, did not agree. He argued that "to tell the American people the truth" was reason enough, and his staff stood behind him. He went to work trying to get the support of Senator Goldwater and others.

Soon Senator Stevenson published the *Congressional Record* (SH136, September 22, 1980) the full text of a review from *The Washington Post* written by former USS *Pueblo* skipper, Commander Lloyd Bucher, and he urged every member of Congress to read the book. Then he gave UPI reporter William J. Small a remarkable interview which was broadcast by radio and widely printed in newspapers on September 28.

In that interview, Senator Stevenson said: "I intend to use the [Intelligence] Subcommittee as a means of looking into this matter further... One possibility would include providing (crewmen) with an opportunity to tell their story to the American people. Those sailors have one story to tell, and that story leaves no doubt but what this was a premeditated, carefully reconnoitered attack against our ship."

The story quoted three Government officials who were not interested in examining the matter. "That's the explanation Israel brought forward, and that's what we have to go with," said State Department spokesman Jack Toohey, neatly dismissing the value of the logs, files and testimony of survivors. "To Israel it might only be an irritant with little purpose," said Ted Gubbison on the State Department's Israel desk, apparently untroubled by the charges and unwilling to examine the evidence. "The findings of the Court of Inquiry have not been revised," said a Navy spokeswoman, and that settled the matter. Then the story closed with these astounding remarks by Senator Stevenson: "Congressmen are "intimidated by a lobby which at the moment takes its orders from an extremist minority within Israel. It's about time we indicated that Mr. Begin is wrong when he says they can go on defying the United States. If you acquiesce even in an attack against your own ship, and the killing of your own countrymen, you lose all credibility, in the world as well as in Israel. You lose your self respect, ultimately, and you may lose the peace of the world."

Unfortunately, Senator Stevenson did not prevail. He had not run for reelection and his term in Congress was about to expire. Other senators were simply unwilling to risk their futures by openly challenging the Israeli Government. Just before he left the Congress, Senator Stevenson wrote to tell me that most members of Congress are "timid" about the USS *Liberty* and that Barry Goldwater, though initially interested, had chosen to take the path [of caution] advised by his staff.

UPI reporter William Small's story, however, did have one apparent result. After years of procrastination and refusal to pay the $14 million demanded by the United States for loss of the ship itself (actually worth more than $40 million) the Israeli Government suddenly offered $6 million to settle the score. President Carter accepted and his decision was announced by the department of State on December 19 with a press release entitled "The Book is Now Closed on the USS Liberty Affair." Adlai Stevenson remarked that the book would not truly be closed until the Government acknowledged the truth, but that chemical book closing was more than enough to satisfy several hundred Congressmen.



Former Joint Chiefs of Staff Chairman, Admiral Thomas Moorer, told Liberty survivors, "I never could accept that the Liberty attack was an accident."

USS *Liberty* Reunion

Meanwhile, Stan White continued to work toward a *Liberty* reunion. On June 4, 5 and 6, 1982, more than 100 former crewmen of the USS *Liberty* met a block from the White House at the Hotel Washington in Washington, D.C., for their first gathering in 15 years. It was a joyful, tearful, emotional occasion.

All the men had been ordered (illegally, we now believe) never to say anything about the *Liberty* to anyone. For the first time, they felt free to discuss the attack, and most found that speaking out relieved a heavy burden.

Virgil Brownfield described what it was like to see his best friend die. "People don't die like they do on TV, you know. They sort of die... like chickens. And everyone is falling — the navigator and the executive officer

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and the officer of the deck — and you wonder if you should just stand up and get it over with."

"At one point I got madder than hell. I just wanted to kill somebody," said Chuck Jones. "But I got over that, 'cause there were just too many things to do. In my own mind it wasn't a mistake, but I don't hate those guys."

We're not blaming the Israeli people," said Ron Grantski. "The Israelis had some people in charge who should be held responsible."

"We should have stood up a little bit, instead of accepting their apology just like that," added Gene Kirk.

Joe Meadors asked: "How many Russian intelligence trawlers have been wiped out? You know if one of those were sunk, they'd go to war over that."

Crewmen had sent the Ambassador of Israel a polite invitation to attend the reunion or to send a representative to ask questions. We were hoping he would come, as we felt it would be impossible for him to defend his government's actions after hearing first hand from men who had survived the attack. Instead, Israeli journalist Wolf Blitzer phoned, promising to attend. But he didn't show up either. Apparently a public meeting with men who know the truth about the *Liberty* attack was more than the Government of Israel wanted to risk.

The gathering did have other results. A reporter called former Secretary of State Dean Rusk to ask his opinion. "Sure the attack could have been deliberate," he said. "They had sightings beforehand of the ship. I don't buy the Israeli explanation. We were never able to get to the heart of what happened."[9]

Perhaps the most outspoken of all was retired Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Admiral Thomas H. Moorer, who did not hesitate to tell the crew and assembled reporters that the attack "could not possibly have been a case of mistaken identity. I have never been willing to accept the Israeli explanation," he said. Later he added, "Even a rag-tag Navy could not make a mistake like that."

Soon after the reunion a highly-censored report by the super-secret National Security Agency revealed the true feelings of another Government servant. Scribbled in the margin next to the still-officially-censored Israeli excuse was a note by the agency's Deputy Director, Dr. Louis Tordella. Never intended for public exposure, the note read: "A nice whitewash."

Even retired Admiral Isaac C. Kidd, who headed the official Navy inquiry into the attack, agreed by telephone to a request by *Liberty* survivor Don Blalock that he reexamine the evidence and rethink the conclusions of his 1967 Court. If he ever did reread the file, he kept his findings to himself.

Veterans Organizations Lend Support

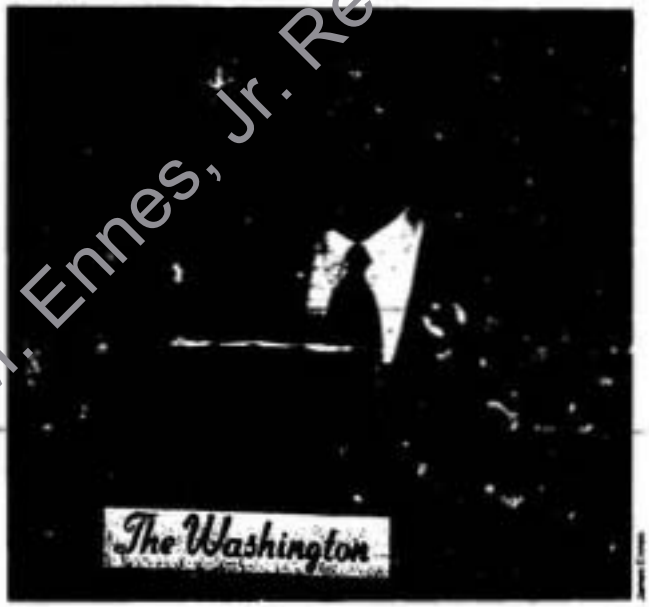
Liberty crewmen are now supported by almost every major veterans organization except the American Legion. Strangely, the American Legion was first to cry out publicly about the *Liberty*. In 1967 the Legion passed a national resolution calling for a proper investigation (and rejecting the official Navy investigation) but according to Legion staff member Dr. Frank Maria, who proposed the original resolution, the American Legion failed to follow through because they came under heavy pressure from pro-Israel organizations.

The Disabled American Vets, The Retired Officers Association, The Veterans of Foreign Wars, and most others have laid wreaths on the *Liberty* graves at Arlington, but the American Legion, still stung by the charges, has been conspicuously absent.

Liberty veterans were supported when they complained to the Veterans Administration that the gravestone marking the final resting place of six men at Arlington National Cemetery was evasive and improper. The stone was changed to read "Killed – USS Liberty" instead of "Died in the East ern Mediterranean."

The Veterans of Foreign Wars, in a letter from National Commander James Currieo, called officially upon the Reagan Administration to join the VFW in sending a representative to "render long overdue honors" at a ceremony at the *Liberty* gravesite. Not surprisingly, the White House ignored the request. But the Jewish War Veterans did not. Jewish War Veterans published a scathing attack by National Executive Director Harris Stone on the VFW for having "dredged up an ancient and discredited story,"[9] and then issued a carefully docu-

Columnist Philip Geyelin addressed the gathering and characterized the Israeli excuse as "simply not believable."



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mented request for rebuttal space from the USS *Liberty* Veterans Association.

But the VFW was not intimidated. VFW members attending the 1983 national convention passed Resolution Number 665 calling upon the United States to establish "a fitting memorial honoring those men lost on the USS *Liberty*."

The Israeli Government Persists

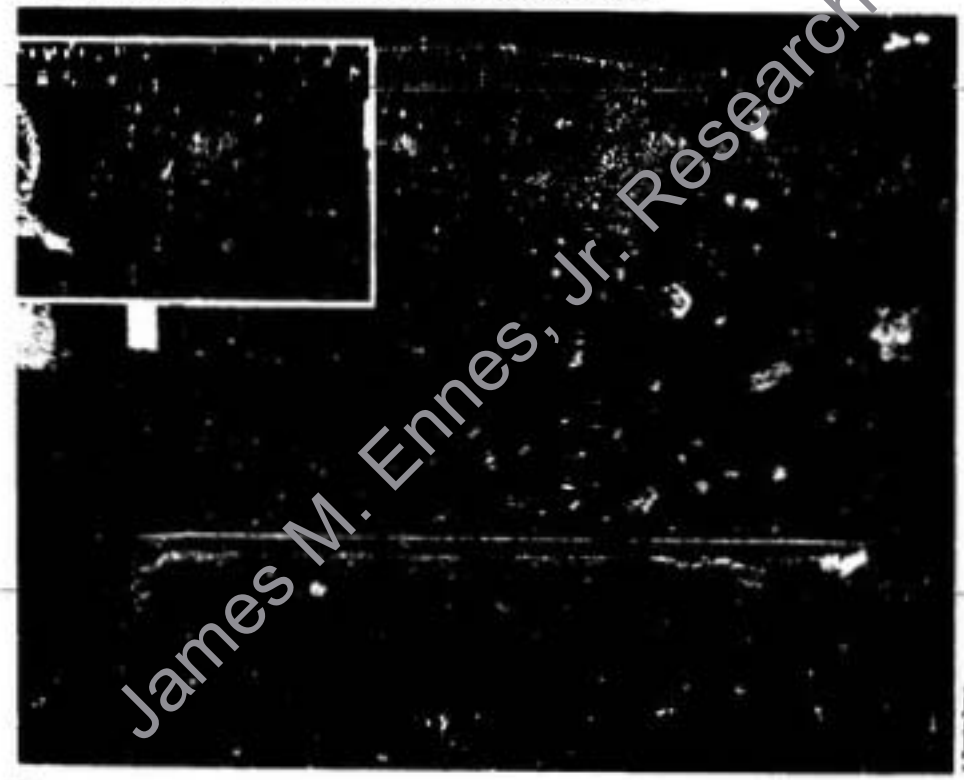
Largely through the efforts of *Liberty* crewmen working together, the story has now been told on the front pages of the *New York Times*, *The Baltimore Sun*, and *The Los Angeles Times*, and in major stories in many other pages including *The Washington Post*. It has been covered repeatedly in national wire service stories and on national radio networks. According to columnists Evans and Novak, President Reagan even mentioned the *Liberty* attack to his staff as an example of Israeli treachery.[6]

Meanwhile, the Israeli Government periodically releases yet another "official version" of the incident. The latest, prepared by the History Department of the Israeli Defense Forces, was released in 1982 on the eve of the *Liberty* reunion. Like those before it, the report ignores hard evidence, laws of physics and testimony of crewmen. Instead it dwells on the incredible claims that the ship flew no flag and was tracked by radar from patrol boats that were in fact far beyond radar range.

As this is written, another salvo is about to be fired. According to a correspondent in Jerusalem, two leading Israeli writers will publish a 7,000 word essay on the USS *Liberty* in the summer issue of *Atlantic Monthly*. The authors reportedly believe that their article "refutes all that has ever been written about the Israeli attack."

To do that, the article will have to resolve all inconsistencies found in the official Israeli excuses. Why do *Liberty* crewmen recall waving to reconnaissance pilots when Israel claims there was no reconnaissance? Or why *Liberty* crewmen remember seeing the torpedomen-deliberately destroy life rafts at 3:15 when Israel claims that the last shot was fired before 2:40. It will have to explain away CIA reports that Moshe Dayan directed the attack[8] and that the decision to attack the *Liberty* was made a day in advance.[9] It should make interesting reading.

Original and new tombstones of six Liberty crewmen in Arlington National Cemetery, Virginia



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NOTES

1 *New York Times*, June 10, 1967, p. 20. Although the story is attributed only to a senior officer of the *Liberty*, Golden now admits freely to having been the source. At the time of the interview he was Liberty's Acting Commanding Officer.

2 For a detailed look at *Liberty*'s mission and capabilities and her relationship with the National Security Agency, see James Bamford, *The Puzzle Palace*, Houghton Mifflin, 1982.

3 From documents in the Midwest File of the Lyndon B. Johnson Library obtained in 1981 by author Stephen Green under the Freedom of Information Act.

4 Stephen Green, *Taking Sides*, Wm. Morrow, 1984, pp. 150-230.

5 JCS Top Secret message 0901102 JUN 67, reproduced in Navy Court of Inquiry file and elsewhere.

6 Review of Department of Defense Worldwide Communications, Report of the Armed Services Investigating Subcommittee of the Committee on Armed Services, House of Representatives, May 10, 1971.

7 Proceedings of Navy Court of Inquiry, Exhibit 47.

8 From documents in the Midwest File of the Lyndon B. Johnson Library obtained in 1985 by author Stephen Green under the Freedom of Information Act.

9 From interview with Cryptologic Technician Charles Bowles, who [illegible] present.

10 "Sources, Israel [illegible] on Intrusion Preliminary Inquiry File 1167 [illegible] bearing before Spec. Ambassador Rabinovich, July 23, 1967; also, Rpt. 41 on the Liberty Incident by Western Department of the Israeli Defense Forces for senior officers of the U.S. Navy, June 1982.

11 The Israeli Government insists that there was no reconnaissance whatever and that no claims of US reconnaissance orbits "can be dismissed as exaggerated." However, a careful reading of survivors' testimony in the Navy Court of Inquiry file verifies that all 11 orbits did occur. A Top Secret study by Department of State Legal Advisor Carl F. Salans dated September 21, 1967, cites testimony from crewmen of "overflights of the *Liberty* at 0915, 0950, 1050, 1056, 1120, 1145, 1230 and 1245." Dozens of crewmen are willing to testify publicly that they recall repeated overflights at unaltered level.

12 This report of radio jamming is redacted in the DIA History Department report as untrue and irresponsible. However, the original source of this report in the U.S. Navy Court of Inquiry which concluded as a "finding of fact" that Liberty radios were jammed, apparently by equipment operated from the pier. The use of jamming is confirmed by Liberty's Chief Radioman Maynr Smith and by radio logs of the affected radio circuits which reflect loud and unusual interference. See also, *Taking Sides*, p. 130.

13. Navy Court of Inquiry file.

14. President Johnson's Press Secretary, George Christian, told me in 1978 during my research for *Assault on the Liberty*, "There was considerable skepticism in the White House that the attack was accidental, even though tragic mistakes are rather common during wartime." Later, Christian said, he became convinced that "an accident of this magnitude was too much to swallow," but the Johnson White House nevertheless chose to look the other way. Donald Neff, in *Warriors for Jerusalem*, London Press, 1984, examines in detail the Israeli influences on the Johnson White House which caused that reaction.

15 Probably the single most explosive revelation in Green's finding in *Taking Sides* that the United States knew a day in advance of the Israeli plan to attempt to sink the USS *Liberty*.

16 James M. Ennes, Jr. versus Department of State, Civil Action 84-0128 in United States District Court for the District of Columbia.

17 Syndicated column by Drew Pearson and Jack Anderson, June 30, 1967.

18 Admiral Arleigh Burke, Admiral Thomas Moorer, Senator Adlai Stevenson, Senator Barry Goldwater, Congressman Paul Findley, Congressman Paul McCloskey, Secretary Dorothy George Weller, Philip Graubart.

19 *Al Loam Jewish Eagle*, Winnipeg Jewish Post Jewish Review.

20 December 24, 1980. The editorial was then picked up for national distribution by a national newspaper editorial service and probably appeared in many other newspapers.

21 The national bookseller removed the book to stock after I discussed the problem with Waldon VP Kay Sexton.

22 For more information about the *Liberty* Site, write to [redacted]

23 *Los Angeles Times*, June 30, 1982, "Survivors Still Seek Answers," p. 1.

24 *The Jewish War Veteran* magazine, April-May-June 1983, p. 7.

25 Rowland Evans and Robert Novak, syndicated column, "New Factors of the Israeli Attack," February 9, 1983, distributed by Field Enterprises.

26 CIA Information Report, "Attack on USS Liberty Ordered by Dayan," based on the report of an informant who was in a position to see the Israeli War Room. The CIA analyst who received the report as "untrustworthy" [illegible] though it is consistent with other reports [illegible] and has not been discredited.

27 This writer has received five separate reports, three of them from a highly placed CIA official, that the United States learned in advance that Israel had decided to attack the *Liberty*. [illegible] Green in *Taking Sides* is the first to [illegible] a credible witness, in this case former Congressman Robert Sikes of Florida, who is willing to stand behind that information publicly.

The Official Israeli Excuse

The Israeli Government has provided at least four "official versions" of their excuse for the attack on the USS *Liberty*. Various versions conflict with one another as well as with testimony from *Liberty* crewmen and information from the ship's logs. Here are the main points of the Israeli excuse, along with the rebuttal arguments that are made by men who were aboard the ship.

Israel: The *Liberty* was approaching too close to shore in a time of war.

Survivors: The *Liberty* was in international waters more than 15 miles from the nearest land. The U.S. Navy Court of Inquiry that investigated the matter pointed out that under international law a neutral nation has a legal right to dispatch a ship into international waters adjacent to an area of hostilities and that each belligerent has a duty to refrain from attacking such ship.

Israel: The Israeli Government asked the United States Government whether any American ships were operating near the war zone, but received no reply (or, according to another version, was told that there were no American ships within 100 miles). According to still another official version, however, the ship was identified during the morning, but was mistakenly attacked anyway because someone removed the ship's name from a chart in the Israeli War Room.

Survivors: The claim that Israel asked about American ships in the area was investigated by the Department of State when it was first made in 1967. The official finding was that the Israeli claim was a fabrication created by Israel for propaganda purposes.[1]

Israel: The town of El Arish was shelled from the sea during the morning.

Survivors: The town of El Arish was not shelled from the sea. That story appears to have been fabricated to explain the presence of torpedo boats in the area.

Israel: Torpedo boats sent to investigate the shelling of El Arish detected the *Liberty* on radar at 1:41 p.m. from a distance of 17 miles and mistakenly calculated her speed as 30 knots.

Survivors: The Israeli story is a physical impossibility. The torpedo boats

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A wounded Liberty sailor being treated in the ship's mess hall a few hours after the attack

made the 27 nautical mile trip to the USS *Liberty* from their base at Ashdod in 150 minutes, averaging 30.8 knots (nautical miles per hour). That was close to their top speed in the open sea while fully loaded. At 1:41, when the boats are said to have first detected the *Liberty* on radar, the boats had travelled only about 20 nautical miles. They were still about 27 nautical miles (31 land miles) from the USS *Liberty*. Due to the curvature of the earth, it is impossible for a vessel the size of the Israeli boats to detect an object the size of the USS *Liberty* from a distance of more than about 16 miles. The boats did not come close enough to detect the *Liberty* by radar until 2:00, and by that time the attack was already underway.[7]

Israel: Due to the ship's supposed high speed, she was thought to be an enemy vessel trying to escape. The torpedo boat commander called for air support.

Survivors: For several hours before the attack, *Liberty*'s speed did not exceed five knots. She was incapable of speeds in excess of 17 knots. The Israelis, however, claim they plotted *Liberty*'s speed twice and have made a six-fold miscalculation each time. However, since it is impossible for the boats to have detected the *Liberty* by radar at all before the start of the air attack, they could not have made the miscalculation that supposedly led to the air strike. The "30 knot miscalculation" appears to be a fabrication invented to shift blame from Israeli headquarters, which *did* plan and direct the attack.

Israeli: The aircraft made a "run over the ship" and, finding no flag or other identifying marks, commenced the air attack at 2:00 p.m. (According to a 1982 version, they made two passes over the ship.)

Survivors: No aircraft made a "run over the ship" in the minutes before the attack. Had they done so, they would have seen distinctly American-looking ships with a freely-flying American flag and American sailors in uniform sunbathing on deck. One aircraft did circle the ship up to one minute before the attack; however, *Liberty*'s radio operators overheard those pilots reporting to Israeli headquarters that the ship *did* fly an American flag.

Israeli: At 2:14 p.m., an attacking Israeli pilot reported seeing letters CPE-5 or GTE-5 on the ship's bow. Thinking the ship might be Russian, Israeli headquarters ordered the attack terminated.

Survivors: Certainly Israeli pilots are aware that Soviet ships do not display their identification in English. Soviet ships display numbers only (no letters), and Egyptian ships such as *El Quseir* do. Attack survivor Ariadne Welch Athanasaw, the air attack did not end at 2:14, but continued until about 2:30 when the torpedo boats were close enough to have been endangered by the aircraft.

Israel: Officers who were aware that *Liberty* had been seen in the area during the morning did not think the ship in question could be the *Liberty* because the ship they were stalking had been moving at 30 knots and had supposedly been conducting a shore bomb. silmeet

Survivors: If the ship being stalked was too fast and too heavily armed to be the *Liberty*, then it could not have been *El Quseir* either. *El Quseir* was even slower and more poorly armed than the *Liberty*.

Israel: When the torpedo boats arrived near *Liberty* at 2:35 p.m., the ship was covered with smoke from the air attack. Before attacking, a careful visual identification was made from close range. Officers on two different torpedo boats identified the ship in front of them as the Egyptian ship *El Quseir* which *Liberty* is said to resemble.

Survivors: Since *El Quseir* was the only ship in the Egyptian Navy that

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was not a submarine or a destroyer, it is certain that the torpedomen knew her very well. *El Quseir* was less than half *Liberty*'s length and less than one-fifth her overall size. *El Quseir* lacked *Liberty*'s distinctive antenna system and had a radically different silhouette. Undoubtedly every Israeli seaman was aware that *El Quseir* was a 30-year-old rusted-out horse carrier for the Egyptian cavalry, totally incapable of launching a shore bombardment. No doubt they knew, too, that *El Quseir* was rooted to her pier in Alexandria waiting to be scrapped. The *El Quseir* story is an elaborate fabrication.

Israel: When asked to identify herself, *Liberty* refused to do so and opened fire on the boats with a machine gun.

Survivors: The Navy Court of Inquiry investigated the Israeli claim in 1967 and reported officially that the *Liberty* did not refuse to identify herself. To the contrary, the *Liberty* flew an oversized American flag as the boats approached, while a signalman repeatedly flashed "U.S. Navy ship" with the ship's 36-inch searchlight.[1]

Israel: Convinced that they were facing an enemy ship, the torpedomen fired torpedoes. Moments later the boatmen observed the hull number "GTR-5" in English on the ship's bow and terminated the attack, thinking the ship might be Russian.

Survivors: The Israeli torpedomen continued to fire upon the ship with machine guns until 3:15, when messages from the United States Sixth Fleet promised *Liberty* that help was on the way. Apparently it was the impending arrival of American warplanes that caused the Israelis to stop firing, not the belated sighting of the ship's hull number.

Israel: Rescue helicopters called by the torpedo squadron commander saw an American flag being raised. This was the first indication that the ship might be American.

Survivors: *Liberty* crewmen recall that the helicopters were fully loaded with armed troops in battle dress. Each helicopter trained a large machine gun on *Liberty* sailors from an open doorway. They were attack helicopters, not rescue helicopters. They did not fire, but neither did they offer help. Help was not offered for another 77 minutes (4:32 p.m.), more than two-and-one-half hours after the first shot was fired.

Israel: Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara told a Congressional Committee, "It was the conclusion of the investigatory body, that the attack was not intentional."

Survivors: Robert McNamara's statement in defense of the Israeli attack is misleading and out of context. Israeli apologists ignore the fact that Secretary McNamara was being quizzed by an angry Congressional committee whose members did not believe him at all. The true flavor of the hearing is more accurately reflected in Chairman Borke Hickenlooper's protest: "I can't tolerate for a minute that this was an accident. I think it was a deliberate attack... It creates a sense of utter frustration when we can't find out what the facts are in this thing."[2]

1. The only Israeli request for information about American ships was made on June 9, six days after the attack. The Israeli claim to have asked about American ships was first made to American reporters, not to the American Government, and it was not true. No such assertion was ever made officially by the Israeli Government. Nevertheless, the claim caused great consternation in the State Department and was the subject of several messages, including AMEMB Tel Aviv serial 0178 JUN 67, USDAO Tel Aviv 0[illegible] JUN 67, and AMEMB Tel Aviv [illegible] which said flatly: "No request for info on U.S. ships operating off Sinai was made until after Liberty incident. Had Israelis made such an inquiry, it would have been forwarded immediately to the Chief of Naval Operations and other high naval commands and repeated to the Department (of State)."

2. The still withheld Israeli Preliminary Inquiry File 1-67 claims that the torpedo boats left the Ashdod Harbor at 12:05, which is consistent with other reports. For 15 years that report, although deeply flawed, stood as the most definitive Israeli excuse for the attack, it was the product of a judicial proceeding and supposedly drew information from senior officers and official records. In time, however, that version had to be changed. Apparently, recognizing that 12:05 departure renders impossible the 1:10 radar sighting which is vital to the Israeli excuse, the Israeli History Department has "changed history" to present a more credible story. The 1982 Israel Defense Forces now assert that the boats actually left the harbor at 11:35 and were already [illegible] when they received orders at [illegible] to [illegible] the shelling of El Arish.

3. The Israeli claim that the *Liberty* refused to identify herself was investigated thoroughly by Rear Admiral Isaac Kidd, when it was first made by Israel. Kidd reported emphatically (NAVAL OSIAH NAVY Naples Secret message 0[illegible] JUN 67) that it did not happen. This writer has probed further by interviewing *Liberty*'s signalman, Robert Davis, who did his best to identify the ship, but was ignored by the torpedo.

4. Most of the points in the Israeli excuse are addressed in the top secret study by Carl Salan State Department Legal Adviser. In each case addressed, the State Department study supports our conclusions and refutes the official assertions of the Government of Israel.

Book Views

Taking Sides: American's Secret Relations With a Militant Israel
By Stephen Green
William Morrow and Company, 370 pp., 1984, $14.95.

Warriors For Jerusalem: Six Days That Changed The Middle East
By Donald Neff
Simon and Schuster, 384 pp., 1984, $17.95.

By David Yates

Steven Green has limited his study topically to U.S. - Israeli relations from the founding of the Jewish state in 1948 to the June 1967 War. Having supposed, wisely, that sensitive reports by experts would be classified, he submitted more than 100 Freedom of Information Act requests to 22 different Government agencies. Whenever a request for politically sensitive papers was turned down, Green compensated by conducting interviews with former officials in the U.S. administration who had seen them. This approach results in an automatic revision of history with new information divulged on many episodes which occurred during this era.

There is a misconception prevalent in America that the Israelis were chronically short of arms and dangerously outnumbered by Arab armies in 1948. However, Green quotes classified Army Intelligence and Defense Attaché reports from military experts

James M. Ennes, Jr. Research Papers

in Tel Aviv at that time, which estimated that Israeli fighters outnumbered the Arabs three-to-one at the termination of the British Mandate. Meanwhile, as the British blockade was lifted, "trained volunteers, arms, and aircraft flooded in from Eastern Europe." By November 1948, at least 100 planes were flying on the Israeli side, piloted mainly by American World War II veterans. Israeli soldiers received training in Czechoslovakia, a country which also sold the Israelis arms for badly needed hard currency, available in the tens of millions of dollars from concerned Americans. As Green puts it, "the Arabs were not fighting the Jews of Palestine. They were fighting the combined forces and resources of the international Jewish community." The Israelis kept their overwhelming military superiority as secret as possible to make them appear a more worthy recipient of U.S. Government assistance.

One of Green's interviews corroborates the interpretation of Israeli Professor Avi Shlaim of "the Lavon Affair." Long considered an inept Israeli attempt to sour relations between the U.S., Great Britain and Egypt, these inept, ruin sabotage attempts seem more likely to have been an attempt by some Israeli politicians to destroy secret peace negotiations between the liaisons of Egyptian President Nasser and Israeli Prime Minister Moshe Sharrett. Sharrett continues to be exonerated from earlier besmirchments, after his family's publication of his personal diary, and Green identifies "the inability of the Eisenhower Administration to recognize the significance of Ben-Gurion's retirement and Sharrett's peace initiatives as one of the major U.S. policy failures in the history of the Middle East conflict to date."

More revelations come out about the Six Day War. Green has traced a warning that the Israelis would attack the *Liberty* if she did not change her course to a day before the ship was attacked "by mistake." Another, more startling, discovery describes in detail a mission involving direct U.S. participation in the air attacks on Egypt during the war.

In a narrative history of the Six Day War itself, Donald Neff, correspondent and Senior Editor for 16 years of *Time* magazine, has also done a great deal of research, particularly at the Lyndon Baines Johnson Presidential Library in Austin, Texas. This history, *Warriors for Jerusalem*, brings two climactic months in Middle East history into sharp focus.

During May and June 1967, the Israeli cabinet began to take direct orders from the military. Accurate intelligence had determined that Israeli military strength would allow them to devastate the Arab armies, and take what land they desired from the Arab people. But the memory of 1956 — when Ben-Gurion "lost the peace" and was forced by Eisenhower to give up conquered territory) made Prime Minister Eshkol and Foreign Minister Eban somewhat cautious.

But fate was on the side of the army. Coincidentally, U.S. President Lyndon Johnson was at that time left without any domestic support because of his unpopular Vietnam policy, and he had discovered that unequivocal support for Israel was one way, if not the only one, to garnish favorable feedback and muster support for his Administration. In America, "Vietnam doves were Israel hawks." Otherwise at the nadir of his political career, Johnson woke one morning in June to find that an Israeli newspaper poll had rated him more popular than heroes Moshe Dayan and Ezer Weizman.

The ingenuousness of Johnson's Middle East policy is obvious when one considers that his friends, Arthur and Mathilde Krim, were privately giving him constant advice on handling Israeli affairs at the same time he was claiming his impartiality in public. Not only were the Krims staunch supporters of Israel, but Mathilde had also served in the Irgun terrorist group in the 1940's and had smuggled explosives from Europe to Israel across the borders of Switzerland, France and Italy. The Krims were frequent guests in the White House. Ironically Mathilde was staying in the White House when the Six Day War erupted.

As Neff says in his prologue, "The uncritical support of the United States soon encouraged the most recalcitrant and militant elements... (who) came to govern the State of Israel." Furthermore, "United States' blind support of such reckless leaders (in the Six Day War) tarnished its reputation as a champion of human rights... Because of the events of 1967, America's will and determination to stand on the side of justice are open questions today."

David Yates, a specialist in Middle East affairs, is on the staff of A.M.E.U.

New Selections

☐ Stephen Green, *Taking Sides: America's Secret Relations with a Militant Israel*, William Morrow, 1984, 570 pp., $14.95. Exploring America's behind-the-scenes relations with Israel, the author spent two years examining files recently declassified, many at his request. Important new information emerges concerning Israeli army strength vis-a-vis the Arabs since the 1948 war, Israel's shaky friendship with the Eisenhower Administration, the Dimona nuclear power plant at Dimona, and U.S. participation in the 1967 war. Our price: $11.50. *See review on pages 13 and 14.*

☐ Donald Neff, *Warriors for Jerusalem: Six Days That Changed the Middle East*, Simon & Schuster, 1984, 304 pp., $17.95. An award-winning former correspondent brings the June 1967 war into focus. The conquest of the West Bank, Gaza and Sinai, the confrontation of American and Russian fleets in the Mediterranean, and the open alliance between America and Israel, are related against a background of the war which destroyed U.S. credibility in the Middle East. Our price, $12.75. *See review on pages 13 and 14.*

☐ Ibrahim Abu-Lughod, *Palestinian Rights: Affirmation and Denial*, Medina Press, 225 pp., $7.95. In this book of essays, seven distinguished international scholars examine, analyze and detail Palestinian national rights, including their right to national identity, sovereignty in Palestine, return, and representation. The international assessment and response to these rights and their violation by Israel are carefully probed and documented. Our price, $3.95.

☐ Dewey Beegle, *Prophecy and Prediction*, Pryor Pettengill, 274 pp., $6.95 (paperback). Refutes the biblical claim of Zionists to the Promised Land by discussing what the Bible teaches about prophecy, especially concerning the predictions of events which have already occurred and those which are to come. Our price, $4.50.

☐ Lenni Brenner, *Zionism in the Age of the Dictators*, Croom Helm Ltd., London, and Lawrence Hill and Co., Westport, CT., 1983, 277 pp., $8.95 (paperback).

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Books To Order

using a wide range of sources, profoundly Jewish. Brenner concludes that from the beginning the goal of Zionism was the occupation and control of Palestine, and not the rescue of millions of Jewish victims of Nazi fascist and other European tragedies. Our price: $7.95.

☐ Jimmy Carter, *Keeping Faith: Memoirs of a President*. Bantam Books, New York, 1982, 622 pp., $22.50. Drawing from the 1,000-page diary he kept as President, Carter evaluates his accomplishments and disappointments. A sizeable portion is devoted to Camp David with minute-by-minute accounts of the negotiations and private meetings with Middle Eastern officials. Our price, $9.50.

☐ Colin Chapman, *Whose Promised Land?*, Lion Publishing, Herts, England, 1983, 256 pp., $9.95. Outlines the conflicting claims to the Holy Land from the time of the Bible on. Discusses the relevance of biblical promises to the modern age. Our price: $2.75.

☐ Richard Curtiss, *A Changing Image: American Perceptions of the Arab-Israeli Dispute*, American Educational Trust, Washington, D.C., 1982, 216 pp., $9.95. Traces the evolution of American public opinion on the Arab-Israeli conflict; concludes that it is becoming more balanced, and that this trend will continue. Our price, $7.25.

☐ Saad El Shazly, *The Crossing of the Suez*, American Mideast Research, 331 pp., $14.00. Egypt's former military commander-in-chief tells how the Egyptian Army executed its brilliant 1973 crossing of the Suez and how Egypt's political leaders turned that victory into disaster. Our price, $10.95.

☐ James Ennes, Jr., *Assault on the Liberty*, Random House, New York, 301 pp., $13.95. The author served as lieutenant among the officers of the USS *Liberty* on her fatal voyage. He was on watch at the bridge during the day of the Israeli attack. Our price, $10.95.

☐ Roberta Strauss Feuerlicht, *The Fate of the Jews: A People Torn Between Israeli Power and Jewish Ethics*, Times Books, 1983, 324 pp., $18.95. Probing the history of Jewish history, the author concludes that the resiliency of Judaism derived from its internationalist outlook and the teachings of the ancient prophets — teachings that, she believes, are ignored by Israel's militarism, its ruling elite and its supporters abroad. Our price, $11.00.

☐ General Accounting Office, *U.S. Assistance to the State of Israel: The Unreported Debt Report*, American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee, Washington, D.C., 1983, 78 pp. This report examines the full range of aid to Israel and the U.S. policies governing this relationship. Specifically it examines how the relationship is translated into policy objectives, the major determinants of aid levels to Israel, the effect of U.S. aid on Israel's economy and the U.S. commitment to develop Israel's arms industry — current and proposed. Our price, $4.50.

☐ David Gilmour, *Dispossessed: The Ordeal of the Palestinians 1917-1980*, Sidgwick and Jackson, 242 pp. Well-documented history of Palestinians, based in part on revealing quotations from Zionist sources. Author examines the status of Palestinians in exile, the complex inter-relationships of the PLO, and the Palestinians vis-a-vis the international community, particularly with the Soviet Union and the Third World. Our price, $3.95.

☐ Grace Halsell, *Journey to Jerusalem*, Macmillan, 1982, 256 pp., $7.95. A distinguished journalist visits the Holy Land and meets people as diverse as Mayor Bassam Shaka of Nablus and Billy Rowe of the Rowes, NY, now a Greek Christian settler near Bethlehem. Our price, $2.95.

☐ David Hirst, *The Gun and the Olive Branch*, Futura Publications, London, 1983 reprint, 362 pp., fully subtitled "The Roots of Violence in the Middle East." In tracing these roots, the author dispells a number of myths about Arabs and Zionists. Well researched and very readable. Our price, $2.75.

☐ Stephen D. Isaacs, *Jews and American Politics*, Doubleday & Co., 302 pp. An investigation into the role Jews play in American politics. It explodes many myths on this subject and shows how Jews have exercised the power they have. Our price, $3.65.

☐ Michael Jansen, *The Battle of Beirut*, South End Press, Boston, 1982, $6.50 (paperback). This book analyzes the war from its start in June 1982, to the massacre at Sabra and Shatila in September. It explodes the contention of a "limited operation" and "minimal civilian casualties," and exposes the longer term ambitions of Israel. U.S. policy is also examined, especially the degree of collusion between Alexander Haig and the Israeli leaders. Our price: $5.95.

☐ Sabri Jiryis, *The Arabs in Israel*, Monthly Review Press, 314 pp., $5.95. Expanded version of Jiryis' original authoritative account of the deprivation of Arabs living in Israel. Our price, $4.25.

☐ Alfred Lilienthal, *The Zionist Connection II: North America*, New Brunswick, NJ, 900 pp., $9.95 (paperback). Covers the Arab-Israeli conflict from the time of Herzl to the 1982 Israeli invasion of Lebanon. Research involved thousands of hours of personal interviews, many of which most Americans are unaware. Our price, $8.25.

☐ Radwan Nijim, *Clovis and Charlie Peden and the Muslim Population of Arab American University Graduates*, Belmont, MA, 1982, 60 pp., $6.95. Examines the biblical, political and socio-religious factors in the formulation of U.S.-Middle East policy. Our price, $5.25.

☐ Livia Rokach, *Israel's Sacred Terrorism*, Association of Arab-American University Graduates, 1980, 60 pp., $4.50 (paperback). Examines the 1953-57 diary of Moshe Sharett, founding member of Israel's Labor Party, his country's first foreign minister and its second prime minister. Our price, $3.50.

☐ Regina Sharif, *Non-Jewish Zionism*, Zed Press, London, 1983, 144 pp., $9.95. Two centuries before Herzl the "protestant revolution generated the belief that a Jewish return to Zion would expedite the Second Coming of Christ. That belief continues among certain fundamentalists, and the author attributes the axiomatic support of Israel in the West today to this theological foundation as much as to Jewish lobbying and diplomacy. Our price, $5.50.

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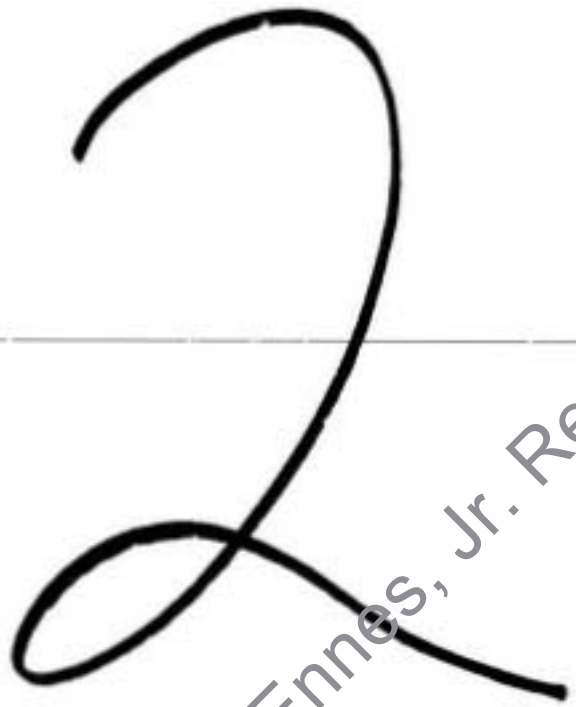

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EXCUSES FOR THE ATTACK

—

A COLLECTION OF ARTICLES AND REPORTS BY THE GOVT. OF ISRAEL AND SUPPORTERS ATTEMPTING TO DISPROVE CLAIMS THAT THE ATTACK WAS DELIBERATE, AND SOME REBUTTAL ARGUMENTS

FOLDER 2

James M. Emmes, Jr. Research Papers

THE ISRAELI VERSION

The enclosed report of an Israeli Judge was passed to the United States about two months after the Israeli attack on the USS Liberty. This and two earlier and less detailed reports were all withheld from the American public at the request of the Israeli government. The earlier reports have both been declassified under the Freedom of Information Act. This report, by far the most detailed of the three, has never been released. The Department of State claims to be unable to identify such a report. The Joint Chiefs of Staff did identify it, but refuse to release the report on grounds that such release would be damaging to the interest of the United States. The same report, however, was handed to a citizen by a civil servant who found it in an unclassified file. It is not classified and can be withheld on no legitimate grounds.

Careful reading of the Israeli report reveals many admissions different from the official stories told by both countries. Officially and publicly, both countries describe the assault on the USS Liberty as a brief and mistaken affair initiated by forces on the scene and later followed up by torpedo boats which happened upon a flaming hulk which they supposed to be an enemy.

The report of the Israeli Judge, however, reveals (as previously reported by Liberty crewmen) that the air attack was two stage (high speed Mirage jetsfollowed by low speed Mystère jets), that napalm "bombs which caused fires" was used, and that the whole affair was coordinated from the Israeli war room where the ship was identified and its track plotted on a chart.

The report distorts many of the circumstances of the attack in order to reach a conclusion that the attack was an error. It is difficult to accept, for instance, that the Liberty's track was "erased" from the war room chart, or that such an erasure led to the attack. Furthermore, it is impossible to accept the claim that Israeli torpedo boats located the USS Liberty at 1341 Tel Aviv time (19 minutes before the firing started), and plotted Liberty's speed erroneously at 32 knots. The torpedo boats left their base at Ashdod at 1200. At 1341 they were still far beyond radar range and could not possibly have picked up the Liberty on their radar. In fact, the boats have a radar horizon of 16 miles or less and could not possibly have spotted the Liberty on radar until about the moment the attack started at 1400.

There are many other defects in the Israeli report. Most are evident from a careful reading. For a more detailed report of the circumstances of the attack and of the coverup that followed and still exists today, read ASSAULT ON THE LIBERTY (Random House, 1980), by James M. Ennes, Jr., who was an officer on the bridge of the ship during the attack.

Russell David, who was Liberty's signalman on the bridge as the torpedo boats approached, insists that no one signaled "identify yourself first," as the Israelis claim. Instead, David repeatedly signaled "USS LIBERTY - U S NAVY SHIP". His signals were ignored by the torpedomen.

James M. Ennes, Jr. Research Papers

ISRAEL DEFENSE FORCES

Preliminary Inquiry File 1/67

Preliminary Inquiry

Before: Sgan-Aluf I. Yerushalmi

DECISION

1. On Thursday 8th June, 1967, at approximately 1400 hours, aircraft of the Israel Air Force attacked a vessel situated about 20 miles north-west of El-Arish, and some 14 miles off the shore of Bardawil. About half an hour later torpedo boats of the Israel Navy attacked the same vessel and hit it with a torpedo. Soon, during the attack by the torpedo boats, it became clear that the vessel thought to be an enemy ship, was a vessel named "Liberty", of the United States Navy. The attack was immediately broken-off, but most regrettably, only after, as transpired, loss of life and material damage had been caused.

2. In order to understand the chain of circumstances which lead to this unfortunate incident, a number of the events which preceded it, must be reviewed.

3. The incident occured on the fourth day of the war. On that day the towns of Gaza and El-Arish, as well as the area extending to the Suez Canal, were already in the hands of our forces. Although our command of the air was absolute, our forces were still conducting battles in Sinai and Naval operations were being carried out on the day of the incident. In the hours before noon, naval engagements were taking place along the coast of Israel and an enemy submarine was believed to be sunk by the Naval Forces (note: there is no confirmation for this from intelligence sources).

4. Before noon, between 1100 and 1200 hours, Navy H.Q. received reports from two separate sources, according to which El-Arish was being shelled from the sea. The Naval representative at Air Force H.Q. was ordered to check the credibility of the report. This officer got in touch with Air Force Operations Branch, and was told that the source of the report was the Air Ground-Support Officer. Immediately thereafter he was informed by the Naval representative at G.H.Q. that the information about the shelling received by them originated from Southern Command.

It is to be noted that the reports from Southern Command were also accompanied by information, that two vessels had been observed approaching the coast.

5. At 1205 hours an order was given to three torpedo boats of the division at Ashdod to proceed in the direction of El-Arish. Reports about the shelling continued to reach G.H.Q./Operations, and pressure was exerted on the Naval representative, on the lines of "the coast has been shelled for hours, and you -- the Navy -- are not reacting." The Naval representative contacted Navy H.Q. and proposed an immediate action. He was informed that torpedo boats had been sent to the spot to locate the target, and it had also been agreed with the Naval representative at Air Force H.Q., that as soon as the torpedo boats locate the target, aircraft would be dispatched. In the meantime, the commander of the torpedo boat division, who had already been proceeding in the direction ordered, was informed about the shelling of the El-Arish coast and he was ordered to establish radio contact with the aircraft as soon as they appeared over the target.

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6. According to the division log-book, a target was located at 13.41 hours situated at a distance of about 20 miles north of El-Arish. The division was ordered "to close in and identify the target", and reported that the unidentified target was moving at a speed of 30 knots westwards -- that is, in the direction of Port Said.

A few minutes later, the Division Commander reported that the target, now 17 miles from him, was moving at a speed of 28 knots, and since he could not overtake it, he requested the dispatch of aircraft towards it. The Division Commander also reported that the target had changed its navigational direction.

7. As a result of the request of the Navy H.Q. through its representative with the Air Force, aircraft was dispatched to the target. The aircraft carried out a run over the ship in an attempt to identify it. According to their statements, they were looking for a flag, but found none; likewise no other identification mark was observed. As against this, it was established that the painting of the ship was grey (the color of a warship), and two guns were situated in the bow. This was reported to H.Q.

On the assumption that they were facing an enemy target an order was given to the aircraft to attack. During the first stage of the attack the aircraft strafed the ship with cannon and machine guns, and during the second stage dropped bombs on it, which caused fires, and smoke was seen to rise from the ship.

The aircraft was ordered to leave the target, to allow the torpedo boats, which meanwhile had drawn near, to engage in attack, but during the last run a lowflying aircraft observed the marking "CTR-5" on the hull of the ship.

8. Upon receipt of the information about the marking, so observed by the pilot, an order was transmitted to the torpedo boat division not to attack the ship, since its identification might not be correct.

The Division Commander was ordered to approach the ship in order to establish visual contact and to identify it. The order was carried out, and the Commander reported that the ship appeared to be a merchant or supply vessel. The Division Commander also signalled the ship and requested its identification, but the latter replied with a signal meaning "identify yourself first". Meanwhile the Division Commander was consulting and perusing a book on the identification of Arab Navies and making comparison with the target seen by him, he came to the conclusion that he was confronting an Egyptian supply ship by the name of "El-Kasir". At the same time the commander of another torpedo boat of the division informed him, that he also had identified the ship as the Egyptian "El-Kasir", and then at 14.36 hours the Division Commander authorized the division to attack with torpedoes. And in fact a torpedo was fired at the ship and hit it. Only at a later stage, when one of the torpedo boats approached the ship from the other side were the markings "CTR-5" noticed on the hull, and then the final order was given to break off the attack.

It is to be noted that throughout the contact no American or any other flag appeared on the ship and it was only a helicopter, sent after the attack in order to render assistance if necessary -- which noticed a small American Flag flying over the target. At that stage the vessel was finally identified as an audio surveillance ship of the U.S. Navy.

9. Although at this stage of the inquiry was any evidence brought on the results of the attack, it is reasonable to assume, in view of the testimony as to the nature of the hits, that loss of life, as well as material damage to the ship, was caused. Nevertheless, according to the evidence presented to me, the ship succeeded in leaving the area of the incident under its own power, without requiring the assistance offered.

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10. I have briefly described the incident, in consequence of which a plaint has been submitted to me by the Chief Military Prospector, in accordiance with the instructions of the Military Advocate General, to hold a preliminary inquiry, since in his view offences had been committed which a military court is competent to try. But before I deal with the seven counts of the p' int, I must briefly describe a number of facts which help to explain the background of the plaint, and without which it cannot be understood.

11. On the day of the incident, at 04.10 hours, an aircraft with a naval observer on board, set out on an air reconnaissance mission, and reported, at approximately 06.00 hours, the location of a ship 70 miles westward of Tel Aviv. The ship was later identified as a supply vessel of the American Navy. At about 09.00 hours an Israel aircraft flying over the sea, reported that some 20 miles north of El-Arish it had observed a warship which had opened fire on him when he tried to identify it. During the debriefing of the pilot at 09.40 hours, it appeared that the report about the firing was unfounded, and that the ship was "coloured grey, very bulky and the bridge amidships".

At 10.55 hours the Naval Liaison Officer at Air Force H.Q. reported t. the Navy H.Q. that the ship about which he had reported earlier in the morning was an electromagnetic audio-surveillance ship of the U.S. Navy, named Liberty, whose marking was G.T.R. - 5. At the same time the Acting Chief of Naval Operations was present at Navy H.Q.

12. Upon receiving the information from the reconnaissance aircraft about the location of the ship, as mentioned above, it was marked on the Combat Information Centre Table at Navy H.Q. At first the object was marked in red, meaning an unidentified target; afterwards, when the ship was identified as a supply vessel of the American Navy, it was marked in green, i.e. a neutral ship. At about 11.00 hours, after the Acting Chief of Naval Operations had received the report, as above stated, from the Liaison Officer at Air Force H.Q. and had understood, as he testified, that it referred to the target, the location of which was correct at 06.00 in the morning, he ordered its erasure from the table, since he had no information as to its location at the time of the report.

Accordingly, it is clear that from the moment when reports about the shelling of the coast of El-Arish were received, and of the commencement of activity at Navy H.Q. in order to confront a presumed enemy, and until the said incident with the ship "Liberty", the latter was not to be found on the Combat Information Centre Table at Navy H.Q.

13 Upon receipt of the reports about the shelling of the El-Arish coast the Acting Chief of Naval Operations called the Head of the Naval Department to the Command Bridge, and the latter took over the command on the bridge, ordered the dispatch of the torpedo boats and aircraft and their attack on the target.

At 14.20 hours O.C. Navy arrived at the Command Bridge and it was he who authorized the commander of the torpedo boat division to attack. At the first stage of activity, with the appearance of the Head of the Naval Department, there was present on the bridge the Acting Chief of Naval Operations (a duty which he took over at approximately 10.30 hours). At a later stage the Chief of Naval Operations returned to the Command Bridge.

14 The subject-matter of the first two counts of the plaint is the failure to report the fact that the American ship "Liberty" was seen in the morning hours of the day of the incident, sailing in the vicinity of the Israel coast, under the first count - to the Head of the Naval Department, and under the second count - to the Air Force H.Q.

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According to the third count of the plaint "the extent of the veracity and credibility of the reports on the shelling of El-Arish from the sea, which reached the Air Force, the Senior Naval representative at the Air Force and the Naval mission at G.H.Q., was not properly investigated."

The fourth and fifth counts are alternative, and allege negligence, in that an order to attack a target thought to be an enemy target, was given without checking its national identity and without taking into account that the ship "Liberty" was observed in the morning hours of that day sailing in the vicinity of the Israel coast.

In the sixth count, the Chief Military Prosecutor charges that the order of the Naval Department not to attack the ship, suspected by the division of being an enemy ship, "for fear of error and out of uncertainty with regard to the true identity of that ship", was not delivered to the division.

Finally, in the seventh count, the Chief Military Prosecutor charges that "aircraft of the Air Force and torpedo boats attacked the American ship "Liberty" on an unfounded assumption -- resulting from failure to take reasonable steps properly to establish her identity -- that she was an Egyptian warship".

To establish the plaint, the Chief Military Prosecutor called 34 witnesses and also produced to me 14 various exhibits. In his final submission the Chief Military Prosecutor argued that on the evidence, the commission of each of the offences, that appear in the plaint, can be attributed to various military personnel, whom he indicated by name, although the plaint itself does not mention the accused (see section 294(a) (2) of the Military Justice Law, 1955).

15. In an interim decision dated 5th July, 1967, I held that "it appears to me, prima facie, that offences of negligence may have been committed by the Acting Chief of Naval Operations, because he did not report to the Head of the Naval Department, that on the day of the incident the American ship "Liberty" was observed proceeding in the vicinity of and along the Israel coast"; and "that he may have been negligent in that after being informed that the target, which was reported to be allegedly shelling the El-Arish coast was marked CTR - 5, he did not inform the Head of the Naval Department and/or the O.C. Navy, that a vessel with identical or similar sailing had earlier been identified."

As a result of this decision of mine, the Acting Chief of Naval Operations appeared as accused and was represented by the Chief Military Defence Counsel. He called 3 witnesses, made a statement under oath and produced 5 exhibits.

16. Before dealing with each count of the plaint, I must observe that it is clear to me that it is not my function to determine, in any manner whatsoever, whether the ship "Liberty" acted properly at any stage prior to the incident or during the incident itself. My task is to decide whether any offence has been committed by any military personnel involved in this incident, i.e. as is stated in section 297 of the Military Justice Law, 1955, "to decide whether or not there is sufficient amount of prima facie evidence to justify the commital of the accused for trial". At the same time, since the subject matter of the plaint before me are offences of negligence, I will be unable to determine the reasonableness of the conduct of all those concerned in the matter without examining the conduct of the ship, against the background of the general situation, as was described to me.

As stated the incident occured in the midst of war, very close to the coast where battles were still raging, and on the day of the incident -- in the hours of the morning -- an enemy submarine was even sunk by the Israel Navy. It was proved to me, beyond any shadow of a doubt, that the ship was hit in an area described as "the naval battles arena" in the event of a clash between the navies of Israel and Egypt. Although, when hit, the ship was outside territorial waters, it was testified to me that the area was declared by the Egyptian authorities as one dangerous

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to shipping, a declaration which presumably reached all vessels to be found in the vicinity. Moreover, the place of the incident does not serve as a recognized shipping lane. It was explained to me, likewise, that it is customary for warships to announce their approach to the shores of a foreign state, particularly in sensitive zones, which was not done in this case.

17. I shall now deal with the counts of the plaint.

The first complaint by the Chief Military Prosecutor is against the Acting Chief of Naval Operations, for not having drawn the attention of the Head of the Naval Department to the fact that in the hours of the morning, the ship "Liberty" was sailing in the vicinity of the Israel coast. This omission occured in two stages: the first -- prior to the attack of the aircraft, the second -- after the aircraft reported the identification of the marking on the hull of the ship.

In view of the evidence of the Head of the Naval Department before me, that he did not know on the same day of the presence of the "Liberty" in the area, I thought at first that the Acting Chief of Naval Operations had not acted as a responsible officer should have acted. But during the evidence for the defence, the Officer of the Watch at Navy H.Q. testified that in the course of the fight with the submarine the Head of the Naval Department was present on the Command Bridge. At the same time an American supply ship was marked in red on the Combat Information Centre Table, and during a momentary lull in the fight, the O.C. Navy, who was directing the fight, inquired into the import of the marking, and ordered it to be changed to green.

The Acting Chief of Naval Operations testified that he was an eye-witness of the said event, and concluded therefrom that the Head of the Naval Department knew about the presence of an American supply ship in the area, as had already been reported in the hours of the morning. This assumption seems to me to be reasonable under circumstances, and therefore I take the view that no negligence on his part has been proved, even prima facie. As regards the second stage -- that is, the failure to draw the attention of the Head of the Naval Department to the fact that the marking, which the pilot had reported as being on the hull of the ship, was similar to the markings of the "Liberty" -- it is my considered opinion, there was no reason for him to repeat this information to the Head of the Naval Department.

Witnesses related that the Naval Liaison Officer at the Air Force passed on to the Naval Command Bridge the report on the marking and its similarity to that of the "Liberty", and the officer with whom he spoke, repeated his words in a loud voice, so as they were heard by all present on the bridge, including the Head of the Naval Department and the Chief of Naval Operations. What reason, therefore, was there to draw the attention of the Head of the Naval Department to a fact which had been audibly announced by the said officer? Moreover, as I have already pointed out, the Acting Chief of Naval Operations had reasonably assumed that the facts of the presence of the "Liberty" in the area, was known to all concerned.

No one present, indeed, had connected this report with the target attacked, but I shall consider this question, when I deal with the reasonableness of the attack on the target, under the given circumstances.

18. As to the second count the Chief Military Prosecutor argued that it was the duty of the Naval Liaison Officer at the Air Force to report to the Air Force, where he represented his service, the information about the presence of the "Liberty" in the area, and not having done so, was negligent in the discharge of his duty.

This argument is unfounded. The responsibility for the Defence of Israel against enemy Naval actions rests solely with the Navy. It was made clear to me in this instance that the Air Force fulfilled merely an auxiliary function, while the responsibility for identification and attack lay upon the Navy. Even though Air Force H.Q. issued the order to the pilot to attack, it was really an order issued

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by the Navy, passed on through Air Force H.Q., and the responsibility for its issue falls upon whoever issued it at Naval H.Q.

The Naval Liaison Officer at the Air Force well knew, that the report on the "Liberty" was transmitted by him to Navy H.Q.; and he was entitled to assume, that whoever decided upon the attack, had done so after taking the above fact into consideration. What reason was there in feeding the Air Force with information and considerations which did not concern it?

19. It appears to me that it would be proper at this stage to deal with the fifth count, in which the Chief Military Prosecutor alleges that the Torpedo Boat Division Commander was not provided with the order of the Naval Department not to attack a ship, suspected by the former to be an enemy vessel, for fear of error and uncertainty as to its true identity.

In the operations log-book of the flag boat, carrying the Division Commander on board, it was recorded that at approximately 14.20 hours an order in the following terms was received from Naval Operations Branch: "Do not attack. It is possible that the aircraft have not identified correctly". A similar entry, made at the same time, is to be found in the war-diary of Naval Operations Branch, as an instruction transmitted to the Division.

When the entry was produced to the Division Commander, he claimed that no such message ever reached him, the Deputy commander of the boat, through whom contact between Division Commander and Naval Operations Branch was maintained, testified, that he received the message and passed it on to the Division Commander.

Although considerations of the credibility of witnesses should not be part of my functions, it appears to me that in the normal course of events as described, the message was passed on in the normal course of reporting to the bridge of the Division Commander. It is possible that the message escaped the awareness of the Division Commander in the heat of battle.

In any event, be the matter as it may, there is insufficient evidence before me, justifying the committal for trial of any accused person on these grounds, and accordingly I so decide.

20. The third count concerns, as has been said, the insufficient investigation of the veracity of the report on the shelling of El-Arish by the Naval Liaison Officer at the Air Force, who was ordered to do so by the Head of the Naval Department.

It is not disputed that the Liaison Officer clarified with Air Force H.Q. the source of the report concerning the shelling, and was told that the source of the information was the Air-Ground-Support Officer. Immediately thereafter he was informed by G.O.C. that reports of the shelling were being received from Southern Command. The Chief Military Prosecutor argued that as soon as the Head of the Naval Department had cast doubts upon the correctness of the report, it was the duty of the Naval Liaison Officer at Air Force H.Q. to establish its correctness by contacting the original source of the report.

This argument does not recommend itself to me at all. We are concerned with reports in time of war coming through the usual report-channel, and it appears to me that a commander may assume that every such report received by him is correct, and treat it with utmost seriousness as long as the information is within the limits of reasonableness. Since otherwise, if one wishes to say that he is duty-bound to inquire into the correctness at the original source, one cannot rely upon reports at all, and it would be impossible in such circumstances to conduct any military operations whatsoever. The information itself was credible, and if the Head of the Naval Department cast doubt upon it, that was only because of previous reports which had been found incorrect, but not by reason of the improbability of the information.

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As soon as the Naval Liaison Officer at Air Force H.Q. had established the source of the report reaching the Air Force, and had immediately confirmed its content from another source, i.e. Southern Command through G.H.Q., the correctness of the information was, in my opinion ascertained sufficiently, and in a reasonable manner.

21. Three counts remain to be dealt with -- the fourth, the fifth and the seventh of the plaint -- which, so it seems to me, form one whole.

The Chief Military Prosecutor argued that it was negligence to give the order to attack a warship without previously establishing, beyond doubt, its national identity and without taking into account the presence of the American ship "Liberty" in the hours of the morning in the vicinity of the coast of Israel.

In summing-up the seventh count of the plaint, the Chief Military Prosecutor saw negligence in the giving of the order to the aircraft and torpedo boats to attack the ship upon an unfounded presumption that it was an Egyptian warship, and this as a consequence of not having taken reasonable steps to ascertain properly its identity. As parties to the negligence, the Chief Military Prosecutor joined the Head of the Naval Department, the Chief of Naval Operations and the Acting Chief of Naval Operations (who fulfilled his functions during a certain period on that day), the Torpedo Boat Division Commander, and finally, although indirectly, the Naval Liaison Officer at Air Force H.Q.

22. It appears to me that the activity of our forces in the said incident, may be divided into three stages:

(a) the first stage, in which the order was given to Air Force planes to attack the target, and their attack;

(b) an intermediate stage, after the report of the aircraft about the marking of the attacked ship with the symbol "GTR - 5";

(c) the identification of the target as the ship "El-Kasir" and the attack of it with torpedoes.

23. In my opinion, on the evidence I have heard, there are five factors, as a result of which the assumption arose, that the target was an enemy ship and should be attacked:

(a) the report on the shelling of the El-Arish coast for hours on end;

(b) the speed of the target, assessed by the torpedo boats as 28 to 30 knots;

(c) the course of the target towards Port Said;

(d) the report from the aircraft that the target was a warship and carried no naval or other identification marks;

(e) the location of the ship -- close to a battle zone.

There is no doubt that the dominant factors were the speed and the course of the target. Most remarkably, it were two torpedo boats of the Division, which determined the speed, although it was proved to me beyond a shadow of a doubt, that no ship of the class of the "Liberty" is capable of developing a speed above 15 knots, this being the theoretical maximum speed limit.

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24. The Chief Military Prosecutor in summing up his argument with respect to this stage of the incident, reiterated with emphasis that the root of the negligence of all parties lay in their disregard of the presence of the ship "Liberty" in the vicinity, and not connecting the target discovered by the torpedo boats with this ship.

It seems to me that those concerned were entitled to assume, that they had before them a correct report as to the speed of the target, within the usual limits of reasonable error of 10% to 15%, relying upon the existing means of determining the speed of the target.

The initial speed of the target, determined by the torpedo boats at 15 knots, and received with doubts, was verified within minutes and finally confirmed as a speed of 25 knots, as is customary at sea.

It was therefore the speed of the target, which led to the final and definite conclusion, that this was a military vessel, and thus there was no reason for surmising, in view of this datum that the target could possibly be the ship "Liberty". If we add to this the other factors mentioned above, their cumulative effect was to negate any presumption whatsoever as to a connection between the American supply ship, reported on that morning in another location, and the target discovered by the torpedo boats.

The Acting Chief of Naval Operations testified, that upon assuming his duties, he was not informed of the reports received at 09.30 hours at Navy H.Q. about the presence of a ship at a distance of 20 miles north of El-Arish, while the report of 10.55 hours related to the presence of the "Liberty" 70 miles west of Tel-Aviv in the early hours of the morning. I shall go further and say, that after hearing all the witnesses, it appears to me that even on the assumption, that the presence of the "Liberty" as such, 20 miles north of El-Arish, was known to the concerned, that would not have altered the conclusions as to the nature of the target discovered by the torpedo boats, that it was an enemy warship, according to all the said data.

Since I am of the opinion that the assumption as to an enemy ship was reasonable, I have come to the conclusion, that the order given to the aircraft to attack was in the said circumstances, justified.

25. At the second stage of the activity of our forces, upon the receipt of the report of the pilot with regard to the marking discovered on the hull of the attacked ship, the order was given to cease the attack, and at a later stage the Division was ordered to draw near to the target and make a visual identification. During this stage the suspicion of the Acting Chief of Naval Operations was indeed aroused, that possibly the target attacked was not an enemy target, but at that moment it was the Head of the Naval Department who was directing the activity, at whose side was the Chief of Naval Operations, who had meanwhile returned to the Command Bridge. In the course of deliberations and attempts at identification at Navy H.Q. the O.C. Navy arrived at the Command Bridge, and he took over the command from the Head of the Naval Department.

The visual identification by the Division Commander on the spot was awaited at Navy H.Q., following, apparently, misgiving and the awareness of a possible camouflage of markings by an Egyptian ship. This identification was not delayed, and the Division Commander reported the certain identification of the vessel as an Egyptian transport ship named "El-Kasir". It is noteworthy that the identification of the target as the "El-Kasir" was made both by the Division Commander and the Commander of another torpedo boat, and on examining photographs of the two ships I am satisfied that a likeness exists between them, and that an error of identification is possible especially having regard to the fact, that identification was made while the ship was clouded in smoke.

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The Chief Military Prosecutor attacked this identification as unreasonable in view of the fact that it was clear to all those involved in the incident, that it was inconceivable for this auxiliary ship to shell the El-Arish coast, or for her ever to move at a speed of 30 or 28 knots. He also argued that its presence at the scene of the incident was without logic. The answer to this submission, as explained to me, was that those concerned were entitled, on the assumption that the coast could indeed be shelled, to surmise that she formed, perhaps, part of the vessels engaged in the shelling of the shores which succeeded to get away from the area, which she had lagged behind them. Or, as one of the witnesses contended, she had come to assist in the evacuation of Egyptian soldiers, straggling in the areas occupied by our forces.

26. There is no doubt to the fact, that the refusal of the "Liberty" to identify herself to the torpedo boats, largely contributed to the error of identification. The Division Commander testified that he signalled the "Liberty" after the aircraft attack and requested its identification, and was answered "Identify yourself". If the conduct of the captain of the "Liberty" can still be explained by the existing, as I have heard in maritime tradition, that a vessel belonging to does not identify itself first to a smaller vessel, that such conduct cannot comprehended when the request for identification followed an aircraft attack. an event should have, in my opinion, made the captain realise, that he had been attacked because he was regarded as an enemy target.

In addition, I must add that the Division Commander gave evidence from the experience of the Navy in the Sinai War, that when the destroyer "Ibrahim El-Awal" was requested to identify itself by our vessels, she gave the same reply "identify yourself first". Likewise, the Division Commander and one of the torpedo boat commanders testified, that the target was reported to have opened fire upon one of the torpedo boats. Under those circumstances it seems, that the identification, in the third stage of the activity of our forces, as the "El-Kasir", was well within reason.

To sum up these last counts, my conclusion is that in all the circumstances of the case, the conduct of any of the naval officers concerned in this incident cannot be considered unreasonable, to an extent which justified committal for trial.

For all my regret that our forces were involved in an incident with a vessel of a friendly state, and its sad outcome, I ought to put the behavior of each of the officers, who had any connection with the incident, to the test of the conduct of reasonable officers during wartime operations, when the naval arm of the Israel Defense Forces was confronted with maritime forces superior in numbers, and when all involved were conscious of the task before them -- to protect the safety of Israel, to identify every enemy threatening from the sea, to attack it speedily and to destroy it. The criterion for reasonable conduct under these conditions may possibly differ from that in times of relative quiet. Indeed, whoever peruses the material evidence presented to me, may conceivably draw some lesson regarding the relations between the two arms of the Israel Defense Forces, which were involved in the incident, and the operational procedures in times of war, particularly between the different branches of the Navy -- but all this is certainly not within the scope of my inquiry. Yet I have not discovered any deviation from the standard of reasonable conduct which would justify the committal of anyone for trial. In view of what has been said above, I hold that there is no sufficient amount of prima facei evidence, justifying committing anyone for trial.

Given the 13th day of Tamuz, 5727 (21.7.67) and read in the presence of the Chief Military Prosecutor -- Rav-Seren Ezdai, the Chief Military Defence Counsel -- Sgan-Aluf Tein, and the Acting Chief of Naval Operations.

Y. YERUSHALMI, Sgan-Aluf
Examining Judge

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DEPARTMENT OF STATE

The Legal Adviser

September 21, 1967

TO : U - The Under Secretary

THROUGH: S/S

FROM : L - Carl F. Salans

SUBJECT: "The Liberty" - Discrepancies Between Israeli Inquiry and U.S. Navy Inquiry - INFORMATION MEMORANDUM

As you requested, we have compared the decision of the Israeli Judge, dated July 21, 1967, with the findings of the U.S. Navy Court of Inquiry, and the Clifford Report, concerning the Liberty incident.

The following discrepancies are noteworthy:

I. Speed and Direction of the "Liberty"

- The Israeli report indicates that the torpedo boat Division Commander reported and reconfirmed the target's (Liberty's) speed at 28 to 30 knots and that it had changed its navigational direction shortly after 1341 hours.

- The U.S. Navy inquiry established that the Liberty had been on a steady course at 5 knots from 1132 hours until the attack.

II. Aircraft Surveillance

- The Israeli report indicates that a ship was reported in the area by reconnaissance aircraft at 0600 and that another report was received of a contact between an Israeli aircraft and a surface vessel about 0900.

- The Navy Court finding of facts, plus testimony of various members of the crew indicates reconnaissance overflights of the Liberty at 0515, 0850, 1030, 1056, 1126, 1145, 1220, and 1245.

III. Identification by Israeli Aircraft

- The Israeli report indicates that the fighter aircraft carried out a run over the ship in an effort to identify it.

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- The Navy Inquiry reports no such identification run. Commander McGonagle testified that he observed one air-reconnaissance flight approximately five to six miles from the ship at an altitude of 7,000 feet. He did not see it approach the ship. Within a couple of minutes a loud explosion was heard from the port side of the ship, apparently resulting from a rocket, launched by a second aircraft.

IV. Identification by Torpedo Boats

- The Israeli report indicates that the torpedo boats approached the Liberty in order to establish visual contact and to identify it, and that in addition, the Commander of the torpedo boats signalled the Liberty requesting its identification. The Liberty reportedly answered, "Identify yourself first," and opened fire on the torpedo boats.

- Commander McGonagle's testimony indicated that the only signals from the torpedo boats were those made during the high-speed approach from a distance of approximately 7,000 yards and that it was not possible for the Liberty to read the signals because of the intermittent blocking of view by smoke and flames. No reply signal was sent. Immediately after the Liberty was struck by a torpedo, the torpedo boats stopped at a range of approximately 500 to 800 yards and one signalled by flashing light in English "Do you require assistance?" Commander McGonagle testified that he had no means to communicate with the boat by light but hoisted "CODE LIMA INDIA". ("I am not under command", i.e., not able to control movements of ship.)

V. Flag and Identification Markings

- The Israeli report indicates that the fighter aircraft which reportedly made an initial pass over the Liberty was looking for a flag but found none; likewise no other identification mark was observed. "... Throughout the contact no American or any other flag appeared on the ship...." (Elsewhere the report had indicated that at 1055 the ship had been identified as the Liberty "whose marking was GTR-5.")

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- The Navy Inquiry confirms by testimony of five members of the crew that they had personally observed the Ensign flying during the entire morning and up until the air attack. The Ensign was subsequently shot away during the air attack. Before the torpedo attack, a second Ensign was hoisted. The Navy report also found that "hull markings were clear and freshly painted."

- The Clifford report noted that "the Liberty's U.S. Navy's distinguishing letters and number were painted clearly on her bow. The Liberty's name was clearly painted in English on her stern. The ship's configuration and her standard markings were clearly sufficient for reconnaissance aircraft and waterborne vessels to identify her correctly...." The report noted that at all times prior to the air attack the Liberty was flying her normal size American flag (5 ft. by 8 ft.) at the masthead. Five minutes prior to the attack by the torpedo boats, the Liberty put up a flag measuring 7 ft. by 13 ft. to replace the flag which had been shot down in the air attack.

VI. Identification of Ship as "El-Kasir"

- The Israeli report indicates that shortly before the torpedo boat attack the torpedo boat Division Commander reported the certain identification of the vessel as an Egyptian transport ship named "El Kasir". Identification of the target was made both by the Division Commander and the commander of another torpedo boat. The Israeli Judge indicated in his decision that "on examining photographs of the two ships, I am satisfied that a likeness exists between them, and that an error of identification is possible, especially having regard to the fact, that identification was made while the ship was clouded in smoke."

- The Clifford report noted "That the Liberty could have been mistaken for the Egyptian supply ship El Quseir is unbelievable. El Quseir has one-fourth the displacement of the Liberty, roughly one-half the beam, is 180 feet shorter, and is very differently configured. The Liberty's unusual antenna array and hull markings should have been visible to low-flying aircraft and torpedo boats. ... Trained Israeli naval personnel should have been able easily to see and identify the larger hull markings on the Liberty."

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Additional Observations Regarding Israeli Report

1. Speed of "Liberty" and "El Kasir" as identification factors

- The Israeli report states that the initial speed of the target reported by the torpedo boat commander at 1341 hours as 30 knots was verified within minutes and confirmed as a speed of 28 knots. The report notes that it was the speed of the target which led to the final conclusion that there was no reason for surmising that the target could possibly be the Liberty.

- The reported speed would have ruled out the "El Kasir" as the target, as well as the Liberty since the top speed of the "Kasir", published in Janes Fighting Ships, is in the range of 14 knots. The Liberty's top speed is 18 knots.

II. Failure to Relate "Liberty" to Bombardment capability

- The Israeli report emphasizes that the attack originated with reports that the El Arish area was being shelled from the sea. The implication of such reports was obviously that a ship capable of such shelling was present in the immediate offshore area, i.e., within gun range of the shore.

- It would be clear to any trained observer that the armament aboard the Liberty was incapable of shore bombardment. It appears nevertheless that neither the aircraft, torpedo boats, nor the command headquarters to which they presumably reported evaluated the ship's capability for shore bombardment.

III. Time Sequence of Attacks

- The Israeli report indicates that it had been agreed that as soon as the torpedo boats located the target, aircraft would be dispatched. At 1341 hours the torpedo boat located the target. "A few minutes later", the dispatch of aircraft was requested. The first air attack occurred at approximately 1400 hours.

- Assuming "a few minutes later" would mean four or five minutes, the request for aircraft must have occurred about 1345. One may infer from the fact that within a period of approximately 15 minutes, the request was transmitted, received, a command decision made, aircraft dispatched, and the attack launched, that no significant time was expended in an effort to identify the ship from the air before the attack was launched.

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IV. Attack by Torpedo Boat After "Do Not Attack" order

- The Israeli report confirms that during the final attack by aircraft the marking "CPM-5" was noted on the hull and an order was transmitted to the torpedo boat division not to attack. The order was recorded in the log book of the flag boat at approximately 1420 hours. The torpedo boats nevertheless began their attack run at approximately 1428. The Division Commander later "claimed that no such message ever reached him." The Deputy Commander testified that "he received the message and passed it on to the Division Commander."

This is an exact duplicate of a document prepared on September 21, 1967, by the Legal Adviser of the Department of State for Secretary of State Dean Rusk and Under Secretary for Political Affairs Eugene V. Rostow.

The document was classified TOP SECRET until January 24, 1983, when it was declassified and released in response to a $15,000 law suit filed in Minneapolis Federal District Court after the State Department refused to release it under the administrative provisions of the Freedom of Information Act.

Some of the pages have been retyped due to poor quality of the copy supplied by the Government.

An exact photocopy is held in the files of the USS LIBERTY VETERANS ASSOCIATION.

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DEPARTMENT OF STATE
The Legal Adviser

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September 21, 1967

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TO : U - The Under Secretary

THROUGH: S/S [illegible]

FROM : L - Carl F. Salans CFS

SUBJECT: "The Liberty" - Discrepancies between Israeli Inquiry and U.S. Navy Inquiry
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- The reported speed would have ruled out [illegible] as the target, as well as the Liberty since the top speed of the "Kasir", published in Jane's Fighting Ships, is in the range of 14 knots. The Liberty's top speed [illegible] knots.

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- Assuming "a few minutes later" would mean four or five minutes, the request for aircraft [illegible] have occurred about 1345. One may infer from the fact that within a period of approximately 15 minutes, the request was transmitted, received, a command decision made, aircraft dispatched, and the attack launched, that no significant time was expended in an effort to identify the ship from the air before the attack was launched.

IV. Attack by Torpedo Boat [illegible] Not Attack Aircraft

- The Israeli report confirms that during the final attack

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by aircraft the marking "CPR-5" was noted on the hull and an order was transmitted to the torpedo boat division not to attack. The order was recorded in the log book of the flag boat at approximately 1420 hours. The torpedo boats nevertheless began their attack run at approximately 1420. The Division Commander later claimed that no such message ever reached him. The Deputy Commander testified that he received the message and passed it on to the Division Commander.

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ISRAEL DEFENCE FORCES

Preliminary Inquiry File [illegible]

Preliminary Inquiry

Before: Sgan-Aluf I. Yurushalmi
ETC.

DECISION

Copies [illegible]
00, [illegible], 61, 92

1. On Thursday 8th June, 1967, at approximately 1400 hours, aircraft of the Israel Air Force attacked a vessel situated about 20 miles north-west of El-Arish, and some 14 miles off the shore of Bardawil. About half an hour later torpedo boats of the Israel Navy attacked the same vessel and hit it with a torpedo. Soon, during the attack by the torpedo boats, it became clear that the vessel thought to be an enemy ship, was a vessel named "Liberty", of the United States Navy. The attack was immediately broken-off, but most regrettably, only after, as transpired, loss of life and material damage has been caused.

2. In order to understand the chain of circumstances which lead to this informate incident, a number of the events which preceded it, must be reviewed.

3. The incident occured on the fourth day of the war. On that day the towns of Gaza and El-Arish, as well as the area extending to the Suez Canal were already in the hands of our forces. Although our command of the air was absolute, our forces were still conducting battles in Sinai and Naval operations were being carried out on the day of the incident. In the hours before noon, naval engagements were taking place along the coast of Israel and an enemy submarine was believed to be sunk by the Naval Forces (note: there is no confirmation for this from intelligence sources).

4. Before noon, between 1100 and 1200 hours, Navy H.Q. received reports from two separate sources, according to which El-Arish was being shelled from the sea. The Naval representative at Air Force H.Q. was ordered

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to check the credibility of the report. This officer got in touch with Air Force Operations Branch, and was told that the source of the report was the Air-Ground-Support Officer. Immediately thereafter he was informed by the Naval representative at G.H.Q. that the information about the shelling received by them originated from Southern Command.

It is to be noted that the reports from Southern Comm. about the shelling were also accompanied by information about two vessels had been observed approaching the coast.

5. At 1205 hours an order was given to three torpedo boats of the division at Ashdod to proceed in the direction of El-Arish. Reports about the shelling continued to reach G.H.Q./Operations, and pressure was exerted on the Naval representative, on the lines, of "the coast has been shelled for hours, and you — the Navy — are not reacting." The Naval representative contacted Navy H.Q. and proposed an immediate action. He was informed that torpedo boats had been sent to the spot to locate the target, and it had also been agreed with the Naval representative at Air Force H.Q., that as soon as the torpedo boats locate the target, aircraft would be dispatched. In the meantime, the commander of the torpedo boat division, who had already been proceeding in the direction ordered, was informed about the shelling of the El-Arish coast and he was ordered to establish radio contact with the aircraft as soon as they appeared over the target.

6. According to the division log-book, a target was located at 13.41 hours situated at a distance of about 20 miles north of El-Arish. The division was ordered "to close ... and identify the target", and reported that the unidentified target was moving at a speed of 30 knots westwards — that is, in the direction of Port Said.

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A few minutes later, the Division Commander reported that the ship, now 17 miles from him, was moving at a speed of 25 knots, and since he could not overtake it, he requested the approach of aircraft towards it. The Division Commander also reported that the target had changed its navigational direction.

7. As a result of the request of the Navy, through its representative with the Air Force, aircraft was dispatched to the target. The aircraft carried out a run over the ship in an attempt to identify it. According to their statements, they were looking for a flag, but found none; likewise no other identification mark was observed. As against this, it was established that the painting of the ship was grey (the color of a warship), and two guns were situated in the bow. This was reported to H.Q.

On the assumption that they were facing an enemy target an order was given to the aircraft to attack. During the first stage of the attack the aircraft strafed the ship with cannon and machine guns, and during the second stage dropped bombs on it, which caused fires, and smoke was seen to rise from the ship.

The aircraft was ordered to leave the target, to allow the torpedo boats, which had meanwhile drawn near, to engage in attack, but during the last run a lowflying aircraft observed the marking "CPR - 5" on the hull of the ship.

8. Upon receipt of the information about the marking, so observed by the pilot, an order was transmitted to the torpedo boat division not to attack the ship, since its identification might not be correct.

The Division Commander was ordered to approach the ship in order to establish visual contact and to identify it. The order was carried out, and

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the Commander reported that the ship appeared to be a merchant or naval vessel. The Division Commander also signalled the ship and requested its identification, but the latter replied with a signal meaning "identify yourself first". Meanwhile the Division Commander was compiling and perusing a book on the identification of Arab Navies and after comparing with the target seen by him, he came to the conclusion that he was confronting an Egyptian Supply ship by the name of "El-Kasir". At the same time the commander of another torpedo boat of the division informed him, that he also had identified the ship as the Egyptian "El-Kasir", and then at 14.36 hours the Division Commander authorized the division to attack with torpedoes. And in fact a torpedo was fired at the ship and hit it. Only at a later stage, when one of the torpedo boats approached the ship from the other side were the markings "GTA - 3" noticed on the hull, and then the final order was given to break off the attack.

It is to be noted that throughout the contact no American or any other flag appeared on the ship, and it was only a helicopter, sent after the attack in order to render assistance — if necessary — which noticed a small American Flag flying over the target. At that stage the vessel was finally identified as an audio-surveillance ship of the U.S. Navy.

9. Although at no stage of the inquiry was any evidence brought as the results of the attack, it is reasonable to assume, in view of the testimony as to the nature of the hits, that loss of life, as well as material damage to the ship, was caused. Nevertheless, according to the evidence presented to me, the ship succeeded in leaving the area of the incident under its own power, without requiring the assistance offered.

10. I have briefly described the incident, in consequence of which a plaint has been submitted to me by the Chief Military Prosecutor, in

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accordance with the Instructions of the Military Advocate General, to hold a preliminary inquiry, since in his view offences had been committed which a military court is competent to try. But before I deal with the seven counts of the plaint, I must briefly describe a number of facts which help to explain the background of the plaint, and without which it cannot be understood.

11. On the day of the incident, at 04.15 hours, an aircraft with a naval observer on board, set out on an air reconnaissance mission, and reported, at approximately 06.00 hours, the location of a ship 70 miles westward of Tel Aviv. The ship was later identified as a supply vessel of the American Navy. At about 09.00 hours an Israel aircraft flying over the sea, reported that some 20 miles north of El-Arish it had observed a warship which had opened fire on him when he tried to identify it. During the debriefing of the pilot at 09.40 hours, it appeared that the report about the firing was unfounded, and that the ship was "coloured grey, very bulky and the bridge amidships".

At 10.55 hours the Naval Liaison Officer at Air Force H.Q. reported to Navy H.Q. that the ship about which he had reported earlier in the morning was an electromagnetic audio-surveillance ship of the U.S. Navy, named Liberty, whose marking was G.T.R. - 5. At the same time the Acting Chief of Naval Operations was present at Navy H.Q.

12. Upon receiving the information from the reconnaissance aircraft about the location of the ship, as mentioned above, it was marked on the Combat Information Centre Table at Navy H.Q. At first the object was marked in red, meaning an unidentified target; afterwards, when the ship was identified as a supply vessel of the American Navy, it was marked in green, i.e. a neutral ship. At about 11.00 hours, after the Acting Chief of Naval Operations had received the report, as above stated, from the Liaison Officer at Air Force H.Q., and had understood, as he testified, that it referred to the target,

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the location of which was correct at 03.00 hours in the morning, he ordered its erasure from the table, since he had no information as to its location at the time of the report.

Accordingly, it is clear that from the [illegible] reports about the shelling of the coast of El-Arish were received, and of the commencement of activity at Navy H.Q. in order to confirm a presumed enemy, and until the said incident with the ship "Liberty", the latter was not to be found on the Combat Information Centre Table at Navy H.Q.

13. Upon receipt of the reports about the shelling of the El-Arish coast the Acting Chief of Naval Operations called the Head of the Naval Department to the Command Bridge, and the latter took over [illegible] command on the bridge, ordered the dispatch of the torpedo boats and aircraft and their attack on the target.

At 14.20 hours O.C. Navy arrived at the Command Bridge and it was he who authorized the commander of the torpedo boat division to attack. At the first stage of activity, with the appearance of the Head of the Naval Department, there was present on the bridge the Acting Chief of Naval Operations (a duty which he took over at approximately 10.30 hours). At a later stage the Chief of Naval Operations returned to the Command Bridge.

14. The subject matter of the first two counts of the plaint is the failure to report the fact that the American ship "Liberty" was seen in the morning hours of the day of the incident, sailing in the vicinity of the Israel coast, under the first count - to the Head of the Naval Department, and under the second count - to Air Force H.Q.

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According to the third count of the plaint "the extent of the veracity and credibility of the reports on the shelling of El-Arish from the sea, which reached the Air Force, the Senior Naval representative at the Air Force and the Naval mission at G.H.Q., were not properly investigated."

The fourth and fifth counts are alternative, and allege negligence, in that an order to attack a target thought to be an enemy target, was given without checking its national identity and without taking into account that the ship "Liberty" was observed in the morning hours of that day sailing in the vicinity of the Israel coast.

In the sixth count, the Chief Military Prosecutor charges that the order of the Naval Department not to attack the ship, suspected by the division of being an enemy ship, "for fear of error and out of uncertainty with regard to the true identity of that ship", was not delivered to the division.

Finally, in the seventh count, the Chief Military Prosecutor charges that "aircraft of the Air Force and torpedo boats attached the American ship "Liberty" on an unfounded assumption -- resulting from failure to take reasonable steps properly to establish her identity -- that she was an Egyptian warship".

To establish the plaint, the Chief Military Prosecutor called 34 witnesses and also produced to me 14 various exhibits. In his final submission the Chief Military Prosecutor argued that on the evidence, the commission of each of the offences, that appear in the plaint, can be attributed to various military personnel, whom he indicated by name, although the plaint itself does not mention the accused (see section 294(a) (2) of the Military Justice Law, 1955).

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13. In my Interim decision dated 5th July, 1967, I held that "it appears to me, prima facie, that offences of negligence may have been committed by the Acting Chief of Naval Operations, because he did not report to the Head of the Naval Department, that on the day of the incident the American ship "Liberty" was observed proceeding in the vicinity of and along the Israel coast"; and that he may have been negligent in that after being informed that the target, which was reported to be allegedly shelling the Egyptian coast was marked Cit - 3, he did not inform the Head of the Naval Department and/or the O.C. Navy, that a vessel with identical or similar marking had earlier been identified."

As a result of this decision of mine, the Acting Chief of Naval Operations appeared as accused and was represented by the Chief Military Defence Counsel. He called 3 witnesses, made a statement under oath and produced 5 exhibits.

14. Before dealing with each count of the plaint, I must observe that it is clear to me that it is not my function to determine, in any manner whatsoever, whether the ship "Liberty" acted properly at any stage prior to the incident or during the incident itself. My task is to decide whether any offence has been committed by any military personnel involved in this incident, i.e. as is stated in section 297 of the Military Justice Law, 1955, "to decide whether or not there is sufficient amount of prima facie evidence to justify the commital of the accused for trial". At the same time, since the subject matter of the plaint before me are offences of negligence, I will be unable to determine the reasonableness of the conduct of all those concerned in the matter without examining the conduct of the ship, against the background of the general situation, as was described to me.

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As stated the incident occured in the midst of war, very close to the coast where battles were still raging, and on the day of the incident in the hours of the morning — an enemy submarine was even sunk by the Israel Navy. It was proved to me, beyond any shadow of doubt, that the ship was hit in an area described as "the naval battles ground" in the midst of a clash between the navies of Israel and Egypt. Although, when hit, the ship was outside territorial waters, it was testified before me that the area was declared by the Egyptian authorities [illegible] declaration which presumably reached all vessels to be found in the vicinity. Moreover, the point of the incident does not serve as a recognized shipping lane. It was explained to me, likewise, that it is customary for warships to announce their approach to the shores of a foreign state, particularly in sensitive zones, which was not done in this case.

17. I shall now deal with the counts of the plaint.

The first complaint by the Chief Military prosecutor is against the Acting Chief of Naval Operations, for not having drawn the attention of the Head of the Naval Department to the fact that in the hours of the morning, the ship "Liberty" was sailing in the vicinity of the Israel coast. This omission occured in two stages: the first — prior to the attack of the aircraft, the second — after the aircraft reported the identification of the marking on the hull of the ship.

In view of the evidence of the Head of the Naval Department before me, that he did not know on the same day of the presence of the "Liberty" in the area, I thought at first that the Acting Chief of Naval Operations had not acted as a responsible officer should have acted. But during the evidence for the defence, the Officer of the Watch at Navy H.Q. testified

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that in the course of the fight with the submarine the Head of the Naval Department was present on the Command Bridge. At the same time an American supply ship was marked in red on the Combat Information Center Table, and during a momentary lull in the fight, the O.C. Navy, who was directing the fight, inquired into the import of the marking, and ordered it to be changed to green.

The Acting Chief of Naval Operations testified that he was an eye-witness of the said event, and concluded therefrom that the Head of the Naval Department knew about the presence of an American supply ship in the area, as had already been reported in the house of the morning. This assumption seems to me to be reasonable under circumstances, and therefore I take the view that no negligence on his part has been proved, even prima facie. As regards the second stage — that is, the failure to draw the attention of the Head of the Naval Department to the fact that the marking, which the pilot had reported as being on the hull of the ship, was similar to the markings of the "Liberty" — it is my considered opinion, there was no reason for him to repeat this information to the Head of the Naval Department.

Witnesses related that the Naval Liaison Officer at the Air Force passed on to the Naval Command Bridge the report on the marking and its similarity to that of the "Liberty", and the officer with whom he spoke, repeated his words in a loud voice, so as they were heard by all present on the bridge, including the Head of the Naval Department and the Chief of Naval Operations. What reason, therefore, was there to draw the attention to the Head of the Naval Department to a fact which had been audibly announced by the said officer? Moreover, as I have already pointed out, the Acting Chief of Naval Operations had reasonably assumed that the facts of the presence of the "Liberty" in the area, was known to all concerned.

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It was possible, indeed, that [illegible] attacked, but I shall consider this question, when I deal with the reasonableness of the attack on the target, under the given circumstances.

18. As to the second count the Chief Military Prosecutor argued that it was the duty of the Naval Liaison Officer at the Air Force to report to the Air Force, where he represented his Service, the information about the presence of the "Liberty" in the area, and that having failed to do so, he was guilty in the discharge of his duty.

This argument is unfounded. The responsibility for the Defence of Israel against enemy Naval actions rests solely with the Navy. It was made clear to me in this instance that the Air Force fulfilled merely an auxiliary function, while the responsibility for identification and attack lay upon the Navy. Even though Air Force H.Q. issued the order to the pilot to attack, it was really an order issued by the Navy, passed on through Air Force H.Q., and the responsibility for its issue falls upon whoever issued it at Naval H.Q.

The Naval Liaison Officer at the Air Force well knew, that the report on the "Liberty" was transmitted by him to Navy H.Q.; and he was entitled to assume, that whoever decided upon the attack, had done so after taking the above fact into consideration. What reason was there in feeding the Air Force with information and considerations which did not concern it?

19. It appears to me that it would be proper at this stage to deal with the sixth count, in which the Chief Military Prosecutor alleges that the Torpedo Boat Division Commander was not provided with the order of the Naval Department not to attack a ship, suspected by the former to be an enemy vessel, for fear of error and uncertainty as to its true identity.

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In the operations log-book of the flag boat, carrying the Division Commander on board, it was recorded that at approximately 14.30 hours an order in the following terms was received from Naval Operations Branch: "Do not attack. It is possible that the aircraft have not identified correctly". A similar entry, made at the time also, is to be found in the war-diary of Naval Operations Branch, as an instruction communicated to the Division.

When the entry was produced to the Division Commander, he claimed that no such message ever reached him, the deputy commander of the boat, through whom contact between the Division Commander and Naval Operations Branch was maintained, testified, that he received the message and passed it on to the Division Commander.

Although consideration of the credibility of witnesses should not be part of my functions, it appears to me that in the normal course of events as described, the message was passed on in the normal course of reporting to the bridge of the Division Commander. It is possible that the message escaped the awareness of the Division Commander in the heat of battle.

In any event, be the matter as it may, there is insufficient evidence before me, justifying the committal for trial of any accused person on these grounds, and accordingly I so decide.

20. The third count concerns, as has been said, the insufficient investigation of the veracity of the report on the shelling of El-Arish by the Naval Liaison Officer at the Air Force, who was ordered to do so by the Head of the Naval Department.

It is not disputed that the Liaison Officer clarified with Air Force H.Q. the source of the report concerning the shelling, and was told that the source of the information was the Air-Ground-Support Officer. Immediately thereafter he was informed by G.H.Q., that reports of the shelling were being

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received from Southern Command. The Chief Military Prosecutor argued that as soon as the Head of the Naval Department had cast doubts upon the correctness of the report, it was the duty of the Naval Liaison Officer at Air Force H.Q. to establish its correctness by contacting the original source of the report.

This argument does not recommend itself to me at all. We are concerned with reports in time of war coming through the usual right-channel, and it appears to me that a commander may assume that such such report received by him is correct, and treat it with utmost seriousness as long as the information is within the limits of reasonableness. Since otherwise, if one wishes to say that he is duty-bound to inquire into the correctness at the original source, one cannot rely upon reports at all, and it would be impossible in such circumstances to conduct any military operations whatsoever. The information itself was credible, and if the Head of the Naval Department cast doubt upon it, that was only because of previous reports which had been found incorrect, but not by reason of the improbability of the information.

As soon as the Naval Liaison Officer at Air Force H.Q. had established the source of the report reaching the Air Force, and had immediately confirmed its contents from another source, i.e. Southern Command through G.H.Q., the correctness of the information was, in my opinion ascertained sufficiently, and in a reasonable manner.

21. Three counts remain to be dealt with — the fourth, the fifth and the seventh, of the plaint — which, so it seems to me, form one whole.

The Chief Military Prosecutor argued that it was negligence to give the order to attack a warship without previously establishing, beyond doubt, its national identity and without taking into account the presence of the American ship "Liberty" in the hours of the morning in the vicinity of the coast of Israel.

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In summing-up the seventh count of the plaint, the Chief Military Prosecutor saw negligence in the giving of the order to the aircraft and torpedo boats to attack the ship upon an unfounded presumption that it was an Egyptian warship, and this as a consequence of not having taken reasonable drops to ascertain properly its identity. As parties to the negligence, the Chief Military Prosecutor joined the Head of the Naval Department, the Chief of Naval Operations and the Acting Chief of Naval Operations (who fulfilled his functions during a [illegible] period on that day), the Torpedo Boat Division Commander, and finally, although indirectly, the Naval Liaison Officer at Air Force [illegible].

22. It appears to me that the activity of our forces in the said incident, may be divided into three stages:

(a) the first stage, in which the order was given to Air Force planes to attack the target, and their attack;

(b) an intermediate stage, after the report of the aircraft about the marking of the attacked ship with the symbols "CTR - 5";

(c) [illegible] identification of the target as the ship "El-Kasir" and the attack of it with torpedoes.

23. In my opinion, on the evidence I have heard, there are five factors, as a result of which the assumption arose, that the target was an enemy ship and should be attacked:

(a) the report on the shelling of the El-Arish coast for hours on end;

(b) the speed of the target, assessed by the torpedo boats as 28 to 30 knots;

(c) the course of the target towards Port Said;

(d) the report from the aircraft that the target was a

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[illegible] marks;

(e) the location of the ship — close to shore in a battle zone.

There is no doubt that the dominant factors were the speed and the course of the target. Most remarkably, it were two torpedo boats of the Division, which determined the speed, although it was proved to be beyond a shadow of doubt, that no ship of the class of the "Liberty" is capable of developing a speed above 15 knots, this being the theoretical maximum speed limit.

24. The Chief Military prosecutor is summing up his argument with respect to this stage of the incident, reiterated with emphasis that the root of the negligence of all parties lay in their disregard of the presence of the ship "Liberty" in the vicinity, and not connecting the target discovered by the torpedo boats with this ship.

It seems to me that theses concerned were entitled to assume, that they had before them a correct report as to the speed of the target, within the usual limits of reasonable error of 10% to 15%, relying upon the existing means of determining the speed of the target.

The initial speed of the target, determined by the torpedo boats at 30 knots, and received with doubts, was verified within minutes and finally confirmed as a speed of 23 knots, as is customary at sea.

It was therefore the speed of the target, which led to the final and definite conclusion, that this was a military vessel, and thus there was no reason for surmising, in view of this datum that the target could possibly be the ship "Liberty". If we add to this the others factors mentioned above, their cumulative effect was to negate any presumption whatsoever as to a

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connection between the American supply ship, reported on that morning in another location, and the target discovered by the torpedo boats.

The Acting Chief of Naval Operations testified, that upon assuming his duties, he was not informed of the reports received at 03.40 hours at Navy H.Q. about the presence of a ship at a distance of 20 miles north of El-Arish, while the report of 10.35 hours related to the presence of the "Liberty" 70 miles west of Tel-Aviv in the early hours of the morning. I shall go further and say, that after hearing all the witnesses, it appears to me that even on the assumption, that the presence of the "Liberty" as such, 20 miles north of El-Arish, was known to the concerned, that would not have altered the conclusion as to the nature of the target discovered by the torpedo boats, that it was an enemy warship, according to all the said data.

Since I am of the opinion that the assumption as to an enemy ship was reasonable, I have come to the conclusion, that the order given to the aircraft to attack was in the said circumstances, justified.

23. At the second stage of the activity of our forces, upon the receipt of the report of the pilot with regard to the marking discovered on the hull of the attached ship, the order was given to cease the attack, and at a later stage the Division was ordered to draw near to the target and make a visual identification. During this stage the suspicion of the Acting Chief of Naval Operations was indeed aroused, that possibly the target attacked was not an enemy target, but at that moment it was the Head of the Naval Department who was directing the activity, at whose side was the Chief of Naval Operations, who had meanwhile returned to the Command Bridge. In the course of deliberations and attempts at identification at Navy H.Q., the O.C. Navy arrived at the Command Bridge, and he took over the command from the Head of the Naval Department.

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The visual identification by the Division Commander [illegible] awaited at Navy H.Q., following, apparently, misgivings and the averseness of a possible camouflage of markings by an Egyptian ship. This identification was not delayed, and the Division Commander reported the certain identification of the vessel as an Egyptian transport ship named "El Quseir". It is noteworthy that the identification of the target as the "El-Quseir" was made both by the Division Commander and the Commander of another torpedo boat, and on examining photographs of the two ships I am satisfied that a likeness exists between them, and that an error of identification is possible especially having regard to the fact, that identification was made while the ship was clouded in smoke.

The Chief Military Prosecutor attacked this identification as unreasonable in view of the fact that it was clear to all those involved in the incident, that it was inconceivable for this auxiliary ship to shell the El-Arish coast, or for her ever to move at a speed of 30 or 28 knots. He also argued that its presence at the scene of the incident was without logic. The answer to this submission, as explained to me, was that those concerned were entitled, on the assumption that the coast was indeed shelled, to surmise that she formed, perhaps, part of the vessels engaged in the shelling of the shores which succeeded to get away from the area, which she lagged behind them. Or, as one of the witnesses contended, she had come to assist in the evacuation of Egyptian soldiers, straggling in the areas occupied by our forces.

26. There is no doubt to the fact, that the refusal of the "Liberty" to identify herself to the torpedo boats, largely contributed to the error of identification. The Division Commander testified that he signalled the "Liberty" after the aircraft attack and requested its identification, and was answered "identify yourself first". If the conduct of the captain of the "Liberty" can still be explained by the custom existing, as I have heard in maritime tradition, that a vessel belonging to a power does not identify itself first to a smaller vessel, then such conduct cannot be comprehended

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when the request for identification failed to elicit such. Such in event should have, in my opinion, made the captain realize, that he had been attacked because he was regarded as an enemy target.

In addition I must add that the Division Commander gave evidence that the experience of the Navy in the Sinai War, that when the destroyer "Ibrahim El-Awal" was requested to identify itself by our vessels, she gave the same reply "identify yourself first". Likewise, the Division Commander and one of the torpedo boat commanders testified, that the torpedo was reported to have opened fire upon one of the torpedo boats. Under these circumstances it seems, that the identification, i.e. the third stage of the activity of our forces, as the "El-Kagir", was well within reason.

To sum up these last counts, my conclusion is that in all the circumstances of the case, the conduct of anyone of the naval officers concerned in this incident cannot be considered unreasonable, to an extent which justifies his committal for trial.

For all my regret that our forces were involved in an incident with a vessel of a friendly state, and its sad outcome, I ought to put the behavior of each of the officers, who had any connection with the incident, to the test of the conduct of reasonable officers during war operations, when the naval arm of the Israel Defence Forces was confronted with maritime forces superior in numbers, and when all involved were conscious of the task before them — to protect the safety of Israel, to identify every enemy threatening from the sea, to attack it speedily and destroy it. The criterion for reasonable conduct under these conditions may possible differ from that in times of relative quiet. Indeed, whoever peruses the ample evidence presented to me, may conceivably draw some lessons regarding the relations between the two arms of the Israel Defence Forces, which were involved in the incident, and the operational procedures in times of war, particularly between the different branches of the Army — but all this is certainly not within the

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steps of my inquiry. Yet I have not discovered any deviation from the standard of reasonable conduct which would justify the committal of anyone for trial.

In view of what has been said above, I hold, that there is no sufficient amount of Prima facie facie evidence, justifying committing anyone for trial.

Given the 13th day of Tamuz, 5727 (21.7.67) and read in the presence of the Chief Military Prosecutor — Rav-Sarna Hadar, the Chief Military Defence Counsel — Sgan-Aluf Tein, and the Acting Chief of Naval Operations.

Y. YESHSHALMI, Sgan-Aluf

Examining Judge

Ltc.
(per Israeli Embassy)

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THE ATTACK ON THE "LIBERTY" INCIDENT

8 JUNE 1967

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ISRAEL DEFENCE FORCES
HISTORY DEPARTMENT
RESEARCH AND INSTRUCTION BRANCH
JUNE 1982

Israel Defence Forces
History Department

Subject: The Attack on the "Liberty" Incident.

1. The tragic event of the attack on the American intelligence ship "Liberty (8 June 1967) became, over the years, an instrument in the hands of journalists and authors, with which to contend that Israel attacked the ship maliciously.

2. Recently, with the publication of the book, Assault on the Liberty, the American Congress appointed a committee, headed by Adlai Stevenson, for the purpose of investigating the affair and publishing the results of the investigation.

3. Immediately upon learning of the appointment of the committee, it was decided that the History Department would research the affair and submit the official version of the State of Israel.

4. This research is based upon all the primary and secondary evidence available.

5. This article is the official version, written by Lt. Col. Matti Greenberg - Head of the Combat Research Branch.

Uri Algon - Colonel
Head of history Department

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INTRODUCTION

On 8 June 1967, at the height of the "Six Day War," the American electronic intelligence ship "Liberty" approached the Sinai coast. In the afternoon hours of the same day, the ship was attacked by air and naval forces of the Israel Defense Forces (IDF). Thirty-four crew members were killed in the attack while 164 were wounded, and the ship suffered damage.

The tragic attack on the "Liberty" was an innocent mistake caused by incorrect target identification and faulty data analysis due to the ambiguities and pressures of the situation in which Israel was involved. It is important to note that the actions of the "Liberty" itself were also a contributing factor to the mistaken attack.

Immediately the Israelis appreciated their mistake, they halted their attack and took steps to provide assistance to the damaged ship [their offers were rejected]. Israel expressed her regrets over the incident and explained that the attack was unintentional. The IDF undertook the task of determining the facts and to this end a Court of Inquiry was formed and an examining-judge was appointed. The findings of the investigation brought to light the circumstances of the case and revealed a series of mistakes which led to the attack. However, the investigation did not uncover a single finding which could point to either malicious intent or criminal negligence. The Israeli Government made available the findings of the investigation to the American authorities and agreed, out of humanitarian considerations, to make immediate compensation payments to wounded crew members and the families of those who were killed.

Despite Israeli declarations and explanations, accepted by the Johnson administration, the issue occasionally makes newspaper headlines and excites rumours. All those who seek to revive the episode share one thing in common, they all claim that Israel premeditatedly and maliciously attacked the "Liberty" with the intent of sinking her. In order to substantiate this claim a list of explanations is presented, some of which may be classified as "science fiction", some of which result from an erroneous presentation and interpretation of the facts or unfounded assumptions.

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The object of this paper is to present an authoritative version of the circumstances and chain of events which led to the "Liberty" incident and to respond to some of the claims made regarding Israel's intentions.

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CHAPTER ONE

THE "LIBERTY" AND HER MOVEMENTS UP TO ISRAEL'S COAST[1]

"Liberty" was built at the Portland, Oregon Shipyards towards the end of the Second World War. The ship was christened "Simmons Victory". She was launched in May 1945, and served as a cargo ship on the Pacific Ocean lane. Her mission functions did not change after the war, and the ship was used for transporting equipment and supplies during the Korean War. In 1950 the vessel was decommissioned and anchored at the national reserve fleet anchorage. In February, 1963, the U.S. Navy purchased the vessel and, in the course of 22 months of repair work at the Portland shipyards, had the craft refitted as an electronic-intelligence ship, and rechristened as the USS "Liberty". The ship was classified as Auxiliary General Technical Research-5 (AGTR-5) -- i.e. an auxiliary ship (noncombat), designated for general technical research. "Liberty" was the fifth U.S. Navy vessel so classified.

In December 1964, "Liberty" was commissioned and after a series of sea trials was assigned to missions along the African coast, in the area between Cape-Town and Dakar. On 25 April 1966, Commander William McGonagle was given command of the "Liberty". He was the ship's commander at the time of the attack.

On 2 May 1967, the "Liberty" sailed from her home port in Norfolk to her patrol area off the African coast, and towards the end of the month entered the port of Abidjan, on the Ivory Coast, for resupply purposes. On her second night at port, a telegram arrived ordering the ship to put to sea immediately and sail "at best possible speed" to Rota, Spain[2].

There the "Liberty" was to take on supplies and equipment and continue to a new operations area off Port Said. Detailed orders were to follow later. Within a few hours, the "Liberty" sailed for Rota and arrived on 1 June 1967. An additional order, which arrived while still at sea, instructed the "Liberty" to proceed from Rota to the eastern shore of the Mediterranean and to patrol 13 miles off the Gaza Strip coastline.

Upon arrival in Spain, supplies and equipment were loaded on the ship. Three enlisted Marines and three civilian technicians joined the crew for her new mission. However, the ship was delayed due to an hydraulic leak in the antenna system. The "Liberty" set out on its mission to the Mediterranean on 2 June 1967. In this area the ship came under command of the Sixth Fleet.

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Intelligence-Ship "Liberty" GTR-5

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We have no clear information as to the exact mission of the "Liberty" along the shores of the Middle East and publications which appeared on the subject could not fully answer this question. However, it is significant that the "Liberty" was dispatched immediately after the U.N. force was withdrawn and Egypt's Gamal Abdul Nasser blockaded the Straits of Tiran. Thus, it appears the U.S. wanted an "electronic ear" in the area, which could monitor unfolding developments in the crisis, gather information and provide first-hand reports. The "Liberty" was equipped with the necessary means for gathering, processing and analyzing the required intelligence data.

While the "Liberty" was speeding its way to its patrol area, the Six Day War erupted. This development created a certain tension aboard ship, and the crew were cognizant of the danger involved in an undefended vessel's approaching a combat zone. The Office of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) was also aware of the "Liberty's" situation; on the night of 7-8 June, the Office of the JCS issued an order limiting the ship's approach to 20 miles from the coast and afterwards instructed the vessel to distance itself 100 miles from the coastline. But these instructions did not reach the "Liberty" and she continued on her original mission.
The "Liberty's" commander was also concerned about the order to operate within visual range of the coast and apparently considered distancing the ship from the dangers inherent in such a station.

On the evening of 7 June (a few hours before the ship reached the area), the commander of the "Liberty" checked with the officer responsible, as to how the mission would be affected if the "Liberty" were to stay farther out at sea. The officer responded that his personnel intended to operate on UHF frequencies which necessitated line-of-sight with the coast; a positioning below the horizon would reduce mission efficency by 80%.[3]

In the light of this professional opinion, the ship's captain determined to approach the coast, notwithstanding the danger, in order to execute his mission more efficiently.

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CHAPTER TWO

ATTACK ON THE "LIBERTY"

THEATRE OF BATTLE AT THE TIME OF THE "LIBERTY'S" APPEARANCE.

The "Liberty" made its appearance at the theatre of operations on 8 June at the height of the war. Although it was clear that the scales were shifting in favor of Israel's rapidly advancing forces, on the Egyptian and Jordanian fronts, the end of the war was still not in sight and the Arab states had not yet agreed to a cease-fire.

The Syrians continued to shell civilian settlements all along Israel's northern front. Israeli artillery returned the fire, and artillery duels continued the entire day. Israel Air Force planes also attacked Syrian fortifications and artillery positions.

On the Jordanian front, Israel had succeeded in gaining complete control of the Jordan Valley up to the Jordan River, and Jordan declared its acceptance of a cease-fire at 1025 hours.

The naval theatre was also active. Three Egyptian submarines were cruising in the theatre of operations but their exact position was as yet undetermined. [4] At approximately 0700 hours, submarine "tracks" west of Atlit were discovered and the enemy submarine was attacked by vessels of the Navy.[5] After three hours, a report was received about the appearance of a submarine periscope off Rosh Hanikra (the border checkpost between Israel and the Lebanon, on the coast). Thus the "Liberty" had entered an arena in which hostilities were being conducted between two belligerent parties. Moreover, Egypt herself on 23 May 1967 declared as prohibited to maritime traffic, the area off the coast, up to a distance of 14 miles from the shore.[6]

DETECTION AND IDENTIFICATION OF THE "LIBERTY".

On 8 June, at 0410 hours, an IAF "Nord" aircraft took off with a naval officer aboard serving as an aerial observer. This air reconnaissance patrol was part of the routine coastal security measures. The patrol set out at first light, parallel to Israel's shores and over the open sea. (An additional patrol of the same type proceeded from 1530 hours until nightfall). The patrol's mission was to detect ship movements before vessels could enter coastal radar detection

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range. The airborne observer would make a brief report of each detection at the moment visual contact was made; additional information would be transmitted in the debriefing, after the plane's landing. At approximately 0545, an unclear message was received from the plane at Central Coastal Command (CLC-Combat Information Center-Central Coast). After clarification with the Navy representative at Air Command, the observation plane was reported to have sighted a ship, apparently a destroyer, sailing 70 miles west of Gaza. The ship was designated as "Skunk-C" on the Control Table, and marked red - i.e. an unidentified target.

Later, at 0603 hours, an additional report arrived from the plane which described the vessel as a supply ship of the US Navy. The report was not unusual. Aerial observers had often reported on the presence of this type of craft, but such vessels would always change direction and disappear far from the coast.[7] Although the ship had been identified by the aerial observer, the target remained colored in red since the team at Central Coastal Command (hereafter referred to as CCC) were not positively sure of the ship's identity.[8]

At approximately 0900 hours, following the discovery of the enemy submarine off Atlit, GOC Israel Navy arrived at the (CCC) bridge. During a break in the activity surrounding the submarine, GOC Navy inquired about "Skunk-C", and after receiving an explanation concerning the vessel, instructed that the ship be marked green - i.e. a neutral craft.

At about the same time, a report arrived at Regional Control 501; the report stated that an Air pilot, returning from a mission in Sinai, had spotted a ship 20 miles north of El-Arish and that when he had tried to identify the vessel it had opened fire upon him.[9] Reacting to this report, Head of Naval Operations Section/3 (a section in the Naval Operations Department) instructed Israel Navy destroyers "Jaffa" and "Eilat" (who were patrolling along the coast) to turn south and verify the identity of the vessel. However, the destroyers were ordered to return to their patrol sectors at 0940 hours, after an additional report arrived from Regional Control 501, that in the light of the pilot's debriefing, there was no certainty that he had indeed been fired upon by the ship.[10] The report likewise stated that, "the ship is colored grey-blue, very wide and the bridge is in the middle."

Meanwhile, the "Nord" plane which had been patrolling the sea had landed and the observer was debriefed by Lt. Commander Pinchasi, a navy representative at Air Command. The observer reported spotting the marking GTR-5,

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on the ship's side. Lt. Commander Pinchasi checked the marking in a "Janes" manual and learned that the reference was to the intelligence-ship named "Liberty". He reported the information to Naval Operations Section/3 and since the reference was to an intelligence ship he likewise reported to Naval Operations Section/4 (Intelligence)[11].

Commander Lunz had relieved the Head of Naval Operations section/3 (who retired to rest) and was the officer who received the report. However, he did not see anything new in the debriefing but rather a complementary report to the one received at 0500 hours. Since he did not have information as to the present location of the "Liberty" he gave the order (at 1100 hours) to erase the vessel from the CCC control table. This order was given in accordance with the accepted updating procedure for maintaining an up-to-the minute picture at the CCC control table.[12]

By this action, the "Liberty" was, for all practical purposes, removed from the agenda. The detection of the "Liberty" at that location (far from the theatre of battle) was not unusual and did not require special attention or tracking. Certainly no danger was discerned that might have necessitated a response and it was reasonable to assume that the ship would turn round and sail away. In addition, it was common practice to erase targets which had disappeared from radar.[13] These were almost certainly the considerations which guided Commander Lunz when he ordered the erasure of "Liberty" from the CCC control-table.[14]

A short time after the erasure of "Liberty" from the CCC control table, a series of events transpired which led to the detection of the ship a second time now under circumstances which led to a tragic mistake.

REPORT ON THE SHELLING OF EL-ARISH AND DISPATCHING OF THE TORPEDO BOATS.

At 1124 hours, the naval representative at Air Command reported to Naval Operation Section/3, on the shelling of El-Arish from the sea. Commander Lunz passed on the report to Chief of Naval Operations, Captain (Navy) Rahav, and he in turn instructed Lt. Commander Pinchasi, in no uncertain terms, to check the source of the report.[15]

The inquiry into the source of the report was ordered because of the many reports which had been received concerning shelling from the sea and which were later proven to be false. The feeling was that this report was probably no different. Lt. Commander Pinchasi was told by Air Operations Section/3

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Naval Torpedo Boat.



Specifications:

Size:	Length - 28.4 meters.	Width - 7 meters.
Arms:	One 40 mm Cannon.	
	Four 20 mm Cannons	
	Two Torpedo tubes.	
Maximum Speed:	42 knots	
Crew:	15 men.	

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that the source of the report was an Air-Ground Support Officer in El-Arish; the Navy representative at the Supreme Command,[16] Lt. Commander Tal, also informed Lt. Commander Pinchasi that a similar report had been received enquiry to Naval Operations/3[17].

Meanwhile the shelling of the coastline also aroused interest at Supreme Command. The Head of Operations Section, Lt. Colonel Haim Nadel, (during a meeting with the COS at 1127 hours), received a report from G Branch-Southern Command, stating that a ship had been shelling El-Arish but the shells had not reached the coast. The Head of Operations Section immediately ordered that the report be verified, and more important instituted a check to see if there were no Israel Navy vessels off the coast of El-Arish.[18] Meanwhile, another report arrived from Southern Command (at 1148 hours), which stated that two ships were approaching the EL-Arish coast.[19]

These reports were passed to Fleet Operations Control Center - to commander Lunz and Captain (Navy) Rahav. The accumulation of reports from various sources and the involvement of Supreme Command in the matter, indicated that these reports were not baseless and should be taken seriously.[20] Therefore, the chief of Naval Operations ordered[21] (at 1205 hours) torpedo boat Division 914 to set out for El-Arish. At this point, the Division commander was instructed to patrol only in the direction of El-Arish but he was not yet informed of the shelling of El-Arish nor was he told what to look for in the area to which he was dispatched.[22]

Division 914 ("Pandor" on the radio code), under the command of Commander Moshe Oren, consisted at that time of three torpedo boats - T203, T204 and T206; the flagship was T204, with the Division commander aboard. The Division had left Ashdod Port at 1120 hours, with the task of patrolling between Ashdod and Ashkelon. At 1215 hours, the Division received an order from Naval Operations/3 to change course and to assume a position 20 miles north of El-Arish and to patrol that region.[23]

Meanwhile, the enquiry at Supreme Command into the shelling of El-Arish continued and the Head of Operations Section was informed that no Israel Navy vessels were in the area but that three torpedo boats were on their way. The Head of Operations Section concluded that when the torpedo boats made contact with the vessel responsible for shelling the coast, they should request close air support from the IAF.[24]

Division 914 continued on her way to EL-Arish and after an hour's sailing (at 1317 hours) she was informed (by Naval Operations/3) of the shelling from the sea, of EL-Arish. The Division commander was told to listen to the air-sea-liaison radio channel (86 and 186) and that IAF planes would be dispatched to the area after the target had been detected by the Division.[25]

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At 1341 hours, the Division detected the target on its radar - 20 miles northwest of El-Arish and 14 miles off the coast of Bardawil. The officer at the CIC on the flagship, Ensign Yifrach Aharon, reported that the target had been detected at a range of 22 miles, that her speed had been tracked for a few minutes, after which he had determined that the target was moving westward at a speed of 30 knots.[26] These data were forwarded to the Fleet Operations Control Center.

The speed of the target detected by the Israel Naval Division was significant in that it indicated, beyond doubt, that the target was a combat vessel - since only combat ships can develop such high speeds. Standing Israeli Navy operation procedures state explicitly: "When there are reports of an enemy in the theatre, and radar detects one or more ships sailing at a speed above 20 knots, they shall be considered hostile and no further identification shall be carried out."[27] The given data created the impression at Naval Operations, of an enemy ship, turning to escape in the direction of Port Said. The Chief of Naval Operations asked the Division to double-check their calculations. A second check confirmed the direction of the target, but her speed was corrected to 28 knots. Since the Israel Navy Division was cruising at the same speed as the target, and therefore could not intercept it the Division Commander requested that IAF planes be dispatched.[28]

In retrospect, it is clear that the data dealing with target speed were incorrect since the "Liberty" was not capable of cruising at such high speeds. However, it is astounding that the same target speed was measured independently by two torpedo Boats: T204 (with the Division commander aboard) and T203 which estimated target speed at 25 - 28 knots.

The CIC officer on torpedo boat T204 later presented several possible explanations for the mistaken estimate of the target's cruising speed. Either the radar screen "jumped", or the radar operator read the information incorrectly, or the statistics were incorrectly recorded on the CIC plot - or a combination of all the above. (The detection of the target at a range of 22 miles was also unusual, since normal detection range was considered to be 12 - 15 miles).[29]

The COC Navy at the time, Rear-Admiral Shlomoh Arel noted that torpedo boats are prone to error in determining the speed of a ship moving in front of them, especially if the measurements are carried out with short, intermittent pauses.[30]

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In view of the repeated reports on the shelling of EL-Arish from the sea, the detection of target by Division 914 and its report on the direction and speed of the target, a clear-cut picture emerged at Naval Headquarters of an enemy ship trying to escape and it was clear that all means available would have to be used in order to overtake and attack the vessel. Under the conditions at that time, the attack could be carried out only by IAF planes and the Chief of Naval Operations requested that planes be dispatched to the target.

At this point it is important to note that in accordance with the coordination procedures between the naval and air arms of the IDF, the naval theatre is under the sole jurisdiction of the naval arm and the IAF operates in this arena according to Navy instructions, in regards to identifying and attacking targets.

DISPATCH OF THE PLANES

At 1348 hours, the Chief of Naval Operations asked that the planes be dispatched. Lt. Colonel Kislev, the senior control officer at IAF Command, instructed the control unit to divert a pair of "Mirage" aircraft ("Kursa" formation), which were returning from a patrol along the Suez Canal. Although another aircraft formation ("Menorah") consisting of 4 Mirage" aircraft, was closer to the region, Lt. Colonel Kislev ordered that those planes should not be diverted from their mission (an attack on surface-to-air missiles along the Suez Canal) which was considered to be more important.[31]

As stated above IAF operations at sea were conditional on the Navy's authorization, and Air Command therefore insisted on receiving a definite clearance if to attack the ship or not.[32] Lt. Commander Pinchasi passed on the question to Naval Operations Section/3, and the Chief of Naval Operations granted permission to attack.[33] His intention was to have the planes attack the target ship and delay her until the torpedo boat division could arrive and enter combat.[34]

Lt. Commander Pinchasi forwarded the authorization to identify the ship as a combat vessel and then attack. The identification of the vessel was not intended to check the ship's nationality, but rather to emphasize the aim of attacking only a warship, and thus to avoid unnecessarily hitting Israel Navy torpedo boats.[35] To this end, he emphasized that contact should be established between the aircraft and torpedo boats.

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Lt. Colonel Kislev passed the attack authorization and instruction to establish contact with the torpedo boats in the vicinity, to Regional Control 501 (on band 186).[36] The control unit passed on the instructions to the IAF planes.

The two "Mirage" aircraft reached the ship at approximately 1400 hours. The formation leader, Captain Spector, descended to a height of 3000 feet and circled the vessel twice; his number two executed one identification run. These runs revealed to the pilots that the ship was not an Israeli vessel since she did not have the identifying markings (a white cross on a red background). The ship was colored battleship grey, had a foremast, one smokestack and two guns on her bow. No flag or other identifying sign was discerned. The formation leader reported this to the torpedo boats and Control and then the aircraft received permission to attack.

At 1400 hours the "Mirage" planes attacked the "Liberty" and executed four strafing runs, firing only with their guns since they had no other ordnance available. Good hits were scored by the strafing runs. Damage could be discerned on the body of the ship and fire broke out on her portside.[37] According to the commander of the "Liberty" the American flag, which was flying on the mast during the attack, was also knocked down.[38]

While the "Mirage" attack was proceeding, the Commander of Regional Control 501 experienced momentary doubts as to the identity of the vessel. It appeared that with the start of the attack, when the commander of Regional Control 501 informed the Navy representative at Regional Control of the ongoing operation the latter was not yet aware of the assault and immediately called Fleet Operations Control Center. Any doubt was immediately removed when the Navy representative at Regional Control announced that it was "okay".[39] The entire clarification lasted a short time and in effect the attack was not interrupted at all. Meanwhile, Lt. Colonel Kisslev directed an additional aircraft formation to the ship. This was a pair of Super-Mystere aircraft ("Royal" formation) on its way to the Mitla Pass. Control informed Lt. Kisslev that this formation was armed with napalm, not effective for attacking ships. But in spite of this fact he instructed the formation to join the attack with "whatever they have".[40]

The "Royal" formation passed over the ship at a height of 15,000 feet, as the previous formation was executing its last strafing run. The formation executed two attack runs with napalm, and one napalm bomb struck the ship.

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The strike on the "Liberty", as photographed by the gun-camera of the Mirage.



Key:

1 - Forward antenna.
2 - Mast (it is impossible to detect the flag).
3 - Smokestack.
4 - "Trisle" antenna.
5 - The Bridge.



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The lack of response from the ship raised suspicions in the mind of the formation leader and he decided to descend for an identification run. In this first run he discerned letters on the ship's bow but did not succeed in reading them clearly although the marking looked like P-30. In order to be sure the pilot descended for a second, slower identification run at a height of about 30 meters and then he was able to discern the letters CTR-5 ("Charley", "Tango", "Romeo") and reported this to control. Although he searched for a flag or other identification marking, he detected nothing. [41]

When the pilot's report (on the latter identification) arrived, Lt. Colonel Kissiev immediately instructed the aircraft to "disengage" and requested a report on the damage caused to the ship. The pilot reported "many hits on the upper section" and that the ship was smoking [illegible] personnel apparently jumping overboard. Lt. Kissiev dispatched helicopters to the ship in order to search for and retrieve survivors. [42]

The aircraft left the area at 1414 hours. In the final analysis, "Liberty" was attacked by four IAF aircraft which flew over the vessel for approximately 20 minutes, executed four strafing runs, two napalm attack runs and a number of identification runs. However, this short attack caused damage to the ship, hit its machine-gun positions and the bridge, hit two fuel tanks which resulted in the outbreak of a large fire on board, and also inflicted casualties among the crew.

THE TORPEDO BOAT APPROACH

As the IAF planes broke off the attack the Israel Navy torpedo boats approached the ship. The first aircraft formation contacted the Division; T206 maintained radio communication and forwarded reports to the Division Commander (who did not maintain contact with the planes). Thus, he was informed that the target was a destroyer of the "Z" or "HUNT" class. The smoke rising from the target, following the air attack, marked the spot and the torpedo boats closed in rapidly. [43] At 1411 hours, the Division Commander was told that the aircraft were finishing their final run and departing - and that now he was to attack. And indeed, after the planes departed, the Division Commander ordered the torpedo boats (at 1418 hours) to launch a torpedo attack.

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However, this attack was delayed. Air Command informed Fleet Operations Control Center, of the discovery of the letters on the ship's side, and Naval Operations/3 instructed the Division (at 1420 hours) not to attack since there was possibly a mistake in the identification of the vessel.[44] The Chief of Naval Operations also ordered the attack delayed but for another reason. He wanted the Division to delay its attack until it was within effective firing range, and not to open fire from too far away. The letters on the ship's side appeared to him as an Egyptian deception tactic, an enemy effort to operate in daytime in spite of Israel's air superiority in the region. He did not believe that another ship could possibly be in the area.[45]

The Commander of Division 914, who was on the bridge, later testified that he did not receive the order from Naval Operations/3. However, the Division approached the target to within visual range and immediately realized that the ship was not a destroyer but rather a merchant or supply ship. An attempt was made to identify the vessel, although this was difficult due to the billowing clouds of smoke which enveloped the vessel; only her bow, part of her bridge and the tip of her mast could be discerned. As a result, the Division Commander cancelled the attack order.[47] Even though the torpedo attack was delayed for a variety of different reasons, the end result was the same - the torpedo Division held its fire and approached the target in order to more clearly identify the vessel.

At 1427 hours the Division commander signaled the target ship requesting identification - "What ship?". The answer received was "AA" - i.e. "Identify yourself first". This appeared to be an evasive answer, which did not satisfy the identification request. This response was identical to the answer given by the "Ibrahim-el-Awal" (an Egyptian destroyer) during the Sinai Campaign, when she was asked to identify herself by the Israel Navy destroyers which had closed in on her. This fact was etched in the memory of the Division commander.[48] In addition, the latter discerned flashes of gunshot fire emanating from the ship, and the commander of T203 saw the fire and reported hits in the vicinity of T-206.[49] Since he still did not possess any clear confirmation of the ship's identity, he requested that the identification guide to Arab fleets be brought to him. After an examination of the pamphlet, he identified the target as an Egyptian supply ship, the "EL-Nuseir". At the same time, the commander of T203 also tried to identify the vessel and without any connection to the Division commander's conclusions, likewise identified the vessel as the "EL-Quseir", due to the ship's silhouette and what appeared to be a gun mounted on her bow.[50]

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THE TORPEDO ATTACK

This combination of factors - an evasive answer to the identification request the identification of the ship by two torpedo boats as the Egyptian "El-Quseir" and the apparent gunshot fire emanating from the ship, indicated clearly at that time that this was an enemy craft. The Division commander reported his identification of the vessel to Naval Operations/3 and then ordered (at 1437 hours) a torpedo attack.

The torpedo boats moved in on the target, with guns firing and after a few minutes (at 1443 hours) opened with torpedo fire, according to the following sequence.[51]

A) T206 attacked first and fired one torpedo from a range of 1,000 yards and a second torpedo from a range of 550 yards; both were seen moving on course to the target but no hits were discerned.

B) T203 attacked a minute later and fired two torpedoes from a range of 2,000 yards. The right torpedo went off course, but the second torpedo hit the target and exploded on the ship's starboard underneath the waterline.

C) Finally, T204 attacked and fired only one torpedo which was not seen as travelling on target course at all.

The Division commander gave the order to prepare for an additional attack from the target's other side and the torpedo boats moved to the ship's portside, off the ship's bow and stern. While proceeding to the target's other side, the torpedo boats entered closer range and discovered the letters GTR on the ship's bow. The Division commander ordered the immediate cessation of all fire. The time was 1447 hours.[52]

Even at this stage, there was still no flag discernable on the ship, and only later, at closer range was the Division commander able to see a small flag and a large flag which bore the ship's name.[53]

The Division commander immediately reported these facts to Naval Operations/3 and received instructions to search for survivors and identify the ship's nationality. In response, the Division commander (at 1451 hours) stated that the ship might possibly be Russian; this, due to the letters marked on the ship's side and the letters marked on the flag. The Division commander also reported that the ship was giving off smoke and pitching over on to its starboard side.[54]

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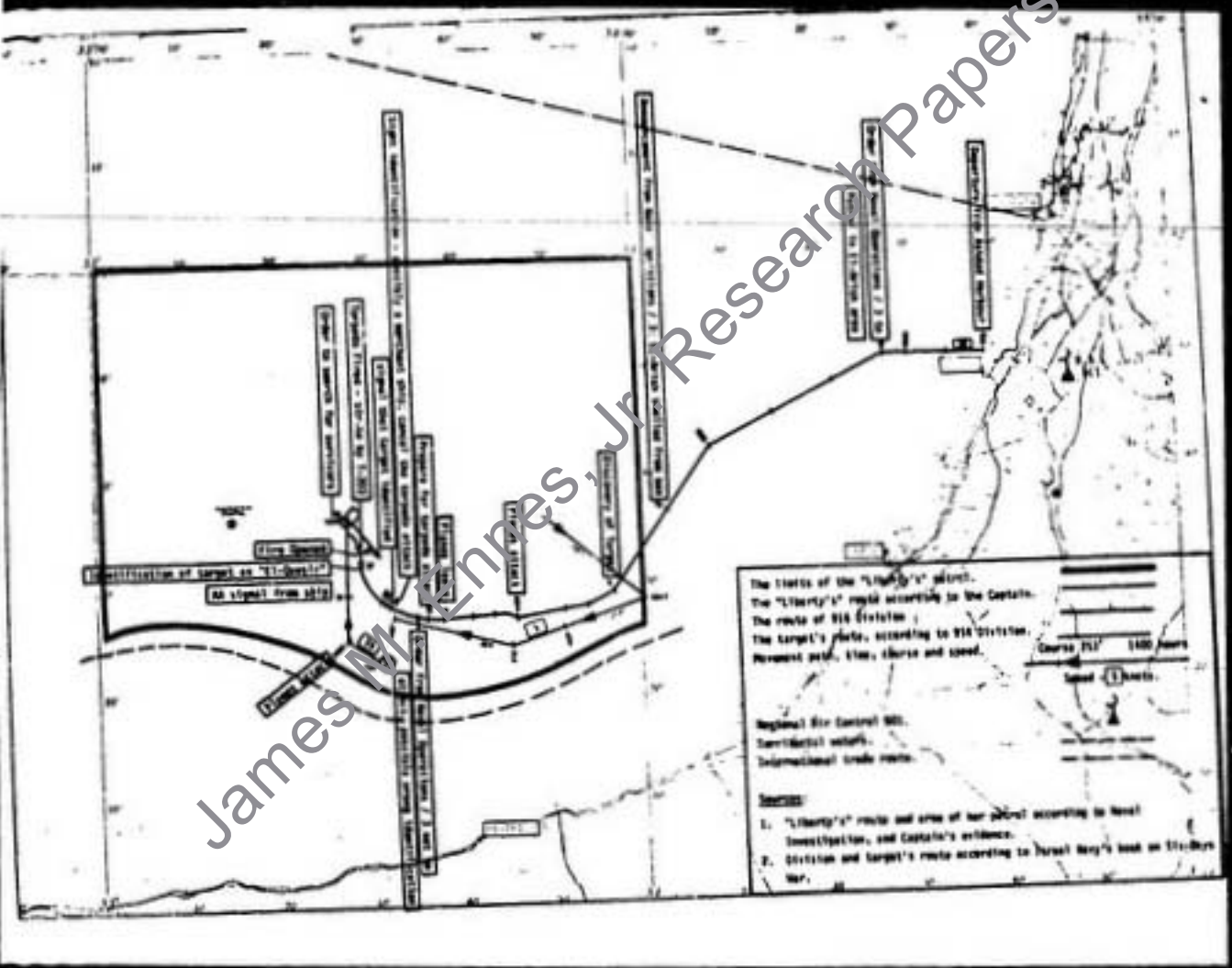

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This report raised serious concern at General Staff Headquarters. The COS informed the Prime Minister and the Minister of Defence, and even convened a meeting in order to examine the possibility that the Russians would exploit the incident in order to intervene in force on the side of the Arabs.[55]

Fleet Operations Control Center first ordered the Division to return to El-Arish but then changed the order and instructed the torpedo boats to make a close-up identification of the vessel. At 1520 hours, the Division commander reported that the ship was American. He noted that the ship was listing on its starboard side and that the crew had brought the fire under control and that the vessel was moving slowly.[56] Beforehand (1503 hours), two helicopters had hovered near the ship in order to search for survivors and one of them had sighted an American flag on the ship's mast. The helicopters also reported on crewmen jumping overboard. After twenty minutes, the helicopters received orders to return.[57]

Naval Operations/3 ordered the Division to stay in place and await instructions. At the same time the Port of Ashdod was ordered to prepare two tugs for immediate dispatch to the ship. At 1536 hours, Naval Operations/3 ordered the Division to approach and search for survivors. As the torpedo boats approached, T206 fished out a rescue craft (of [illegible] manufacture), but with no personnel aboard. The search did not reveal any survivors. After ten minutes the Division received an order to start moving towards El-Arish.

At 1602 hours, GOC Navy radioed the Division commander and told him that the tugs had been dispatched from Ashdod and he enquired into the possibility of towing the ship to Ashdod. GOC Navy instructed the Division commander to approach the ship and offer assistance over the loudspeaker, but not to board the ship. GOC Navy also emphasized the importance of saving lives and ordered that a helicopter to search for any wounded.[58]

The Division approached the ship at 1640 hours and was able to discern the ship's name. The Division's offer of assistance was immediately rejected; the Division commander wished the ship a safe journey and reported back to GOC Navy.

In accordance with the instructions received, the Division monitored the "Liberty's" progress for some time, and at 1704 hours, received an order to return to Ashdod. The Division returned to base and at 1750 hours the "Liberty" disappeared from her radar screen.

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CHAPTER THREE

CAUSES OF THE ERROR

The attack on the "Liberty" by I.D.F. air and naval forces was the result of a chain of innocent misunderstandings and errors which occurred in the course of hostilities. Among these we may cite:

A. The "Liberty's" Scrape From The Control Table

Commander Lunz, who ordered the vessel's erasure, acted in accordance with the accepted procedure of erasing targets which lie beyond radar range. The reason for this procedure is to ensure that the control table gives a clear and up-to-date picture. In any case, Commander Lunz had every reason to assume that the Chief of Naval Operations and the GOC Israel Navy were aware of the "Liberty's" existence in the region, since both had taken her presence into account during the conduct of their operations against the submarine (Vide Supra p.7). The truth of the matter was, however, that the Chief of Naval Operations was unaware of the ship's existence and when the vessel was discovered by the torpedo boats he was convinced that it was a hostile target. In addition Commander Lunz, who was aware of the "Liberty's" existence, was led astray by the vessel's alleged high speed as reported by the torpedo boats. He therefore assumed that the target which was discovered was not the "Liberty" but rather an enemy craft. Later on, when the aircraft reported identifying the letters, Commander Lunz's suspicion was aroused. But at that time he was no longer in command. The Chief of Naval Operation, who was on hand, had heard the report along with him. He therefore did not consider it necessary to reiterate the report to the CNO. Lastly the identification of the vessel as the Egyptian "El Quseir" dissipated all further doubts.

B. The Report On The Shelling Of The El-Arish Coast

The report was at first met with scepticism due to the plethora of such reports received during the previous day. The Chief of Naval Operations therefore ordered a check on the source of the reports. After the source was verified and additional reports were received, the Supreme Command

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intervened, as the matter required serious attention. The Chief of Naval Operations therefore ordered Division 914 to abandon its patrol course and to investigate the situation off the coast of El-Arish. The Chief of Naval Operations intentionally ordered the division to reconnoiter rather than assigning her a specific mission inasmuch as he was not fully convinced that the coast was indeed being shelled and wanted an objective confirmation. First it was for this same reason that he did not inform the Division that the coast was being shelled.[59] The report of the shelling (which was later proven to be incorrect) was the first element in the chain of events which resulted in the tragic attack on the "Liberty".

C. The Detection Of The Target By Division 914

The Division spotted the target on the radar screen at a range of 22 miles and measured its speed and course. The target's speed was measured separately by each of the Division's vessels - with identical results. The high speed of the target (30 knots) indicated clearly that the vessel was a warship, and, in accordance with standard navy procedures followed at that time, this information provided sufficient grounds upon which to identify the target positively as a hostile craft. Despite this, the speed was checked once again, and it remained high. Given the vessel's speed and its course towards Port Said, it appeared to the Division commander and to Naval Headquarters that the target was an enemy warship escaping to its home port. Given such circumstances, a fleeing enemy vessel and the inability of the Division to overtake it, the Division commander took the only effective step and ordered out aircraft. Later, at the time of the air attack, it was discovered that the vessel's speed had been reduced to 12 knots. However, the Division commander did not attribute importance to this fact, since it appeared that the reduction in speed was due to the air raid.

D. The Identification Of The Vessel By The Aircraft.

The aircraft headed for the vessel, and, while in flight, they were informed by Control that the target was an enemy ship and that they should proceed to attack her. When the aircraft arrived at the sight they perceived a large, grey-colored vessel, apparently a destroyer. What appeared to be a gun was mounted on its bow, a distinctive feature of a warship. Despite this, the aircraft carried out identification runs, in an attempt to discover any identifying markings. Only after they had failed to detect any such markings did they then proceed to attack the target.

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E. The Identification Of The Target As The "EL-Quseir"

When Division 914 arrived within eyesight of the vessel, the division commander discerned that the vessel was not a destroyer but rather a mercantile or supply ship. Due to his doubts, he rescinded the order to torpedo the vessel and proceeded to identify the craft. The evasive answer which he received from the vessel in response to his demands of her to identify herself, as well as the gunshot flashes which emanated from the target, strengthened his belief that he was confronted with an enemy craft. The enemy vessel was identified by him and by the other torpedo boat as the "EL Quseir". While it is true that the "EL Quseir" and the "Liberty" are not identical in appearance, they do resemble each other. Given the conditions which prevailed at the time (the "Liberty" was enveloped in smoke), such an identification was made independently by two different officers on two different torpedo boats.

One of course may question the inherent contradictions between the various observations of the target identified as the "EL Quseir", a supply ship.. It should have been obvious that the vessel was incapable of sailing at a speed of 30 knots, or of shelling the coast. However, at the time of the battle, it was assumed that the target was a member of a naval task force which had succeeded in escaping and that the transport had fallen behind due to the limitations on its speed.[60] The accumulation and interlocking of the above mentioned factors created the erroneous (though justifiable, given the circumstances of the incident) picture of an enemy attempting to flee at top speed after a hit-and-run raid. Under such circumstances it is natural for a pursuing Israeli force to do all in its power to strike and capture the vessel.

In addition to the above mentioned factors the conduct of the "Liberty" herself contributed greatly to the creation of the "chain of errors". The following aspects of the "Liberty's" behaviour helped create the impression that she was indeed an enemy craft:

A. The "Liberty's" Position.

The "Liberty" was attacked in a combat zone, far removed from any recognized international shipping lane. Her very presence in the area provided grounds enough for the assumption that she was an enemy vessel. Furthermore, the Chief of Staff at the time Lieutenant General Yitzhak Rabin noted:

"On 5 June 1967, we approached the American naval attaché and said 'We shall protect our coastline against Egyptain attack by a combination of air and naval forces. We shall not be able to delay our reaction to the

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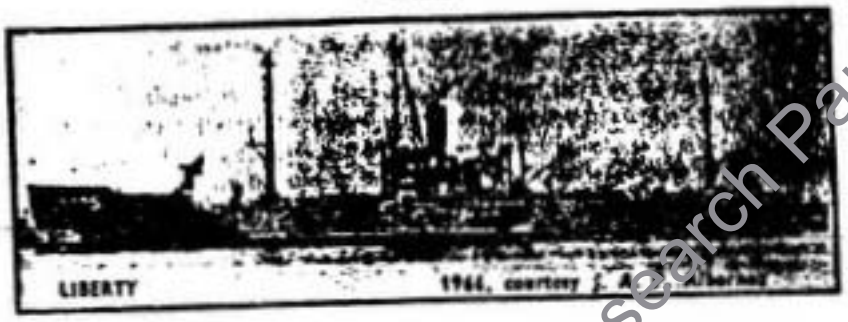
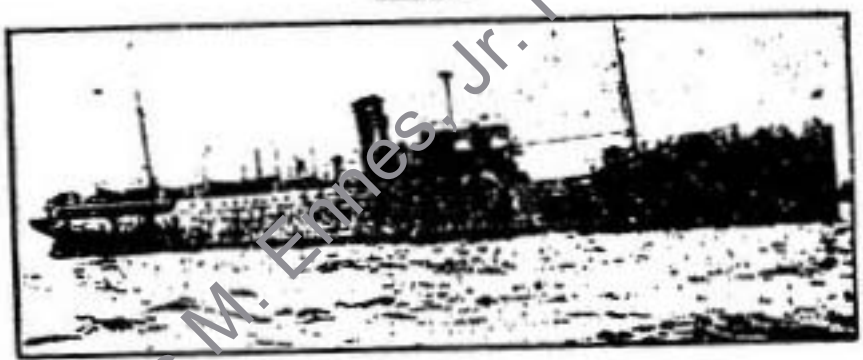
"Liberty"



1966, courtesy [illegible]

"El-Quesir"



We may note the following similarities between the two vessels:

A. Similar deck line.
B. The bridge structure is in mid-ship.
C. A single smokestack is in mid-ship.
D. The "Liberty's" antennae on the aft and fore decks resemble "EL-Quseir's" masts.
E. The antennae on the "Liberty's" fore deck resemble a gun.

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presence of Egyptian vessels in the proximity of our coast. We request you to withdraw all of your vessels from the Israeli coast or to inform us of their exact positions in the area close to our coastline."[61]

The American Command was, or at least should have been aware of the danger entailed by the "Liberty's" presence in the area. The Joint Chiefs of Staff in fact did order the vessel's withdrawal from the coast, only this order "lost its way" amongst the maze of bureaucracy and the military chain of command, and never reached the "Liberty."[62]

It is almost certain that had this order been carried out it would have been possible to avoid this tragic incident.

B. The Difficulty in Identification.

The "Liberty" bore the accepted identification signs for the time. However these signs were insufficient for aerial identification. The vessel's color was battleship grey and the aircraft which carried out the identification runs did not discern any identifying signs or any flag which might indicate its identity. The U.S. Navy Court of Inquiry likewise established that the vessel's slow speed rendered it difficult for attacking planes to distinguish its flag.[63] (In fact with little wind, the flag drooped, thus its markings were indiscernable). Even when the torpedo boats advanced to within eyesight of the vessel in an attempt to identify her, they did not see any flag. The "Liberty's" commander testified in fact that the flag had been knocked down in the course of the air raid and that he had ordered another flag hoisted.[64] Even if this flag was hoisted the torpedo boats did not see it, apparently due to the smoke which shrouded the vessel.

When the torpedo division commander asked the vessel to identify herself, he received an evasive reply. Under such circumstances it would appear that the "Liberty" should have availed herself of all possible means to identify herself (e.g. by hoisting numerous flags and semaphores, flashing signal lamps and flares) in order to attract the attention of the attacking force. Such measures would have been all the more appropriate given the fact that the "Liberty's" commander believed that the air raid had been carried out by error.[65] He did, it is true, try to prevent his vessel opening fire on the approaching torpedo boats, but his machine-gunners did not receive the command to hold fire, and instead opened fire on the Israeli boats. The fire only strengthened the Israelis' impression that the ship was indeed an enemy vessel. The "Liberty's" behaviour leads one to conjecture "that she did all in her power to conceal her identity".[66]

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These errors which were interrelated and stemmed from one another, led to the creation of the erroneous picture of the "Liberty" being a hostile vessel and to the inevitable result - the attack on the "Liberty."

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CHAPTER FOUR

ISRAEL'S ACTIONS FOLLOWING THE INCIDENT

As soon as Israel became aware of the error, she took actions whose immediate aim was to save human life, and, at a later stage, to investigate the incident and determine its causes.

Assistance Offered and The Search for Survivors

Immediately after the incident, Israel Navy torpedo boats and two Israel Air Force helicopters searched the area for survivors. At 1500 hours Israel reported the incident to the American Naval Attaché, Commander Ernest C. Castle, and at 1815 hours the attaché, along with a representative of the IDF's Foreign Attaché Liaison Bureau took off for the ship in a Super Frelon helicopter in order to land the attaché on board and evacuate wounded, if necessary. Commander Castle attempted to signal the ship's crew by hand, and they answered with hand signals and lanterns; however, neither side understood the other. The helicopter pilot was ready to lower the attaché aboard the vessel by means of a cable, but the ship was unable to halt and the lowering could not be carried safely as long as the vessel was in motion. Finally, Commander Castle wrote the following message on his calling card: "Do you have any casualties ?", attached it to an orange and passed it onto the ship. He was answered by signals from the "Liberty" which led him to understand that they had one wounded. But he was not certain of that. The helicopter hovered above the vessel for some thirty minutes and, inasmuch as it was impossible to land or to lower the attaché on board, it returned to its base.

The next day, 9 June, the search for survivors continued by means of a light aircraft. However, there were no results. The American Naval attaché verified details concerning rescue operations and requested that they continue the following day, since he believed that the current might carry survivors or bodies back towards shore.

The search continued on 10 June, conducted by planes and torpedo boats. It lasted from 0500 hours until nightfall - again without any results. The search was not renewed. Commander Castle thanked the IDF for its rescue efforts and did not request that they be resumed, since it was assumed that the bodies of the missing men were trapped in those damaged compartments of the ship which had been sealed after the torpedo attack.

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Exchange of Letters Concerning the Incident

On 10 June the Israeli ambassador to Washington submitted a letter to the US State Department in which the Government of Israel expressed its regrets over the tragic incident and offered to pay compensation for the loss of life and damage to property. The American reply (which was received on the same day) stated that the "Liberty" had been attacked on the high seas, despite the fact that she flew an American flag and bore markings in accordance with the accepted practice, and that there was reason to assume that she had been identified as American. The American reply stated that the attack upon the "Liberty" was incomprehensible and should be regarded at the very least as a case of military negligence and malicious disregard for human life. The American government expected that the Government of Israel would take the necessary disciplinary measures which an incident of such a nature warrants and issue appropriate instructions that would prevent the occurrance of similar incidents in the future. The reply also indicated that the American Government expected full compensation.

The Israeli reply was submitted to the State Department on 12 June. In it Israel rejected the American accusations and stressed that such conclusions prior to the undertaking of a full investigation of the incident, were unjustified. The Israeli letter stated further that the Chief of Staff had appointed a Court of Inquiry and that its report would be forwarded to the United States Government. Israel's reply noted also its offer of assistance and the rescue operation which she had carried out. It also expressed her regret that information concerning the "Liberty's" presence had not been brought to Israel's knowledge beforehand. The Israeli letter concluded with a repetition of Israel's offer to pay compensation.

The Appointment of the Court of Inquiry

On 12 June the Chief of Staff appointed Colonel Ram Ron as a one man Court of Inquiry, "In order to investigate the circumstances surrounding the attack carried out by IDF forces on the American vessel the "Liberty." The senior officer was entrusted with the responsibility for "establishing facts, drawing conclusions and making recommendations."[47] by the 16 June 1967.

Colonel Ram Ron heard the testimony of twelve officers involved in the affair, and in the end of his investigation he established the facts relative to the incident. He concluded that the attack on the

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vessel was not perpetrated "out of malice or criminal negligence but out of innocent error..... The attack was perpetrated as a result of a chain of three errors each one of which individually, appeared to him, considering the circumstances, as a reasonable and innocent mistake." [68] According to Colonel Ron, the following were the three errors:[69]

A) The erroneous report concerning the shelling of EL-Arish.
B). The establishment of the ship's speed at 30 knots, which removed all possible doubt as to the "Liberty" not being a hostile target.
C). The identification of the vessel as the "EL-Nuseir". Colonel Ron further concluded that he had no doubt as to the fact that the "Liberty" had attempted to conceal her identity and presence in the area.[70]

At the conclusion of his report, Colonel Ron proposed recommendations as to procedures for declaring areas to be "Danger Zones" as well as additional recommendations regarding the training of pilots in the identification of enemy vessels, and staff procedures.

The investigation file was forwarded to the Military Advocate General, Colonel Meir Shamgar for his opinion which was submitted to the Chief of Staff on 20 June 1967.

The Military Advocate General reviewed the facts established by the Court of Inquiry, most of which were accepted by him, and analyzed the implications of the investigations. The Military Advocate General's recommendations were as follows: "It is impossible, regarding this incident, to establish clearly at this stage whether anyone involved in the matter should be brought before a court martial....I do not believe that there are grounds to complete the Court of Inquiry's investigation. However, given the importance of the incident and the gravity of the results, it would be proper to entrust the investigation to a Judicial institution - - i.e. examining judge."[71]

Letter of GOC Israel Navy

On 17 June 1967, GOC Navy, R/Ad. Shlomo Erel sent a letter to his American opposite number, Admiral MacDonald. In his letter, the GOC expressed the Israel Navy's deep regrets concerning the terrible tragedy which had occured to the "Liberty" and requested that his condolences be transmitted to the families of the victims. He expressed his admiration of the ship's crew

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for the manner in which they had overcome the damage and succeeded in saving their vessel. He expressed his hope that future circumstances would enable seamen to carry out their work in peace and that such tragedies would not repeat themselves.

The Appointment of an Examining Judge

On 20 June 1967, in accordance with the powers granted him by the Code of Military Justice, the Military Advocate General instructed that a preliminary inquiry of the attack on the "Liberty" be carried out, inasmuch as in his opinion, an offense liable to require a court-martial had been committed.[72]

In accordance with the powers invested in him, and by the decision of the Military Advocate General, the President of the Military Appeals Court, Col. Yaakov Perry, on the same day, appointed Lt. Col. Menahayah Yerushalmi (a judge and professional jurist) Examining-Judge for the "Liberty" affair.[73]

The Military Advocate General had reason to believe that an offense had been committed, although at this stage no one had been indicted. He therefore ordered the holding of a preliminary investigation before an examining-judge, to be conducted in the absence of an accused party.[74]

On 21 June 1967, the Chief Military Prosecutor, Major Yaakov Kadmi submitted a complaint to the Examining Judge without naming any defendant. The document specified seven points of negligence relevant to the actions of the various parties involved.

On 25 June 1967 the first session of the preliminary inquiry was held. During its sessions, which lasted until 4 July 1967, the Examining-Judge heard 24 witnesses for the prosecution (i.e. the Chief Military Prosecutor) and 14 exhibits were presented to him. When the hearing of the witnesses was completed the Chief Military Prosecutor presented a summation and requested to charge a number of naval officers with negligence in accordance with the written complaint.

On 5 July 1967 the Examining-Judge read out an interim decision according to which the material presented before him permitted the attribution of negligence to Commander Lunz. He therefore summoned Commander Lunz to appear before him to cross-examine witnesses who had already appeared and to bring witnesses on his own behalf. For this purpose Command Lunz and his attorney were permitted access to the investigation file.

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The preliminary investigation was concluded on 18 July 1967, after three additional witnesses on behalf of commander Lunz had been heard, and a number of exhibits presented.

On 21 July 1967 the Examining Judge read out his decision regarding the case. He specified the chain of events as depicted in the testimonies offered before him, and in the light of these he analyzed the charges brought by the Chief Military Prosecutor in his complaint.

The Examining Judge cited five factors which were responsible for creating the impression that the target was indeed an enemy vessel and should be attacked:

A. The report concerning the shelling of El-Arish for several hours in succession.
B. The speed of the target which was tracked by the torpedo boats at 28-30 knots.
C. The movement in the direction of Port Said.
D. The report of the aircraft according to which the target was a military vessel which did not bear identifying naval markings or any other signs.
E. The ship's position close to shore in a combat zone.[75]

In the summation of his decision the judge stated:

"Despite my regrets that our forces were involved in an incident with a naval craft of a friendly state and my regrets concerning the sad results of the incident, I must judge the conduct of each of the officers involved in any way with the affair, by the standard of conduct expected of reasonable officers at the time of military operations, when the Israel Navy was out-numbered by opposing naval forces and when foremost before the eyes of all those involved was the mission of protecting the security of the state, identifying every ill-intentioned enemy plotting against the state, and rapidly attacking and destroying him. The standard of reasonable behaviour under such conditions will perhaps differ from such a standard in time of peace. It may be possible for one who studies the compendious evidence presented before me to derive conclusions regarding the relations between the two I.D.F. services involved in the incident, the order of operations in a time of war, and especially the (relationship) between the various sections of the Navy. However such conclusions would transcend the scope of my investigation. I did not discover any deviation from the standard of reasonable behaviour which would justify bringing anyone to trial. Given the above, I hereby decide that there is insufficient prima facie evidence to justify bring any to trial." [76]

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The decision of the examing judge was brought before the Military Advocate General who, after studying it, submitted his judicial opinion to the Chief of Staff on 24 July, 1967.

In his decision the Military Advocate General analyzed the chain of events and the decision of the Examining Judge. He weighed the possibilities available to him in accordance with the authority invested in him, and explained his decision "to accept the conclusions of the Examining Judge and not to ask for an indictment."[77]

The Payment of Compensations

Immediately following the incident, Israel indicated her willingness to pay compensation both to the families of the deceased and to the wounded (letter of 10 June, 1967).

In June 1968 the Government of Israel paid compensation amounting to $3,323,000 to the families of the deceased, and in April, 1969, she paid $3,566,547 in the compensation to the wounded. In both cases Israel paid in full all claims issued against her. Her motivation was humanitarian.[78]

In respect to the claims for damages suffered by the vessel, Israel refused to meet the expenses for the repairs since "we did not consider ourselves responsible for the chain of errors."[79]

On 1 July, 1968 the Government of the United States of America filed claims totalling $7,644,116. This total was based upon an estimate of the sum needed to restore the vessel to operational capabilities (although vessels of this type had already been withdrawn from active service in the US Navy).

On 5 August, 1968 Israel replied that she would not assume responsibility for the damages demanded. Due to American pressure this letter was withdrawn and in September, 1968, Israel likewise proposed that the US claims be withdrawn. On 26th July, 1971 Israel submitted another letter to the United States in which she offered to pay a token sum of $100,000. The Americans refused this offer.

In the course of time the matter was forgotten until the Americans renewed their demands in the beginning of 1978. The Legal Advisor to the Government of the State of Israel appointed a small team to conduct negotiations with the claimant, and on 25 May 1978 the Americans were informed of the appointment of this team and of Israel's willingness to open negotiations.

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In January 1980 the US Department of State announced its intention to propose in the near future a date for the start of negotiations.[80]

Contacts were renewed in December, 1980, during which it was agreed th[illegible] Israel would pay compensation of $6 million to the US Navy for the damage inflicted on the ship. This compromise was reached with the agreement of President Jimmy Carter and it was agreed that the sum would be paid in three equal instalments, beginning in January 1981.

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CHAPTER FIVE

THE REVIVAL OF THE AFFAIR

It might have been assumed that at the end of the various investigations into the "Liberty" incident, the affair would have been cleared up, it having been established that the ship was attacked by mistake. But from time to time the affair crops up anew, for it involves the mystery of a spy-ship, the drama of war, and the tragedy of the killed and wounded.

The issue was revived first by the monthly "Penthouse", in June, 1978, there appeared an additional article in the monthly, U.S. Naval Proceedings. And in 1979 there appeared a book on the affair written by an officer who was serving on the "Liberty" at the time of the incident.

Two common denominators can be detected in these publications:

A. The categorical assertion that the "Liberty" was maliciously attacked by Israel, with the intention of sinking her.
B. Weighty reasons are given to explain why Israel acted as maliciously as she did.

The story is woven around these two points, together with occasional flights of the imagination, missing facts, half-truths, or false conclusions.

In all of the publications mentioned above, Israel's malicious intention is not based on any proven, factual description, but instead is stated as an immediate assertion, as a truth which the author's description is intended merely to reinforce - the strike against the "Liberty" was maliciously deliberate; it was not a question of a mistake, or a misunderstanding, nor even of negligence.

Without entering into the details of each assertion, we may note several facts which in our opinion demolish the basis for any charge of malice.

It is a fact that the air attack on the vessel was halted immediately at the moment of mistaken identity (when the letters were discovered on the ship's side). The same is true in regard to the halting of the torpedo attack.

Immediately, the error was discovered, helicopters were dispatched to search for survivors and to aid in the evacuation of the wounded, and two tugs were dispatched from Ashdod to assist the vessel.

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These actions prove that Israel possessed no malicious intentions whatsoever. If she indeed had harbored such intentions, her Air and Naval Forces were clearly in a position to complete their mission and to sink the "Liberty" had they wished.

As to the alleged motivation for Israel's actions against the "Liberty", various authors offer each his own set of motives. "Penthouse" suggests that the "Liberty" was in possession of recordings which proved that Israel had tampered with the telephone conversations between Nasser and Hussein. Israel allegedly intercepted the conversations of the two leaders and transmitted to Hussein a doctored message which it corrected on the spot. All this in the course of an ongoing conversation with neither of the two parties suspecting anything. According to the author Israel promoted King Hussein to enter the war in force, and broadened the hostilities to include the Jordanian Kingdom. (Contrary to a prior agreement with the USA). The author contends that it was obviously necessary for Israel to destroy the evidence of her deed. We cannot treat this claim seriously. It would seem to be so absurd as to be self-defeating.

The motives which US Naval Institute Proceedings attributes to Israel's action ostensibly appear to be more logical:

> "A vital part of Israel's war plans was preventing the rest of the world from knowing about its military victories until they could be presented together as a political fait accompli ... The Israeli leaders feared superpower pressures for a cease-fire before they could seize the territory which they considered necessary for Israel's future security. Any instrument which sought to penetrate this smokescreen so carefully thrown around the normal 'fog of war' would have to be frustrated." [81]

However this claim cannot withstand examination when one views the overall context of this event, and in order to refute it one does not even have to analyze the question of whether or not at the outbreak of the war Israel had predefined territorial objectives and a coherent philosophy of what constituted territory vital to her security.[82]

The "Liberty" incident occured in the afternoon of 8 June 1967. At that time Israel had not yet decided to attack on the Syrian front. The contrary was in fact the case. It had been decided that Israel would not attack Syria at that stage. Given such circumstances, Israel had nothing to hide at the time of the attack on the "Liberty".

Hostilities had already halted on the Jordanian front, and on the morning

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of 8 June, Jordan officially announced her acceptance of the ceasefire. Israel's control over all of Judea-Samaria was already known and had been publicized throughout the world.

While it is true that on the Egyptian front fighting was still going on, it was clear that the outcome had already been determined and the dimensions of the Egyptian defeat and the Israeli victory were known. News of the destruction of the Arab Air Forces had been widely published throughout the world two days earlier.

One may therefore ask what other military victories or fait accomplis did Israel have to hide. Moreover, when the "Liberty" appeared off Israeli shores on the morning of 8 June, the ship's crew had already learned of all the above events via the mass media. Thus, even had the "Liberty" been sunk, such an act would not have suppressed news of Israel's victory, and in any event there was no need to do so.

Israel had maintained a certain "smokescreen" on 5 June 1967. However, the smoke was dissipated for all practical purposes, on Israel's own initiative during the night of 5-6 June. No other "smokescreen" ever existed.

Innes' book attempts to present a more limited but better established motive for Israel's allegedly malicious intentions:-

> "The Israeli Government was acutly aware of President Johnson's warning that he would support Israel only in self-defence, not in attacks against her neighbors. It was important, then for Israel to be seen as an innocent victim fighting to ward off hordes of wild-eyed Arabs. Not surprisingly, Israel claimed that nearly everything she did was in self-defence.....now, with the war virtually over and the world crying for peace, could Israel put troops in Syria without being seen as an agressor ? Probably not. Not with the USS "Liberty" so close to shore and presumably listening. "Liberty" would have to go.....General Elazar was forced to delay the invasion until "Liberty" was dispatched." [83]

The author claims that the Israeli attack on Syria had been scheduled initially for the morning of 8 June, and due to the "Liberty's" appearance was postponed for 24 hours.

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One may question whether a military action against a hostile nation which had taken an active part in the war against Israel, and which had been attacking her territory and shelling her settlements for several consecutive days, could indeed be labelled an aggressive act. Would not self-defence have been more appropriate ?

It was assumed by Israel that the USA would not unequivocably oppose her action against Syria. On the contrary, Chief of Staff Rabin testifies: "I requested a check on the Americans' position and their possible reaction to a broad offensive against Syria. The matter was examined and our impression was that from the American side there would be nothing to fear."[84]

The question remains as to the timing of the offensive on the Syrian front. In this context Innes does present a number of correct facts. An Israeli offensive had in fact been planned for 8 June, this offensive was postponed and the "Liberty" did appear off the Israeli coast at that time. However, the relationship which the author infers between these facts and the "Liberty's" elevation to a central position, as well as the author's ignorance of other facts, necessarily lead him to a false conclusion.

The "Liberty" was not the main factor influencing Israel's deliberations, and her decision to postpone and then finally to undertake the offensive against Syria was motivated by a completely different set of considerations.

Throughout the entire day of 7 June Operational plans for the offensive on the Syrian front were discussed at Supreme Command and at the Northern Command. In the evening G Branch-Operations issued a warning order for "Northern Summer" (the offensive on the northern Golan). Battle procedure continued at the Northern Command, and H-hour" was set at 081400. However, before midnight 7-8 June, the Minister of Defence informed the Chief of Staff that action on the Syrian Front would be permitted up to the international boundary only.[85] The Chief of Staff opposed a limited operation, which would not be worthwhile and might be interpreted as a failure.[86] The GOC Northern Command was of the same opinion. However, despite the Defence Minister's instructions, battle procedure continued in the Northern Command in the hope that perhaps after all the restrictions might be lifted.

On the morning of 8 June, Israel Air Force Planes attacked the Syrian positions. However, these attacks were halted at approximately 1000 hours when the Minister of Defence repeated his instructions not to cross the international boundary. Throughout the day, Syrian artillery operated quite intensively, and Israeli artillery returned fire. The

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Israel Air Force was also brought into action in the afternoon hours to silence Syrian fire.

The Minister of Defence and the Chief of Staff discussed the question of the offensive on the Syrian front once again on the evening of 8 June. This was followed by deliberations between the Prime Minister, the Minister of Defence and the Chief of Staff and eventually in the forum of the Ministerial Committee for Security Affairs. It was decided that in the meantime Israel should not attack on the Syrian front, and it was decided further to "authorize the Prime Minister and the Minister of Defence to monitor developments, and if they should come to the conclusion that conditions were favorable, they might instruct the IDF to cross the border and operate against Syria."[87]

Only on 9 June at 0700 hours was the decision changed. The change was made when it became evident that Egypt intended to institute a ceasefire (and had advised Syria to do the same); when it appeared that the Russians had no intention of intervening and after reports regarding the flight of Syrians from the border region had been received.[88] Only then did the Minister of Defence give the "green light" for the offensive on the Syrian front.

The above clearly demonstrates that the "Liberty's" appearance off the coast of Israel had no bearing whatsoever upon the cancellation of the offensive on the Syrian front, since orders to that effect had been issued by the Minister of Defence the previous night when the "Liberty" was still far away from Israeli shores. In any event it is evident that the damage to the "Liberty", and her elimination from the arena played no role whatever in those considerations which affected Israel's decision to attack on the Syrian front.

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CONCLUSION

An examination of the facts in the "Liberty" incident, in their proper context proves beyond any doubt that the attack on the American intelligence ship came about as a result of innocent error by the forces which operated on the spot and the HQs which supervised them.

Though the attack on the armed forces of a friendly nation is a most regrettable and painful occurrence, incidents of this kind do occur in war-time.

It goes without saying that such an incident must be thoroughly investigated, that all the causes of the tragic encounter must be examined, conclusions drawn, and proper instructions issued which will prevent the occurrence of such an incident in the future. From Israel's point of view all these steps have been carried out in a most thorough and comprehensive manner. However, it is inappropriate to attribute malicious intent to Israel, when the evidence does not bear out such an attribution.

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NOTES

1. Details on the "Liberty" are taken from: J.M. Ennes, Assault on the Liberty, New York: Random House 1979.
2. Ibid; P.17
3. Ennes, Assault on the Liberty...p.44
4. "The Six Day War : Israel Navy" IDF History Department, December 1970 P. 197 (hereafter referred to as "SDW-Hist. Dept - Navy").
5. Ibid; P.201
6. Ibid; P.58
7. Testimony of Lt. Commander Pinchasi; Examining-Judge File Special Investigation 1/67 P.49 (hereafter referred to as "Ex-Jdg.").
8. Testimony of Lt. Commander Elchanan Hatarsi; Ibid, P.201
9. Operations Log-CCC (Central Coastal Command)
10. Ibid.
11. "Ex-Jdg."; Pinchasi testimony, P.50.
12. Lunz testimony ibid, P.220
13. Ibid; Testimony of Chief of Naval Operations, P.64
14. Later, there were those who would claim that Israel had tracked the "Liberty" constantly and that IAF planes had carried out several reconnaissance overflights to identify the vessel. These claims have no foundation in reality. The IAF did not direct any sortie over the "Liberty" until 1400 hours. Even the plane which first identified the ship was on a routine patrol mission and was not specifically assigned to track the "Liberty". The only reasonable grounds for such claims (assuming that they were genuine) is the fact that a point, north-west of EL-Arish (designated by the IAF as "Boaz"), was the spot over which most IAF sorties would swoop into and out of Sinai. The flights via this route could have appeared to the ship's crew as directed to them.
Ennes, in his book, Assault on the Liberty, describes sorties returning nearly every 30 minutes. On any account this description may be dismissed as exaggerated for even the "liberty's" log describes only three sorties overhead (at 0850,1056 and at 1126 hours).

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15. "Ex.-Jdg" P.51

16. Ibid.

17. Later, at approximately 1300, Lt. Commander Tabak (Navy representative at Air Command) requested from Lt. Colonel Kisslev, at Air Command, to dispatch a plane in order to clear up the matter of the shelling. Lt. Colonel Kisslev responded that he could not dispatch a plane, and it was agreed between them that planes would be directed to the area when the torpedo boats (which had been sent to the area) identified a concrete target (see testimony of Lt. Commander Tabak, "Ex-Jdg" P.86).

18. "Ex.-Jdg".; P. 108

19. Ibid; P.4

20. Quite probably, the source of the report was explosions in the ammunition stores at El-Arish, as noted by the Chief of Staff, then, Yitschak Rabin, (Pinkas Rabin, Service Notebook - Ha'ariv Library, September, 1979, P.198). This version is supported by the Liaison Officer from Operations Headquarters, who was at the spot, and reported later on that he heard explosions, but didn't observe any shelling from the sea (testimony of Lt. Col. Nadel, "Ex-Jdg" P.109). Further support for this version comes from the Commander of the "Liberty", in his evidence before the Investigating Commission of the U.S. Fleet (P.2); he stated that at about 1300 hours the crew noticed black smoke rising from the coast, about 15 miles west of EL-Arish, but they didn't manage to ascertain the exact location of, or cause of the explosion. Another possibility is that the source of the explosions was the clearing-up operations in EL-Arish, still not completed at that time.

21. War Log, Naval Operations Section 3.

22. "Ex.-Jdg."; P.13

23. Division 914 War Log.

24. "Ex.-Jdg"; P.108

25. War Log, Naval Operations Section 3.

26. Ibid; and "Ex.-Jdg." P. 139

27. Flotilla 1, Standing Operation Procedures; Order No. 50.003.

28. War Log, Naval Operations Section 3.

29. "Ex-Jdg "; P.140

30. Israel Court of Inquiry Report, Colonel Ram Ron (English version)P.13.

31. Decypher of weapon-system network, Air Command, 8 June 1967 P. 1 (hereafter "w.s.n.").

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32. "Ex. Jdg" P.82
33. Ibid P.25
34. Ibid P.45
35. Ibid; P.58
36. "w.s.n." P. 1
37. "Ex.-Jdg." PP.101-105
38. Testimony of the commander of the "Liberty", before the U.S. Investigating Committee, P. 6
39. "Ex.-Jdg" p. 154; "w.s.n." P. 5
40. "w.s.n." P. 4
41. "Ex.-Jdg."; P.149
42. "w.s.n." P. 8
43. At 1400 hours the speed of the target was corrected to 12 knots, but the Division Commander did not report the change since he attributed the slower speed to the attack by IAF aircraft. "Ex.-Jdg."; P.27.
44. "Ex-Jdg."; P.18 and also War Log of Naval Operations Section/3 and War Log of Division 914.
45. "Ex-Jdg."; Testimony of Captain (Navy) Rahav, P.[illegible]
46. The order was written in the Division's War Log but it was not forwarded to the Division Commander on the bridge. "Ex.-Jdg."; Testimony of Commander Oren, P. 28.
47. "Ex.-Jdg."; P.28
48. Ibid.
49. Ex.-Jdg."; P.66 The Commander of the "Liberty" also notes in his testimony before the US Navy "Court of Inquiry" that fire was opened on the torpedo boats. See brief of US Navy "Court of Inquiry" - Appendix - testimony of "Liberty" commander, P.6 (hereafter USN Court og Inquiry).
50. "Ex-Jdg", P.28 and 66. (this, in spite of the fact that the "Liberty" is larger than the "EL Quseir").
51. SDW- Israel Navy, P.198.
52. "Ex-Jdge," P.29 and P.26.
53. Ibid; P.30 The commander of the "Liberty" testified (US Navy Court of Inquiry P.6) that when the torpedo boats approached, he noticed that the flag had fallen down in the wake of the attack by IAF planes and he ordered a new flag raised.
54. Ibid; P. 29, and also War Log of Naval Operations/3, and War Log of Division 914.
55. Rabin-Memoirs, P. 197.
56. War Log of Division 914
57. War Log of Naval Operations/3
58. War Log of Division 914.
59. "Ex.-Jdg." P.45
60. Ibid; "Decision of the Examining Judge", P.8
61. Rabin, op.cit., P.198.

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62. U.S.K. Court of Inquiry, P.8
63. Ibid., P.1
64. Ibid; Appendix: Commander's Testimony, P.6.
65. Ibid., P.5
66. Testimony Of R/Adm. Erel, "Ex. Jdg.", P.41.V. also conclusions of the Court of Inquiry headed by Col. Ram Ron, P.16. The author believes this conclusion to be too general and relevant only for the time when contact was made between the torpedo boats and the target.
67. Terms of appointment, Chief of Staff's office (ref. MH-30-2(40) 12 June 1967).
68. The Ron Report, P.9
69. Ibid; PP.10-15
70. Ibid; P.16. V. Reservations to this finding, above, note 66.
71. Letter from the Military Advocate General's Office, (ref. MK-21 (1) - 1372, 20 June 1967). Emphasis in the original.
72. "Ex. Judg.", Exhibit 1.
73. Ibid., Exhibit 2.
74. Ibid., Exhibit 3.
75. "Ex. Jdg.", Decision of the Examining Judge, P.6.
76. Ibid; P.8
77. Military Advocate General's Office, ref. MK-21 (3) - 2265, 24 June 1967, Para 1.
78. Rabin, Op. Cit., P.190.
79. Ibid.
80. The chain of events relative to the compensation issue has been established on the basis of a letter from the Israel Foreign Ministry's Office of the Deputy Director General to the IDF History Department, 31 October, 1980.
81. Robert K. Smith, "The Violation of the Liberty", US Naval Institute Proceedings. 5 June 1978 P. 64
82. The terminology of the article itself suggests that the author was concerned more with the polemic over territory and national security current in 1978 than with the situation which had prevailed in 1967.
83. Ennes, Assault...P.212
84. Rabin, Op. Cit., P.194
85. "The Six Days War: The Campaign on the Syrian Front", IDF History Department, June 1974, 0222 (hereafter "SDW")
86. Ibid.
87. Moshe Dayan, "Story of My Life", Tel-Aviv, 1976, 0475
88. Ibid, and "SDW" P. 238.

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DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY
OFFICE OF THE CHIEF OF NAVAL OPERATIONS
WASHINGTON, DC 20350

Ser 09B1P1/311477

Lieutenant Commander James M. Ennes, Jr., USNR (Ret.)
USS LIBERTY Veterans Association
[redacted]

Dear Commander Ennes:

Please forgive the delay in responding to your Freedom of Information Act request of November 19, 1982, in which you seek a copy of the Israeli letter that accompanied their final report entitled "The Attack on the 'LIBERTY' Incident" dated June 1967.

The Israeli letter was cleared for release on December 21, 1982, and is attached at the enclosure.

I trust the letter satisfactorily responds to your request.

Sincerely,

J. Barton

Enclosure
as stated

James M. Ennes, Jr. Research Papers

Commander in Chief
ISRAELI NAVY

Tel-Aviv, May 21, 1987

Admiral Thomas Hayward
Chief of Naval Operations
U.S. Navy
Washington D.C.

Dear Admiral Hayward,

I would like to refer to the tragic incident which took place during the Six Day War, in June 1967, involving the intelligence ship LIBERTY.

Since the occurance of this terrible event, many publications were released. Many of these publications purported to state the motives and reasons which led to the unfortunate event.

I must point out regretfully that according to the findings of the enclosed report, prepared by the History Department of the Israeli Defence Forces, some of the facts stated in those publications are false, misleading and might damage the friendly relationship between our countries and navies. To the best of our knowledge such additional publications might appear

In light of the above described circumstances, I have recommended to our Chief of General Staff to provide you with the full report concerning the LIBERTY incident. This report is based on a thorough investigation made by judges and senior officers proving clearly, that the incident was a result of an unfortunate chain of mistakes and tragic errors.

My recommendation was adopted by the Chief of General Staff and approved by the Minister of Defence.

2/..

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Commander-in-Chief
ISRAEL NAVY

Tel-Aviv, May 21, 1967

- 2 -

I hope that reading the report sent to you will persuade you as well as your colleagues, that this tragic incident was a terrible mistake. We all deeply regret the loss of life and injuries incurred.

I take this opportunity to express my gratitude for the honor and pleasure which fell to me to welcome you and your wife Peggy during your visit in Israel as guests of the Israeli Navy.

Best regards.

Sincerely yours,

Z Almog

Zeev Almog, R/Admiral
C.I.C. Israel Navy.

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UNITED
STATES

Attack on
the U.S.S. *Liberty* (S)

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Review in April 2011

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UNITED STATES

Special Series

Volume I

Attack on a
the U.S.S. *Liberty* (S-

William D. Gerhard

NATIONAL SECURITY AGENCY/CENTRAL SECURITY SERVICE
1981

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Foreword

(S) The Israeli attack on the U.S.S. *Liberty* some 14 years ago was [redacted]'s wrenching experience [redacted]. The loss, particularly in the case of [redacted] who gave their lives or were wounded, was difficult to accept. The knowledge that the tragedy resulted not only from Israeli miscalculation but also from faulty U.S. communications practices was even more difficult to accept.

(S) The passage of time has made it possible for the authors to reexamine the *Liberty* incident objectively and answer a number of persistent questions. The authors accordingly set forth the technical rationale for the *Liberty* mission, the particulars of the Israeli miscalculations, the details of the American communications failures, a narrative of the attack [redacted] and the lessons to be learned from the event.

(C) [redacted]

(C) A word about the authors. [redacted] worked on this project part time after they had retired. An experienced operations officer and research specialist, Mr. Gerhard [redacted] as well as the Special Research Element that produced studies of [redacted] who spent most of his career in research and documentation activities, was for years in charge of the NSA Library.

Vincent J. Wilson, Jr.
Chief, [redacted] and Publications Staff

James M. Ennes, Jr. Research Papers

Authors' Note

Many people contributed to the completion of this history. The authors gratefully acknowledge the efforts of members of the NSA History and Publications Staff who offered substantive suggestions and labored over publication format and preparation: Vincent J. Wilson, Jr., Chief; [redacted], Historian; [redacted], Editor; [redacted], Secretary; [redacted] of the History Staff, spent many hours arranging for and conducting interviews of personnel intimately associated with the Liberty incident. In turn, [redacted] painstakingly transcribed the interview tapes.

To [redacted] Records Declassification Staff, we are indebted for his security classification review.

Both Bob Rush, Electronic Security Command, and James Gilbert, Intelligence and Security Command History Staff generously provided useful source materials from their collections.

William D. Gerhard
[redacted]
8 December 1980

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Chapter I

Political-Military Background (U)

(U) A brief look at the Middle Eastern situation during early 1967 is necessary for an appreciation of the mounting political and military tensions that ultimately led to the U.S. decision to position the U.S.S. *Liberty* in the eastern Mediterranean.

(U) Since the mid-1950s, the major world powers had been keenly aware of and sensitive to the buildup of tensions in the Middle East. Both the Soviet Union and Communist China were quick to take advantage of unsettled conditions there to extend their own influence over governments wherever possible, often competing with one another in this effort.

(U) By the end of the 1950s the Chinese Communists had begun to assert themselves, especially in Iraq and Syria. In May 1966, Syria's president, Nureddin el-Attassi, scolded at what he called conventional war against Israel and urged what he called a "people's war of liberation," Chinese Communist style.[1] The head of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), Ahmed Shukairy, also committed to receiving Chinese aid. PLO representatives had been sent to Vietnam and communist China to observe communist guerrilla techniques, and PLO troops were receiving arms from Communist China.

(U) As for the Soviets, they had particular cause for wishing to see the Syrian Government bumptious, defeated, and, perhaps, overthrown. The increasingly radical Syrian Governments which had assumed power since the beginning of 1966 had come to rely more and more on Soviet military and economic aid, to permit increasing numbers of Soviet advisers to be stationed in the country, and all in all to offer the most promising field for Soviet penetration and influence in the Middle East. The Soviets genuinely feared massive Israeli retaliation that might topple the Syrian Government; they therefore spurred the Egyptians on to vigorous counteraction, the full repercussions of which they could not foresee.[2]

(U) The United States supported the United Nations' efforts to maintain peace in the area and, while championing the right of the State of Israel to exist, urged restraint and respect for the rights of all nations.

(U) Within the Arab world, President Gamal Abdel Nasser of the United Arab Republic (U.A.R.) sought to overcome opposition to his leadership by the monarchies of Saudi Arabia and Jordan.[3] In late January 1967, when U.A.R. aircraft bombed Najran in Saudi Arabia, relations between the two countries were further strained. In Yemen, the U.A.R. supported the insurgents against the Royalists. Jordan, trying to keep from becoming embroiled in Israeli-Arab frictions, ordered in March a halt to Arab infiltration into Israel through Jordanian territory as well as a cessation of Palestine Liberation internal agitation against the Jordanian Government.

(U) Between January and April 1967, the Syrian-Israeli frontier was the scene of a series of escalating clashes ranging from potshots at tractors to exchanges of fire between tanks, artillery, and aircraft. Both sides refused, at different times, to permit the United Nations Mixed Armistice Commission to mark the armistice line at disputed points and insisted on farming and patrolling disputed areas.[4]

On 7 April 1967, a Syrian-Israeli clash escalated from an exchange of fire between tanks to attacks by both Syrian and Israeli aircraft. By the end of the day, Israeli planes had appeared over the outskirts of Damascus and six Syrian MIGs had been shot down.

As the tempo of the civil war within Yemen increased, U.A.R. aircraft dropped poison-gas bombs on Yemeni Royalists on 22 April. Later that month when the Yemeni Government imprisoned two Americans from the Agency for International Devel-

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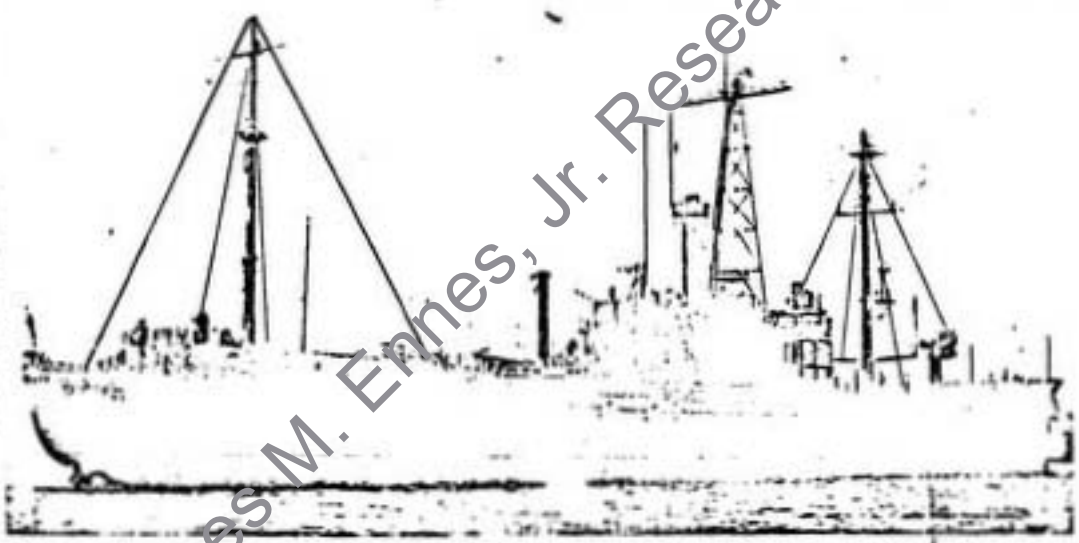

(U) The U.S.S. *Liberty* was commissioned in May 1945 as a victory ship and later converted into a technical research ship (December 1964). She had an overall length of 455 feet, a maximum speed of 18 knots with an allowable personnel complement of 9 officers and 151 enlisted men along with an additional 9 [illegible]

(Photograph courtesy of the Department of the Navy.)

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[redacted] (AID) [redacted]

[redacted] From 11-14 May, U.A.R. aircraft attacked towns in Saudi Arabia [redacted]

[redacted] When on 14 May the U.A.R. placed its air defense units on full alert and deployed its tactical naval units, [redacted]

(U) On 17 May, the U.A.R. requested that the United Nations Emergency Force (UNEF) withdraw from the Gaza Strip. The U.N. complied, and Nasser immediately began moving troops into the Sinai. This decision by the U.A.R. government — presumably encouraged by the Soviets and Syrians — to move its armed forces up to the Sinai armistice line thus reestablished the direct Egyptian-Israeli military confrontation which had been the major immediate cause of the 1956 war.[10]

[redacted] Five days later on 23 May 1967, the U.A.R. blockaded the Strait of Tiran, thereby closing the Gulf of Aqaba to Israeli shipping and prohibiting unescorted tankers of any flag from reaching the Israeli port of Elat. This action reproduced another element that had brought on the 1956 war. Because Israel had repeatedly asserted that she would go to war if the U.A.R. blocked the Gulf, [redacted]

(U) The U.A.R. blockade precipitated quiet but full-scale mobilization by Israel. Arab forces were repositioned, and on 30 May Egypt and Jordan signed a five-year military alliance, completing Arab encirclement of Israel. Shortly thereafter, Soviet naval vessels entered the Mediterranean through the Dardanelles.[11]

(U) On 1 June, as pressure to open the Strait of Tiran built within Israel, Moshe Dayan was appointed Israeli Minister of Defense. The next day, Friday, 2 June, the United States and the United Kingdom issued a joint statement declaring the Gulf of Aqaba an international waterway to which all states were entitled free passage.

(U) The weekend of 3 and 4 June passed uneventfully, but then lightning struck. On Sunday, 5 June at approximately 0845 Middle East time, Israel launched simultaneous air strikes against all forward U.A.R. airfields on the Sinai and in the Suez Canal Zone. While the bulk of the 400-plane Israeli air force concentrated on U.A.R. targets, the remaining Israeli jets made coordinated attacks against airfields in Jordan, Syria, and Iraq. Israeli raids against Arab air bases continued throughout 5 June and by nightfall Israel had complete mastery of the sky having virtually destroyed four Arab air forces.[12]

[redacted] Forty-five minutes after the launching of the Israeli air offensive, Israeli troops started their crushing ground attack against U.A.R. forces in the Sinai. In the Gaza Strip, Israeli ground forces [illegible] Rafah and Khan Yunus. Meanwhile tank columns raced thirty miles west into the Sinai to capture Al 'Arish. With this rapid spread of hostilities, [redacted]

(U) On Tuesday, 6 June, U.A.R. President Nasser, charging that U.S. and British planes had intervened in the war on the side of Israel, closed the Suez Canal to all shipping and severed diplomatic relations with the U.S. In turn, the U.S. broke diplomatic ties with Cairo.

(U) On the battlefield, Israeli tank columns advanced toward the Suez Canal on three major fronts: through Al 'Arish toward Al Qantarah in the north; through Abu 'Uwayjilah along the central route toward Ismailia; and to Al Quseymah on the southern route. Farther south, other columns advanced to Al Kuntillah in the Sinai.

(U) Operating against the Jordanian forces, Israeli troops captured the cities of Janin, Qalqilyah, and Ram Allah and took the high ground north of Jerusalem on 6 June.

(U) On 7 June, Israeli units swept across the Sinai to advance within eighteen miles of the Suez Canal in the north and reached toward the Mitla Pass in the south. Other Israeli forces captured Ash Sharmah at the entrance to the Gulf of Aqaba, breaking the blockade at the Strait of Tiran. Also on the 7th, Israel gained control of the Gaza Strip plus the West Bank of the Jordan River. The Jordanian army and accompanying Iraqi units were defeated.

(U) The United Nations called for a cease-fire. Israel accepted provided the other belligerents complied. On 7 June, Jordan agreed to the cease-fire, but the U.A.R. rejected it. The following day (8 June), however, both the U.A.R. and Syria accepted the cease-fire. At approximately 1400 hours this same date the U.S.S. *Liberty* was attacked.

(U) On 9 June, following an Israeli charge that Syria had violated the cease-fire, Israeli troops and armored forces smashed deep into Syria. By the time both sides agreed, on 10 June, to observe the U.N. cease-fire, the entire southwestern corner of Syria was in Israeli hands, including the Golan Heights which dominated Israeli territory in the Jordan Valley and around the Sea of Galilee.

[redacted]

James W. Ernest, Jr. Research Papers

[redacted] On this same day, when the Soviet representative to the U.N. threatened direct Soviet intervention if the Security Council did not halt the fighting [redacted] A cease-fire, negotiated by the U.N., totally went into effect and all hostilities ceased at 1830 hours Mid-East time on Saturday, 10 June 1967.

Notes

Source documents are in the [redacted] *of the NEA History Collection.*

[illegible] Theodore Draper, *Israel and World Politics*, Viking Press, New York, 1968, p. 35.

[illegible] Hal Kosut, editor, *Israel and the Arabs: The June 1967 War. Facts on File*, New York, 1968, p. 32.

[illegible] Charles W. Yost, "The Arab-Israeli War: How It Began," *Foreign Affairs*, vol. 46, no. 2 (Jan 1968), p. 310.

[illegible] The United Arab Republic was formed in [illegible] with the union of Egypt and Syria and then dissolved in September 1961. Even though the union was dissolved, Egypt was [illegible] to as the U.A.R. until 2 September 1971 when [illegible] changed to the Arab Republic of Egypt. In this [illegible] U.A.R. [illegible] used throughout to mean Egypt.

[illegible] Ibid., p. [illegible]

[redacted]

[illegible] Ibid.

[illegible] Ibid.

[illegible] Ibid.

[illegible] Charles W. Yost, "The Arab-Israeli War: How It Began," [illegible]

[redacted]

[illegible] Ibid.

[illegible] Ibid., p. 9.

[illegible] Ibid.

[illegible] Ibid.

[redacted]

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Chapter II

Considerations Leading to the Ship's Deployment (U)

Looking back upon the *Liberty* incident today, Americans might well question why the U.S. introduced [redacted] into a war theater in which Americans were not direct participants and expose that ship to the risk it did. The decision to deploy, it should be noted, came before the Six Day War erupted. It came after careful [redacted] from this troubled region, of technical factors which would govern the [redacted] and of the need to develop, [redacted] in the event future U.S. involvement in Middle East hostilities should bring a requirement to support [redacted] forces. The [redacted] only one of many actions taken [redacted]

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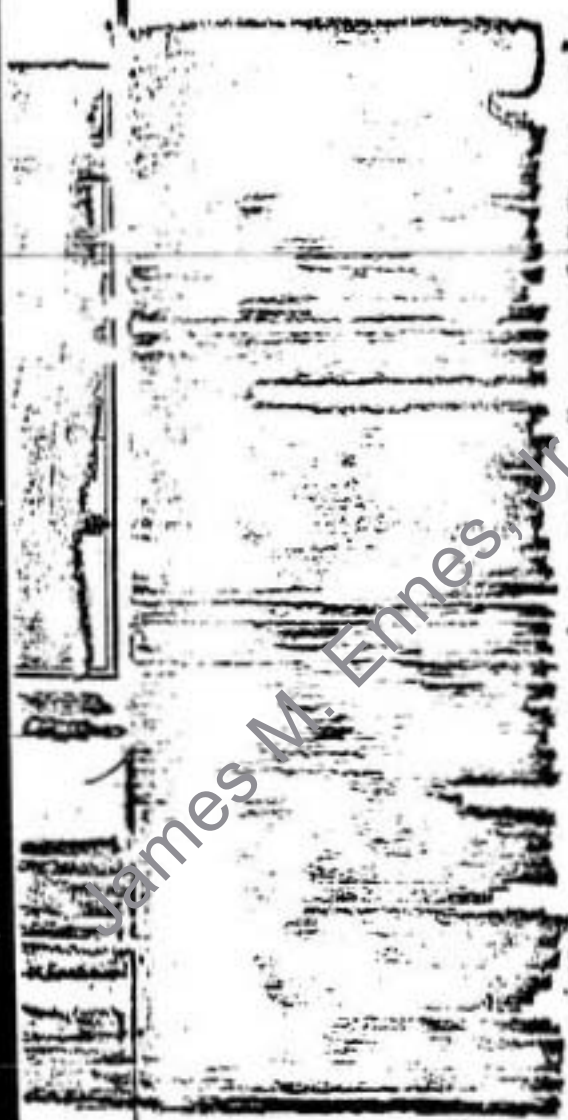

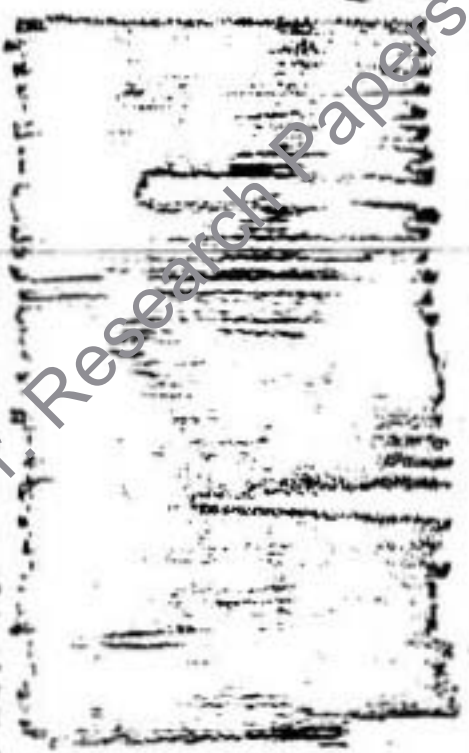

[redacted]

[redacted]

Notes

Source documents are in the [redacted] of the NSA History Collection.

(1) NSA Staff, "Fact Sheet for DIRNSA," [redacted]

[redacted]

(1) "Report to the Director, NSA," [redacted]

[redacted] Informal information from NSA Staff Officer, [redacted]

(1) NSA Staff, [redacted] 18 Jan 1947.

[redacted]

James M. Ennes, Jr. Research Papers

(U) John R. Rasmussen, *A History of Kaphra Station and American Forces in Eritrea*, 28 May 1972.

(U) Kaphra Station, [illegible] Annual Historical Report, FY 1967, vol. [illegible] pp. 11-12, 20.

(U) NSA Staff, [illegible] pp. 24, 27.

(U) [illegible]

(U) [illegible] "A Review of the Technical Research Ship Program, 1961-1969," 1 May 1970; Interview with Gene Shock, 11 Aug 1969, p. 5.

(U) U.S. Army Communications Support Unit, Annual Historical Report, FY 1967, [illegible] pp. 13-14; (U) "Report to the Director, NSA," Table A and B.

(U) NSA Staff, [illegible] "Report to the Director, NSA," [illegible] p. 17-18.

[illegible] NSA Staff, [illegible]

(U) NSA Staff, "Fact Sheet [illegible] detail," "Report to the Director, NSA," [illegible] p. 16-17; Interview with Gene Shock, 11 Aug [illegible]

(U) U.S. Army Communications [illegible] Annual Historical Report, FY 1967, vol. [illegible] pp. 12-14.

(U) NSA Staff, "Fact Sheet for DIRNSA [illegible]

(U) [illegible] "A Review of the Technical Research Ship Program, [illegible] 1 May 1970.

(U) [illegible] p. 18

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SECRET

Chapter III

Deployment to the Mediterranean (U)



U.S.S. *Liberty's* Modus Operandi (U)

(U) U.S. reconnaissance operations came under the purview of the J-3, Joint Chiefs of Staff. A Deputy Director for Reconnaissance assisted the J-3 in the exercise of operational control over reconnaissance activities of the unified and specified commands. The Joint Reconnaissance Center (JRC) worked for the Deputy Director for Reconnaissance and had authority over U.S. reconnaissance operations. NSA had a representative to the Joint Reconnaissance Center, Mr. John Connell.

(U) In 1965 the JCS had given general guidance on the conduct of technical research ship (TRS) operations. Operational control of the ships was to be effected by unified and specified commanders "through the naval component commander to a specific fleet or force commander." In May 1967, the U.S.S. *Liberty* (auxiliary general technical research ship (AGTR)) was operating under the control of the Commander-in-Chief, Atlantic. The TRS commanding officer was Commander William L. McGonagle.



Paddy E. Rhodes, *during an interview,* described the area of the *Liberty*

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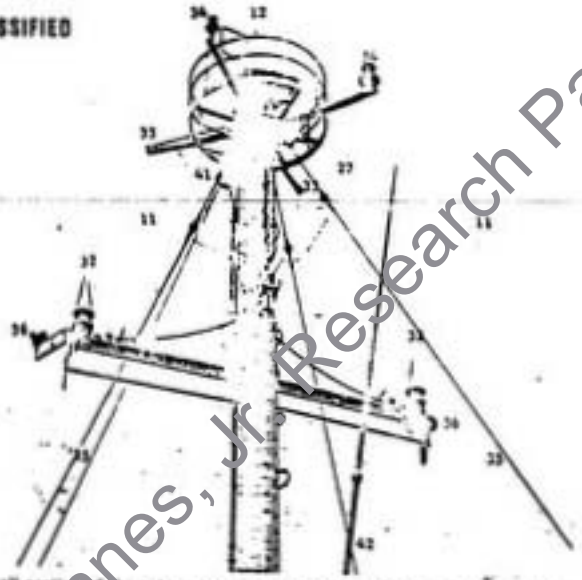
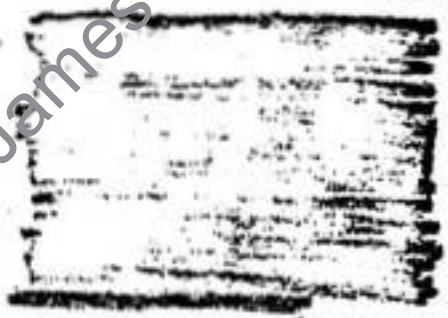


(U) A small portion of the antenna configuration of the U.S.S. *Liberty* included:



(Figure is UNCLASSIFIED)





(U) — Perhaps the most visible technical feature of the ship was its antennas, some 45 or so.

(U) — Not so visible was, however, the ship's armament, which was minimal — four .50-caliber machine guns, 2 forward and 2 aft, one Browning automatic rifle, and a number of small arms.

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Abidjan to Rota, 24-31 May 1967 (U)

[redacted] The TRS was at Abidjan, Ivory Coast, at the end of May on its 50th African cruise when, in response to [redacted] the JCS/JRC, with approval of the Deputy Secretary of Defense, directed movement of the ship to the eastern Mediterranean via Rota, Spain, and requested the Commander-in-Chief, Atlantic to change operational control of the ship to the Commander-in-Chief, Europe upon its arrival at Rota.[7] At the time, the *Liberty* was under the operational control of the Commander, Service Squadron 8, a component of the Commander-in-Chief, Atlantic, and on 24 May the Commander, Service Squadron 8 issued sailing orders to the *Liberty*, with information copies to Commander, Sixth Fleet and others, directing the ship to move at once to Rota.[8] The *Liberty* departed Abidjan at 0531Z, 24 May, with estimated time of arrival in Rota, 31 May.[9]

Liberty at Rota, 31 May to 2 June 1967 (U)

(U) When the *Liberty* arrived at Rota on 31 May, it came under the operational control of the U.S. Commander-in-Chief, Europe (Gen. L.L. Lemnitzer) who turned over control to the Commander-in-Chief, U.S. Navy Europe.[10] While delegating his control, General Lemnitzer still wanted operational information on the ship's progress and asked on 1 June that situation reports (Sitreps) and planned intended movement (Pim) reports from the *Liberty* arrive at his headquarters daily and that any incidents be reported as soon as possible in accordance with the existing reconnaissance reporting instructions.[11]

[redacted] At the taking control, Admiral John S. McCain, Jr., Commander-in-Chief, U.S. Navy Europe, directed the *Liberty* to send to his headquarters daily Sitreps and position reports and in those reports to include the Pim for the next 24 hours and any comments on status of the ship. He directed the *Liberty* to depart for the eastern Mediterranean when ready, provided guidelines for its staying within international waters, and asked for adherence to established communications procedures for the region.[12]

[redacted]

(U) At Rota, the *Liberty* prepared for its deployment to the eastern Mediterranean, taking on provisions and fuel, acquiring the military documentation necessary for its assignment to Commander-in-Chief, U.S. Navy Europe and later to the U.S. Sixth Fleet, and repairing its TRSSCOMM which [illegible] faulty [illegible].

[redacted]

To facilitate the planning [illegible]

[redacted] With the territorial limits established by Middle East countries in mind, JCS subsequently directed the Commander-in-Chief, Europe to deploy the *Liberty* to operational area three with closest point of approach (CPA) to Algeria, Libya, and the U.A.R. of 13 nautical miles during transit. On arrival in operational area three, CPA was to be 12.5 nm to the U.A.R. and 6.5 nm to Israel.[13] Acting upon the JCS message for Commander-in-Chief, Europe and after hearing from the *Liberty* that it had

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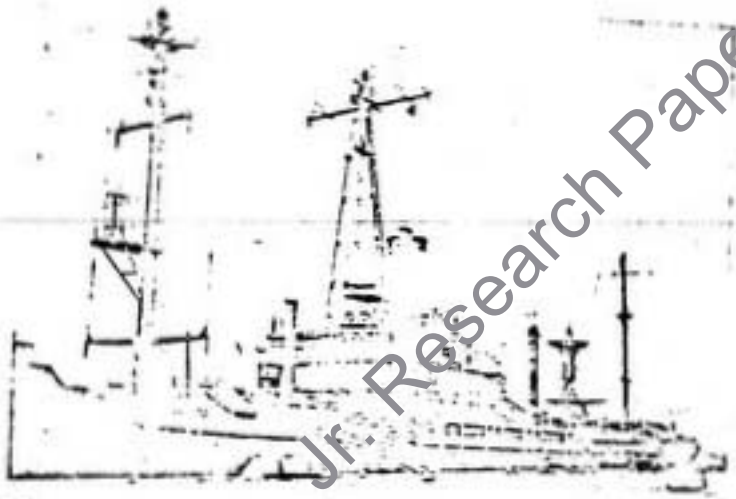

(U) The *Liberty* docked in Rota, Spain, to be readied for deployment to the eastern Mediterranean. In [illegible] the operational control of the *Liberty* was turned over to the U.S. Commander-in-Chief, Europe, who in turn delegated the control to Admiral John S. McCain, Jr., Commander-in-Chief, U.S. Navy Europe.

(Photograph courtesy of [illegible]
(Figure at USCG Academy Library)

completed [illegible] the TRISCOMEM hydraulic system, Admiral McCain directed the *Liberty* to follow the schedule prescribed by JCS.[illegible] The *Liberty* then departed Rota on 2 June at 1200Z through the Strait of Gibraltar on a course paralleling the North African [illegible]

[illegible]

Processing Center (U)

(S) While the *Liberty* was enroute to Rota from Abidjan, [illegible]

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and 33 other addressees including the Commander, Sixth Fleet that as of 0001Z, 7 June, the *Liberty* would be guarding the fleet broadcast from the Naval Communications Station at Asmara, Ethiopia, which served the eastern Mediterranean. In accordance with customary communications procedures, the *Liberty* would guard the fleet broadcast from the Naval Communications Station, Morocco, until it reached the eastern Mediterranean.

(U) The Commander-in-Chief, U.S. Navy Europe apprised Commander, Sixth Fleet, Vice Admiral William I. Martin on 3 June, that the *Liberty*'s mission was to conduct an "extended independent surveillance operation in the eastern Mediterranean" and that the Sixth Fleet might be called upon to provide logistic and other support.

(U) With the outbreak of the war on 5 June, the Commander-in-Chief, U.S. Navy Europe in a message to the Commander, Sixth Fleet and others took note of the movement of some 20 Soviet warships with supporting vessels and an estimated 6 or 9 Soviet submarines into the eastern Mediterranean and Aegean and, along with other guidance, instructed Vice Admiral Martin to keep his ships and aircraft at least 100 nm away from the coasts of Lebanon, Syria, Israel, and the U.A.R. and at least 25 nm away from Cyprus.[4] The Commander, Sixth Fleet directed his units to comply later that day.[5] Neither the Commander-in-Chief, U.S. Navy Europe nor the Commander, Sixth Fleet directives included specific instructions to the U.S.S. *Liberty*.

Enroute to Operational Area Three (U)

(U) *Liberty*'s move into the Mediterranean proceeded according to plan. It reported that it overtook and passed three Soviet ships during its passage through the Strait of Gibraltar. Following the North African coastline,

(U) At [illegible], 2 June the *Liberty* informed the Navy Movement Report Office in London

(U) While it was neither NSA's responsibility nor intension to adjudge the safety factors of the *Liberty*'s mission, in view of the outbreak of hostilities, NSA's Gen. Sheck and [illegible] did

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ask the NSA liaison officer to the JCS/JRC, Mr. J. Connell, on 5 June if any consideration was being given there to a change in the *Liberty's* operational area. They reminded Connell that [redacted] The NSA liaison officer discussed the matter with JRC's [illegible]-movement officer and then advised Sheck and [redacted] that no action was then under consideration.

(U) On 6 June, as it was passing between Libya and Crete, the *Liberty* reported to Sixth Fleet that its TRSSCOMM, which had had malfunctions in its power supply and hydraulic systems on the trip from Rota, was again operating satisfactorily and, in reply to a Commander-in-Chief, U.S. Navy Europe query concerning Pima not being received, provided the date-time [illegible] of Pima previously sent.

[redacted]

(U) On this same day, 6 June, the Commander-in-Chief, U.S. Navy Europe told the Commander, Sixth Fleet that the *Liberty* was to come under his operational control at [illegible] June 1967 in order "to facilitate area [illegible] and control and any possible requirement for protection during the Middle East hostilities" and pointed out that the *Liberty's* schedule might be revised for safety reasons "as dictated by the [illegible] situation."[illegible] *Liberty* acknowledged the instructions concerning its operational control as [illegible] the 6th. *Liberty's* commanding officer, Commander McGonagle, also told the Commander, Sixth Fleet that the ship was in a "Readiness Condition Three-Modified" and reminded his superior that the ship's "self-defense capability" was limited to four [illegible]-caliber machine guns and small arms.

(U) Three hours later the Commander, Sixth Fleet cautioned its new charge by message to "maintain a high state of vigilance against attack or threat of attack" in view of the "unpredictability of U.A.R. actions." He directed the *Liberty* to report by Flash precedence any threatening actions or "any diversion from schedule necessitated by external threat" [illegible] to submit "reports of contact with ships, aircraft, [illegible] submarines which are unidentified, of intelligence interest, or [illegible] Admiral Martin also [illegible] *Liberty* to copy the [illegible] and [illegible] carrier task force (TF-60) tactical [illegible] if necessary." *Liberty* did not receive, for one reason or another, this message.

(U) On 7 June at 0800Z the *Liberty* was off the [illegible] of the U.A.R. and approaching operational areas two and three. Despite the Immediate Precedence assigned to the *Liberty's* [illegible] report at 0908Z, 7 June, giving its [illegible] at 0800Z at 33-08N 26-54E, it took, according to a JCS postmortem report, some fifteen and one-half hours for the *Liberty's* position report to reach the Commander, Sixth Fleet, the action addressee.[illegible] *Liberty* was now guarding the fleet [illegible] of the Naval Communications Station, Asmara. On this day a number of actions were under way to minimize the appearance of U.S. involvement in the Middle East hostilities and to change the *Liberty's* operational area.

[redacted]

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ask the NSA liaison officer to the JCS/JIEC, Mr. J. Connell, on 5 June if any consideration was being given there to a change in the *Liberty*'s operational area. They reminded Connell that [redacted]

The ASA liaison officer discussed the matter with JIEC's ship-movement officer and then advised Sherk and [redacted] that no action was then under consideration.

(U) On 6 June, as it was passing between Libya and Crete, the *Liberty* reported to Sixth Fleet that its TRSSCOMM, which had had malfunctions in its power supply and hydraulic systems on the trip from Rota, was again operating satisfactorily and, in reply to a Commander-in-Chief, U.S. Navy Europe query concerning Pims not being received, provided the date-time group of Pims previously sent.

[redacted]

(U) On this same day, 6 June, the Commander-in-Chief, U.S. Navy Europe, told the Commander, Sixth Fleet that the *Liberty* was to come under his operational control at 0001Z, 7 June 1967 in order "to facilitate area command and control and any possible requirement for protection during the Middle East hostilities" and pointed out that the *Liberty*'s schedule might be revised for safety reasons "as dictated by the situation."[9] *Liberty* acknowledged the instructions concerning its operational control at 2022 on the 6th. *Liberty*'s commanding officer, Commander McGonagle, also told the Commander, Sixth Fleet that the ship was in a "Readiness Condition Three-Modified" and reminded his superior that the ship's "self-defense capability" was limited to four .50-caliber machine guns and small arms.

(U) Three hours later the Commander, Sixth Fleet cautioned its new charge by message to "maintain a high state of vigilance against attack or threat of attack" in view of the "unpredictability of U.A.R. actions." He directed the *Liberty* to report by Flash precedence any threatening actions or "any diversion from schedule necessitated by external threat" and to submit "reports of contact with ships, aircraft, and submarines which are unidentified, of intelligence interest, or engage in harassment." Admiral Martin also instructed the *Liberty* to copy the fleet broadcast and to use his fast cruiser task force (TF-60) tactical circuits if necessary. *Liberty* did not receive, for one reason or another, this message.

(U) On 7 June at 0800Z the *Liberty* was off the coast of the U.A.R. and approaching operational areas two and three. Despite the Immediate Precedence assigned to the *Liberty*'s noon report at 0900Z, 7 June, giving its position at 0800Z at 33-06N 28-54E, it took, according to a JCS postmortem report, some fifteen and one-half hours for the *Liberty*'s position report to reach the Commander, Sixth Fleet, the action addressee.[10] *Liberty* was now guarding the fleet on behalf of the Naval Communications Station, Rota. On this day a number of actions were taken by way to minimize the appearance of U.S. involvement in the Middle East hostilities and to change the *Liberty*'s operational area.

[redacted]

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[redacted]

Directions to Withdraw the *Liberty* (U)

(C) In view of the sensitivity regarding the [redacted] and following a question from the U.S. Chief of Naval Operations about the wisdom of *Liberty*'s assignment in the war zone," the JCS/JRC made a new assessment of the danger inherent in the *Liberty*'s operations. JRC considered the distance of the *Liberty* from the Sixth Fleet, some 300 to 400 miles, [redacted] from [redacted]

(U) In a message conveying the sense of urgency then developing in the Pentagon staff, JCS expressed concern in a message at 2230Z to Commander-in-Chief, Europe over the Middle East situation and stated that the JCS-directed operational area for the *Liberty* was "for guidance only and could be varied as local conditions dictate." JCS also instructed the Commander-in-Chief, Europe to change CPA to the U.A.R. to 25 nm, to Israel 15 nm." Although a copy of the message was to have gone to the *Liberty*, it would not reach the ship prior to the attack. The Department of Army Communications Center in [redacted] the Naval Communications Station in the Pentagon.

(U) Further deliberation within the JCS/JRC following discussions with the Chief of Naval Operations, who was pressing for a 100-mile CPA for the *Liberty*, now resulted in a JCS decision to move the *Liberty* well off the hostile shoreline. Contributing to the decision, an JRC's Captain Merriwell Vineyard (USN) told NSA's JRC representative, John Connell, late on the 7th, was the desire of General Wheeler, Chairman, JCS, to support in any way the U.S. position taken at the U.N. in answer to U.A.R. charges of complicity. U.S. Ambassador Arthur J. Goldberg had stated on the 6th to the Security Council that "All Sixth Fleet aircraft are and have been several hundred miles from the area of conflict."

(U) At 2350Z, one hour after the JCS had given its instructions restricting the *Liberty* to the 15-20 nm CPA, JRC's Major Broadbent, shipping control Commander-in-Chief, Europe channels, on Vice-called Commander-in-Chief, U.S. Navy Europe's command center to convey the JCS/JRC decision and direct that the *Liberty* be moved back to a CPA of 100 nm to the coasts of Israel, U.A.R., and Libya and a CPA of 25 nm to Cyprus. He indicated to Lieutenant E. L. Galavotti, the operations duty officer there, that a confirming JCS message would follow. Broadbent explained the urgency of the matter "because time [was] getting short to where she will be in those limits." Galavotti said he would go to Sixth Fleet right away and had an [redacted] message ready by 0600Z for release to his superiors in Sixth Fleet. Some fourteen minutes after calling Commander-in-Chief, U.S. Navy Europe, Broadbent called the Commander-in-Chief, Europe JRC watch officer, informing him of the verbal request to NAVEUR and telling him that NAVEUR had promised to take action."

(U) Within the Commander-in-Chief, U.S. Navy Europe command center, an unfortunate delay took place, however, in relaying the JCS/JRC instruction to the Sixth Fleet for action. Mindful that this directive had skipped channels and was only verbal, Galavotti's superior, Captain M. J. Hanley, Jr., Deputy Chief of Staff, U.S. Navy Europe, directed that the message to Sixth Fleet not be released until the date-time group of the JCS confirming message was at hand. NAVEUR policy allowed for acceptance of oral instructions from higher headquarters to move ships and aircraft only if [redacted] flag or general officers or if firm evidence of a message directive were provided — for example, the date-time group of a confirming message. Instead of releasing the message, Captain Hanley told the NAVEUR command center duty officer, Commander C. G. Jorgensen, to apprise Commander-in-Chief, Europe of the matter and ask that headquarters to obtain the date-time group of the confirming JCS message. Jorgensen then called the U.S. European Command's (EUCOM) command duty officer at 0600Z, who indicated he would check and call back. The JCS confirming message, JCS 0601[illegible]Z was, of course, not yet released at the time of the call. Its transmission by the Department of Army Communications Center in the Pentagon to Commander-in-Chief, Europe was at 0602[illegible]Z."

(U) Not hearing from the higher headquarters, Commander Jorgensen repeated his call at 0125Z on 8 June to check again on the status of the action and again asked EUCOM to obtain a date-time group, this time speaking with a duty officer in the JRC section of EUCOM, Lieutenant Colonel C. K. Russell. European Command's delay of three hours in

[redacted]

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responding to NAVEUR had resulted from its assumption, based on Breedlove's call from the JCS/JRC, that NAVEUR was already taking action.[17] Shortly thereafter, Russell was able to give Jorgensen the required JCS date-time group, the message having just arrived in the EUCOM JRC duty officer's hands, but this was about the same time as NAVEUR's information copy of JCS 080110Z, the confirming message, arrived in the NAVEUR command center itself — the time, 0325Z, 8 June. A precious four hours had gone by since Major Breedlove's call.

(U) Commander Jorgensen then asked for a telecon with Sixth Fleet's staff duty officer and at 080355Z was experiencing difficulties in establishing contact because of atmospheric conditions. He then had his radio operator contact Sixth Fleet by single sideband radio and request the telecon as soon as possible. The two-way telecon with Sixth Fleet began at 080410Z.

(U) When the Sixth Fleet staff duty officer told Jorgensen his command did not have JCS 080110Z as yet (the Army Communications Center, Pentagon, having misrouted this message to Hawaii), Jorgensen passed it to him three times before gaining an acknowledgement at 080440Z from the Sixth Fleet duty officer, who was having difficulty in hearing NAVEUR. Jorgensen then sent a confirming message: "From CINCNAVEUR Command Duty Officer to COMSIXTHFLT Duty Officer. Be advised that JCS 080110Z FORAC. Official msg follows."

(U) Ironically, the Sixth Fleet's duty officer then indicated to Jorgensen that Sixth Fleet did not hold reference (a), the critical JCS message and asked for a copy. NAVEUR also was without a copy of the reference message, despite both NAVEUR and Sixth Fleet having been designated for information copies. (JCS 7237/072230Z). Jorgensen would obtain it from Commander-in-Chief, Europe and later, on receiving a copy, outline to the Sixth Fleet's duty officer the moments which had, by that time, been overtaken by events.

(U) From 080441Z June 67 it became the Commander, Sixth Fleet's responsibility to direct the *Liberty* to a safer area of operations than the one in which she was then steering. Vice Admiral Martin's message to the *Liberty*, directing it not to approach the coast of the U.A.R., Syria, or Israel closer than 100 nm, went out some four and one-half hours later, at 080917Z, the delay in this case being attributed to preparations on board the U.S.S. *America* for a press conference relating to the U.A.R. charges of U.S. complicity with Israel in the prosecution of the war and to Sixth Fleet's need to transmit other traffic of equal or higher precedence.[18] Meanwhile *Liberty* was, of course, already in its operational area. Its position at 080800Z was within 20 nm of 31-45N 33-00E in area three.

(U) When it rains, it pours, and there would be even further delays in the attempts to get the word to the *Liberty*.

(U) JCS's investigating team, the U.S. Navy Court of Inquiry, and later a congressional staff gave close attention to the Sixth Fleet message to the Liberty, following the course of the message in the critical hours before it came under attack. Essentially, the findings were these:

Time	Status
0617Z, 8 June	Sixth Fleet Staff Duty Officer had message *ready for release* by Assistant Chief of Staff (Operations).
0917Z	Message released with Immediate Precedence.
1035Z	Message transmitted to the Naval Communications Station, Morocco, for relay to the *Liberty*, the delay owing to the transmission of equal or higher precedence messages. Unaware that the *Liberty*, pursuant to its instructions, was now guarding the fleet broadcast of the Naval Communications Station, Asmara, the Sixth Fleet routing clerk erred in sending this message to Morocco.
1050Z	Message received at the Naval Communications Station, Morocco, and passed over Defense Communications System to DCS station, Asmara. Through error, the Asmara DCS station sent the message to the Naval Communications Station, Greece, at 1226Z. The latter sent it back to the Asmara DCS station.
1510Z	Asmara DCS station delivered the message to the Naval Communications Station.
1525Z	Naval Communications Station, Asmara, put the message on its fleet broadcast.

The *Liberty* would not receive the critical message in time.

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(U) The action messages directing withdrawal of the *Liberty* to a CPA of 100 nm were three in number: JCS 0601102Z, Sixth Fleet 0609172Z referred to by the foregoing, and Commander-in-Chief, Europe's 0609202Z to NAVEUR confirming informal exchanges giving action on the JCS message to NAVEUR. Information copies of the JCS and the CINCEUR action messages were to have gone to the U.S.S. *Liberty*, and it is, of course, entirely possible that timely receipt of these might have triggered a withdrawal action on the part of the *Liberty*'s Commander McGonagle. But the same unkind fate guarding the action messages was also looking after the information copies. These too ran into communications problems of one kind or another, and the *Liberty* would not receive them.[*]

Operational Area Three, 8 June (U)



Liberty's Processing Mission (U)



Notes

Source documents are on the [redacted] of the NSA Records Collection.

[*] (U) John Alger, "A Review of the Technical Research Ship Program, 1961-1969," 1 May 1970.

[redacted] Source documents [redacted]

(U) JCS msg cite no. 6o0n, 2810102Z May 1967.

(U) COMSERVSIXTH 0 msg, 2400202Z May 1967.

(U) *Liberty* msg, 2417232Z May 1967.

(U) USCINCEUR msg, 2070322Z May 1967.

(U) USCINCEUR msg 0103332Z Jun 1967.

(U) NSA Staff, "Informal Paper on *Liberty* Communications," 22 June 1967; NSA oral history interview with Orin Shock on 15 Aug 1980.

[redacted] Source documents relating to *Liberty*'s communications during the attack include: [redacted]

(U) USNSA msg to JCS JAC, 2810152Z May 1967.

(U) JCS msg cite no. 6724, 0115402 Jun 1967.

(U) *Liberty* msg to CINCNAVEUR, 0211102Z Jun 1967; CINCNAVEUR msg, 0207172Z Jun 1967.

[redacted] Source documents used in the research [redacted] 16 Jun 1967; NSA Staff [redacted] NSA Station [redacted] ederal.

(U) USNSA msg [redacted] 2810202Z May 1967.

(U) *Liberty* msg, 0211402 Jun 1967.

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(U) NSA oral history interview, Terry L. McFarland, 23 Jun 1980.

(U) CINCUSNAVEUR msg 021610Z Jun 1967.

(U) CINCUSNAVEUR msgs, 081351Z and 081650Z Jun 1967.

(U) COMSIXTHFLT msg, 082015 Jun 1967.

(U) NSA oral history interview [redacted] 6 May 1980; DIRNSA msg [redacted] 092217Z May [redacted]

(U) NSA oral history interviews with [redacted] on 6 May 1980 and with Paddy E. Rhodes on 13 June 1980.

(U) NSA Staff, "Report to the Director," 12 Jun 1967; House Appropriations Committee Surveys and Investigations Staff, *A Report to the Committee on Appropriations, U.S. House of Representatives on the Effectiveness of the Worldwide Communications Systems and Networks of the Department of Defense*, vol. 1, p. iv, "U.S.S. Liberty Incident," December 1967.

(U) NSA Staff, "Informal Paper on Liberty's Communications," 22 Jun 1967.

(U) CINCNAVEUR msg to Sixth Fleet, Liberty, and others, 081107Z Jun 1967.

(U) COMSIXTHFLT msg to Liberty and others, 082040Z Jun 1967.

(U) MG J. H. Rose, USA, "Report of the JCS Fact Finding Team-U.S.S. *Liberty* Incident, 8 Jun 1967," p. 15. Hereafter cited as the Rose Report.

(U) Rose Report, p. 16.

(U) NSA Staff [redacted] undated.

(U) JCS msg cite no. 7229, 071920Z Jun 1967.

(U) COMSIXTHFLT msgs to JCS, 071815Z and 071540Z Jun 1967.

(U) Rose Report, p. 16.

(U) NSA Staff, "Report to the Director," 12 Jun 1967, chronology section.

(U) JCS msg cite no. [redacted] CINCEUR with information copy to Liberty, [redacted] 1967.

(U) Rose Report, pp. [redacted]

(U) Rose Report, p. [redacted] NAVEUR Contingency Watch Team, "Memorandum-U.S.S. Liberty Incident," 12 Jun 1967; NSA Staff, "U.S.S. Liberty Chronology, 23 May-8 Jun [redacted]

(U) Rose Report, p. [redacted] and Tab E to Annex U.

(U) Ibid., p. [redacted]

(U) Ibid., [redacted]

(U) Discussion of information on the communication delays is in the Rose Report and also in the House Appropriations Committee report, [redacted] footnote 22.

(U) DIRNSA msg [redacted]

(U) NSA Staff, "[redacted] the Director [redacted] (U) NSA [redacted] Clark Clifford, Director, DIA - Advises Flexible [redacted] 27 Jun 1967.

(U) DIRNSA [redacted] 091816Z Jun 1967.

NSA Staff, [redacted] 10 Jul 1968.

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Chapter IV

The Attack (U)

(U) Thursday morning, 8 June 1967, found the *Liberty* cruising slowly in international waters on station as directed. At approximately 0830 hours (local time), the *Liberty* notified the Commander, Sixth Fleet that her position for the next 24 hours would be within 30 nautical miles of coordinates 31-45N and 33-30E.[1] The sea was calm and the clear sky permitted visibility of ten miles; a light breeze ruffled the *Liberty*'s ensign.[2]

(U) *Liberty*'s projected course for that day was to proceed to a point 13 nautical miles from the U.A.R. coast at 31-27.2N, 34-00E (Point Alpha), thence to 31-22.2N, 33-42E (Point Bravo), thence to 31-31N, 33-00E (Point Charlie) retracing this track until new orders were received. Normal steaming speed was to be five knots and typical steaming colors (which indicated conditions were normal) were flown.[3] A "condition of readiness three, modified" was set, i.e., a normal steaming watch, except that one man was stationed at each of the forward .50-caliber machine guns, numbers 51 and 52; lookouts on the bridge were designated to man machine guns 53 and 54 just aft of the bridge in the event of a surprise air or surface attack.[4]

(U) At about 0930 hours, it was possible to visually sight the minaret at Al 'Arish on the U.A.R. coast. It was used as a navigational aid and the ship's position was verified as being within its operating limits. There were no other conspicuous or outstanding navigational features in the area.[5]

Reconnaissance of the *Liberty* (U)

(U) Shortly before 0900 hours (local time), two delta-wing, single-engine jet aircraft orbited the *Liberty* three times at 31-27N, 34-00E. The planes' altitude was estimated at 5,000 feet, at a distance of approximately two miles. *Liberty* notified the Commander, Sixth Fleet and others of this reconnaissance, stating that identification was unknown and that no amplifying report would be submitted.[6]

(U) Later in the morning, at 1056 hours, an aircraft similar to the American flying boxcar crossed astern of the ship at a distance of about three to five miles. The plane circled the ship around the starboard side, proceeded forward of the ship and headed back toward the Sinai peninsula. This reconnaissance was repeated at approximately 20-minute intervals. It was impossible to see any identifying markings on the aircraft. The plane never approached the ship in a provocative manner and made no attempt to signal the ship. Nor did the *Liberty* attempt to signal it. Subsequent investigations of the attack on the *Liberty* identified the aircraft as a French-built Noratlas NORD 2501, piloted by Israeli Air Force.

(C) Though this plane was undoubtedly, the thoughts of [redacted] civilians aboard the *Liberty* must have been shared by his shipmates [redacted] remembered thinking when he saw the plane, that "it must be Israeli because what else is flying out here at this point in the war and also it's coming from the direction of Israel and it's going back to Israel, so it was obvious that it was Israeli. I didn't think much of it. They were just out there checking us out. That's what I would do too."[7]

(U) Being sensitive to its exposed and unprotected position, the *Liberty* reported to the Naval Security Station Command, at approximately 1100 hours, that she had destroyed all superseded May publications [redacted] and intended to destroy all irregularly superseded material daily because of the "current situation and shallow water in operating area."[8]

General Quarters Drill (U)

(U) After the lunch hour, at 1310 hours, the *Liberty*'s crew was exercised at general quarters for drill purposes for a mandatory noncompetitive exercise to train the crew in chemical-attack procedures. This was a routine activity, part of the ship's

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(U) The Dassault Mirage jet bomber of the type which attacked the *Liberty* on 8 June.
(Photograph courtesy of *Jane's All the World*.)
(Figure is UNCLASSIFIED)

training program established by the Commander, Service Force, Atlantic Fleet, and was not related to her mission in the eastern Mediterranean. The drill was performed satisfactorily and the ship returned to her "modified condition three" at 1345.[9]

(U) Following the general quarters drill, the *Liberty*'s Commanding Officer, Commander William L. McGonagle, fixed her position by radar as being 25.5 nautical miles from the coast at Al 'Arish, which was to the southeast (bearing 142° true.)

Air Attack Begins (U)



(U) During the general quarters (GQ) drill, Lieutenant James G. O'Connor (Assistant Technical Operations Officer of the Research Department) had been officer of the deck on the bridge. At the conclusion of the drill, he went up to the 04 level (above the bridge) to see if he could locate the approaching airplanes that had been picked up on radar by the lookouts. It was 1400 hours. From the starboard wing of the bridge, Commander McGonagle observed a single jet aircraft that appeared similar, if not identical, to those that had been sighted earlier in the day and about which a sighting report had been submitted. The relative bearing of this plane was about 135°, its position angle was about 45°-50°, its elevation approximately 7,000 feet, and it was approximately five to six miles from the ship. It appeared to McGonagle that the plane was traveling parallel to, and in the same direction as the *Liberty*. With his binoculars trained on the aircraft, the Commander was unaware of a second plane swooping in from the port side to launch a rocket directed toward the bridge. When the rocket exploded two levels below the bridge, McGonagle ordered the general alarm to be sounded.

(U) CTI Paddy E. (Dusty) Rhodes was headed below decks from his GQ station, damage control detail. At the end of the GQ drill, the Commander had ordered the whaleboat engine tested and, when Dusty heard a muffled explosion, he thought, "Those damned deck apes blew that boat up and I've got to go back up and fight the fire." Simultaneously, Dusty heard the general quarters alarm. Scampering back up the ladder, he could smell burning powder and started "dogging down" doors when a rocket tore through a bulkhead to his right ripping steel all about.

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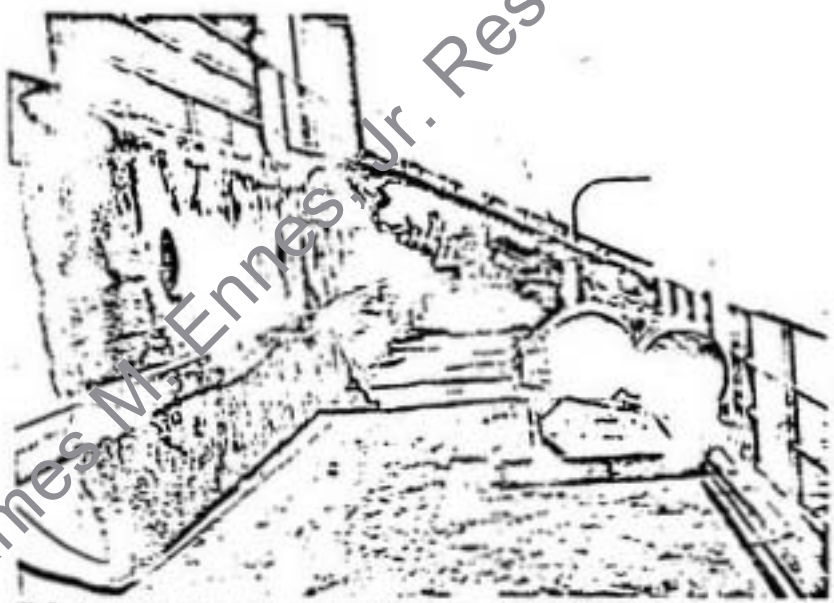
(U) Down in the [redacted], Terry McFarland, wearing his headphones, was vaguely aware of flickers of light coming through the bulkhead. He didn't realize that these were armor-piercing tracer bullets slicing through the *Liberty*'s skin. The "flickers" were accompanied by a strange noise that sounded to Terry like chains being pulled across the bottom of the ship. Next, he saw Seaman "Red" Addington race down the ladder from above with blood running down his right leg from a wound in the knee. "Somebody's up there shootin' at us," said Red. Nobody spoke, but Terry could see the fear in the faces about him. Someone ordered the men to perform emergency destruction, and they turned to dumping classified material in the weighted, white canvas bags specially made for this purpose. [redacted]

[redacted] went to the second deck from the [redacted] spaces to empty safes in that upper level.

(C) Hearing the general quarters alarm, CTI Clide W. Way ran from the mess deck to his station [redacted]

(U) Topside, one level above the main deck, the exploding rocket had started a blazing fire in two 55-gallon gasoline drums stowed below the bridge on the port side. McGonagle quickly ordered his Executive Officer, Lieutenant Commander Philip M. Armstrong, to go below and release the gasoline cans. Lieutenant [redacted] joined the Exec. Just as



(U) Starboard side of the *Liberty*, scorched by fire from exploding rockets that were launched by the Israeli attack aircraft.

(Figure is UNCLASSIFIED)

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both reached the top of the ladder to proceed down, a bomb hit near the whaleboat on the starboard side, immediately aft of the bridge. Armstrong and O'Connor were thrown back onto the bridge and other personnel in the pilot-house were blown from their feet. McGonagle grabbed the engine order annunciator and rang up all head flank speed — an order for maximum speed. At the same time, he ordered Lieutenant Maurice H. Bennett to report to the Chief of Naval Operations (CNO) via the high-command radio circuit (hicom) that the *Liberty* was under attack by unidentified jet aircraft and required immediate assistance. This Flash message, giving the *Liberty*'s position as 32-55E, 31-23N, was received by the aircraft carrier U.S.S. *Saratoga* (CVA-60) and relayed to Commander, U.S. Naval Forces Europe; Commander, Sixth Fleet; and Commander, Task Force 60 (CTF 60).[17] *Liberty*'s transmission was not made without difficulty. During the attack and intermittently thereafter, the hicom voice circuit was subjected to loud jamming regardless of frequency. This electronic interference was described as a steady carrier without modulation.[18]

(U) After being blown back onto the bridge floor, Lieutenant O'Connor realized he had no feeling in his body from the waist down. To get out of the way, he dragged himself into the combat information center (CIC) behind the bridge, where several others had also sought safety. Lying face down, O'Connor soon noticed that there was a lot of blood on the floor and then realized it was his. About the same time, Ensign O'Malley stepped into the CIC and helped stop O'Connor's bleeding by stuffing a battle dressing into the holes in his back.

(U) A few moments after the bomb blast on the starboard side, Commander McGonagle was hit by flying shrapnel and knocked off his feet, but, though shaken up, he remained on the bridge, totally in command.

(U) For the next five or six minutes, aircraft made cross-strafe attacks on the *Liberty* at about one-minute intervals, hitting her with rockets and machine-gun fire. A final count entered into the Court of Inquiry's record, showed 821 separate hits on the ship's hull and superstructure. The attacking aircraft were later identified as French-built Dassault Mirage jet fighters whose armament consisted of two 30mm cannon, two 1,000-pound bombs, and four rocket pods (18 rockets each).

(U) During the first or second strafing run, the ship's public-address system, the electrically powered intercom system, and most sound-powered phone circuits were severed or destroyed.

(U) In the first minutes of the air attack the *Liberty* suffered a complete loss of external communications because of badly damaged radio transmitting equipments and antenna systems. In spite of this, emergency restoration of hicom voice capability was completed within minutes. All U.S.S. *Liberty* communications immediately thereafter were on the hicom voice network.[19]

(U) The coordinated strafing, rocket, and incendiary air attacks created three large fires topside that covered large areas of the ship with flames and heavy smoke. Eight men were killed or died of injuries received during the air attack, two killed or mortally wounded on the bridge, two killed at machine gun 51, one killed at machine gun 52, one died from wounds received on the main deck starboard side, and two died of wounds received on the 01 level portside. Throughout the topside area, 75 men had been wounded by shrapnel and shock of exploding rockets.

(U) During this period, the *Liberty* gradually built up speed from five knots; her exact speed is unknown but it is doubtful that she exceeded 15 to 18 knots while under attack.

Torpedo-Boat Attack (U)

(U) At about 1424 hours, look-outs sighted three high-speed boats approaching the *Liberty* from the northeast on a relative bearing of approximately 130° at a distance of about 10 miles. The boats appeared to be in a wedge-type formation, spaced about 150 to 200 yards apart, and closing in a torpedo-launch attitude at an estimated speed of 27 to 30 knots. Commander McGonagle ordered a sailor from the bridge to man the starboard gun and take the boats under fire. Using the hicom circuit, the *Liberty*'s radioman reported the approach of the torpedo boats. This was received and relayed by the U.S.S. *Saratoga* to Commander-in-Chief, U.S. Navy Europe and to the Commander, Sixth Fleet.[20]

(U) It was then that the Commander noticed that the *Liberty*'s American flag had been shot down. He immediately ordered a signalman to hoist the "holiday ensign" — the largest flag aboard (approximately 7 x 13 feet) — from the yardarm, the normal flag halyard having been destroyed. There was smoke from the burning whaleboat and other topside fires in the vicinity of the bridge.

(U) Commander McGonagle passed the word, "Stand by for torpedo attack." He held his course, since turning away from the boats would bring the ship closer to land, and turning toward them would

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swing the ship broadside toward the attackers, giving them a larger target.

(U) When [redacted] heard the torpedo attack warning, he remembered one of the seamen telling him to sit on the floor and brace his feet against the wall.

(U) In the processing and reporting area, CT Terry McFarland was told to "tuck pant legs into your socks, button top collar, get rid of loose material, and lie flat on floor and hold your head in your hands to protect your face."

(U) When the motor torpedo boats were approximately a mile away, the center boat was seen flashing a signal light. Because of smoke and flames in the direction from which the boats were approaching, Commander McGonagle could not read the signals, but he saw what he believed to be an Israeli flag. As the air attack had knocked out the *Liberty*'s starboard signal light, he attempted to signal with a hand-held Aldis lamp. This may not have been powerful enough to penetrate the smoke pouring from the fires started by the attackers. Believing that the air attack might have been in error, Commander McGonagle quickly shouted to the starboard forward gun to withhold fire. The gunner fired a short burst at the motor torpedo boats before he understood the CO's order. At the same time, though unattended, the after gun on the starboard side opened fire. Flames from the burning whaleboat had ignited bullets in the gun and in the ammunition box, causing the gun to fire in the direction of the attacking boats.

(U) At this time, the motor torpedo boats opened fire with their gun mounts, killing the *Liberty*'s helmsman. In a matter of seconds one torpedo struck astern of the ship at about 25 yards. The time was then 1434 hours. A minute later, a second torpedo struck the ship on the starboard side, just forward of the bridge and a few feet below the waterline. Again, using the bitom net, the *Liberty* [illegible] that the ship had been torpedoed and was sinking badly. The *Saratoga* picked up the transmission and relayed it to the Commander-in-Chief, U.S. Navy Europe and to the Commander, Sixth Fleet."

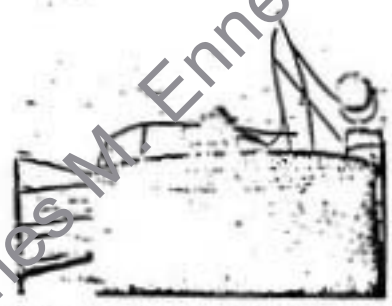
(U) To Lieutenant O'Connor, lying on the floor of the combat information center, the torpedo's deafening explosion seemed to lift the ship right out of the water. When it settled back he thought it was going to capsize.

(U) In the [redacted] where the torpedo struck, everything went black; oil and debris were everywhere. Water rushed in and equipment fell over Terry McFarland, but he managed to keep clear and make his way in the darkness to the ladder to go topside. When he got out there was about a foot and a half of air space left.

(U) CT Clyde W. Way was in [redacted] spaces above the [redacted]. With the explosion below, all equipment fell to the deck and smoke poured from the [redacted] hatch. Way started pulling men out as they came up the ladder. There was no panic. A Marine went down the ladder to help locate men possibly trapped in the water. As the water rose in the [redacted], Lieutenant Maurice Bennett realized that he had to close the hatch to contain the flooding. Attempts to contact the Marine who had gone back failed, and Lieutenant Bennett reluctantly and sorrowfully ordered the hatch closed. McFarland and Way then went topside to help fight fires and attend the wounded.

(U) The torpedo explosion had torn a hole in the side of the ship that extended from a few feet above the water line to below the turn of the bilge. It was shaped like a tear-drop, and was 39 feet across at its widest point. Its immediate effect was to flood all compartments on two decks below the water line, from frame 53 to frame 66. These frames supported watertight bulkheads, and marked the location of the *Liberty*'s [redacted] and store rooms. Twenty-five men died in these spaces some from the blast, others drowned.

(U) The torpedo hit did not start a major fire, probably because of the immediate flooding of the



(U) During the attack, severe damage was done to one of the two forward area 50-caliber gun mounts.

(U) Photograph courtesy of [redacted] (Figure is UNCLASSIFIED)

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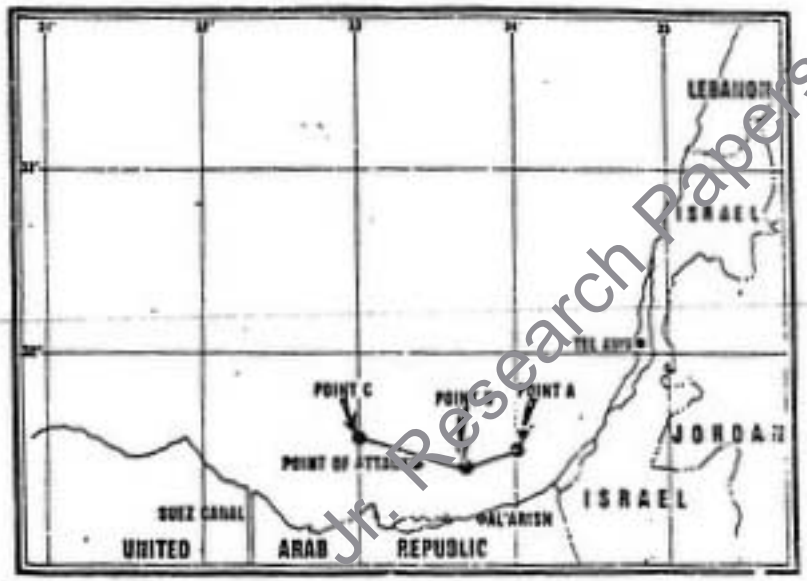

(U) The projected track of the *Liberty* on the day of attack.
(Figure is UNCLASSIFIED)

affected area, but the *Liberty* immediately listed nine degrees to starboard. Power and steering control were lost temporarily and the ship came dead in the water. The time was 1440 hours.

(U) The three torpedo boats also stopped and then moved around astern of the *Liberty* at a range of approximately 500 to 800 yards. One of the boats signaled by flashing light, in English, "Do you require assistance?" Not being able to signal by light, Commander McGonagle ordered a signalman to hoist the international flag signal for "not under command," meaning that the ship was maneuvering with difficulty and that they should keep clear. One of the torpedo boats was identified by a hull number of 204-17. All boats retired toward shore at 1505 hours. The attacking torpedo boats were later identified as French-built motor torpedo boats of the Israeli Ayah class. These were 63-ton craft, capable of 42 knots, with a crew of 15 and armament consisting of one 40mm cannon, four 20mm cannon, and two torpedos.

Post-Attack Reconnaissance (U)

(U) At abt 1 1515 hours, two helicopters approached the *Liberty* and circled around the ship at a distance of about 100 yards. The Star of David insignia was clearly visible. One of the helicopters was numbered 04 or 04, the other 08 or 08. The helicopters departed, returned, and departed again.

(U) Commander McGonagle designated the mess decks as a casualty collection station, and the wounded were taken there by repair party personnel and other crew members able to assist.

(U) Reports received from damage control central indicated that the flooding was under control.

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Power was restored to the bridge at 1820 hours, but steering control could not be regained from the bridge, making it necessary to give rudder orders by telephone to men in the "after steering" compartment, and for some time they operated the ship's heavy rudder by hand.

(U) At 1838 hours, the Israeli torpedo boats again approached the *Liberty* from the starboard, at a range of five miles. During the next hour and a quarter, the boats returned toward the ship several times before disappearing over the horizon without further signal or action.

(U) Communications were restored at about 1800 hours, and Commander McGonagle dictated a message to Lieutenant Bennett providing additional information concerning the attack by unidentified aircraft and the fact that the torpedo boats had been identified as Israeli. A preliminary estimate of the number of dead and casualties, as well as the condition of the ship, was also provided. Transmission of this message was delayed because shipboard emergency measures demanded immediate attention to preserve the safety and stability of the ship and minimize new casualties.

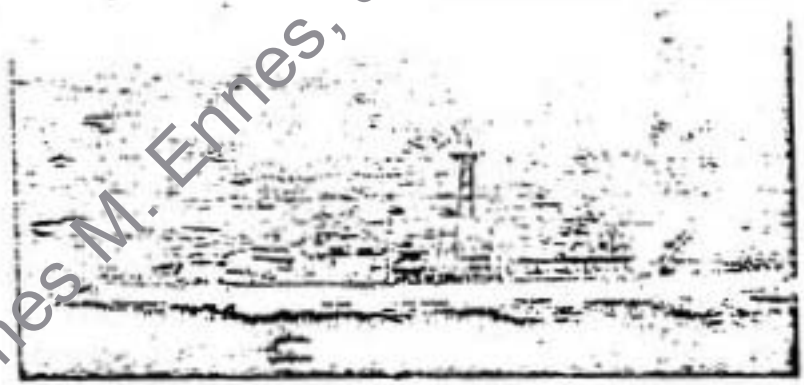
(U) Fifteen minutes later two unidentified jet aircraft approached the *Liberty* from the starboard side and reconnoitered from a distance before disappearing from the scene.

Sixth Fleet Reacts (U)

(U) Aboard his flagship, the guided-missile light cruiser U.S.S. *Little Rock* (CLG-4), the Commander, Sixth Fleet received (from the *Saratoga*) the *Liberty*'s messages about the air and torpedo boat attacks. At 1400 hours, fifty minutes after the attack began, he ordered the aircraft carrier U.S.S. *America* (CVA-66) to launch four armed A-6 Skyhawk [illegible] the carrier U.S.S. *Saratoga* (CVA-60) to launch four armed A-1 attack planes to defend the *Liberty*. The *America* was also directed to provide fighter cover and tanker aircraft to refuel the fighters, if necessary.[14] At this time, the Sixth Fleet was located south of Crete, approximately 450 miles west of the *Liberty*.

(U) At 1511 hours, Commander, Task Force 60, implementing Sixth Fleet's directive and instructed his carrier pilots to "destroy or drive off any attackers who are clearly making attacks on the *Liberty*. Remain over international waters. Defend yourself if attacked."[15]

(U) On the heels of this action, at 1520 hours, the Commander, Sixth Fleet, informed U.S. Commander-in-Chief, Europe (CINCEUR) of the attack and aircraft being deployed to defend the *Liberty*. It was estimated that the first aircraft would be on the scene at 1715 hours.[16]



(U) U.S.S. *Little Rock*, a guided missile light cruiser and the flagship of the Commander, Sixth Fleet.

(Photograph courtesy of the Department of the Navy.)
(Figure is UNCLASSIFIED)

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(U) Following this, at 1549 hours, the Commander, Sixth Fleet relayed to the Chief of Naval Operations (CNO) and the Commander-in-Chief, U.S. Navy Europe, (CINCUSNAVEUR) his message of instruction to the carriers concerning the use of force and observance of Israeli and Egyptian territorial limits.[9]

(U) Commander, Task Force 63, reacting to the *Liberty*'s plight, sent a message to Sixth Fleet at 1610 hours recommending that fleet ocean tug U.S.S. *Papago* (ATF-160) of the Abnaki class be diverted to proceed at maximum speed to assist the *Liberty*.

Washington Informed (U)

(U) An hour and eleven minutes after the *Liberty* was attacked, the National Military Command Center (NMCC) in the Pentagon was phoned by CINCEUR and told of the situation as known. At 0915 hours (DST), 8 June, NMCC phoned [redacted] to notify NSA of the attack.[10]

(U) At the White House, President Lyndon B. Johnson was busy telephoning cabinet members and congressional leaders when he was interrupted at 0949 hours (DST) by Walt Rostow, his Special Assistant for National Security Affairs, and told that the *Liberty*, has been torpedoed in the Mediterranean. The ship is located 60-100 miles north of Egypt. Reconnaissance aircraft are out from the Sixth fleet. ...no knowledge of the submarine or surface vessel which committed this act....shall keep you informed."[11]

(U) Rostow phoned again at 1014 hours to advise the President that the *Liberty* was "listing badly to starboard. The Intrepid has launched 4-A4's and 4-A1's...."[12]

Israel Reports Error (U)

(U) In Tel Aviv, Israel, the U.S. Naval Attaché, Commander E. C. Castle, was called to the Foreign Liaison Office, Israel Defense Force at approximately 1600 hours (local time) and told that Israeli air and sea forces had attacked the *Liberty* in error. Immediately the U.S. Defense Attaché office sent a Flash message to advise the White House, Department of State, and others of this development.[13]

Johnson Informs Kosygin (U)

(U) The message was received by the White House, NMCC, and other members of the U.S. military and intelligence community at 1045 hours (DST). Walt Rostow informed the President and immediately drafted a "hot line" message to the Kremlin. President Johnson approved the following text which was sent to Chairman Kosygin at [redacted] hours (DST):

> We have just learned that U.S.S. *Liberty*, an auxiliary ship, has apparently been torpedoed by Israel [redacted] in the Sinai. We have instructed our carrier [redacted] in the Mediterranean to dispatch aircraft to the area to investigate. We wish you to know that our commanders have been instructed to use the fullest of aircraft, and hope that you will take appropriate steps to see that proper parties are informed. We have passed the message to Cherniakov but feel that you should know of this development urgently.[14]

The message was received in Moscow at 1124 hours (DST).[15] At 1210 hours Kosygin replied by "hot line" that he had passed the message to President Nasser of Egypt.[16] Two later instructions were issued by JCS and Commander Sixth Fleet to withdraw the aircraft launched to defend the *Liberty*. By 1849 hours Sixth Fleet reported all planes recalled and accounted for.[17]

(U) Deputy Secretary of Defense Vance advised the Commander-in-Chief, U.S. Navy Europe, by phone at 1700 hours that all news releases on the *Liberty* affair would be made at the Washington level — no releases were to be made aboard ships. This information was relayed to the Commander, Sixth Fleet.[18]

Liberty Recovers (U)

(U) Unaware of what was happening at fleet headquarters or in Washington and Tel Aviv, the *Liberty* was struggling to regain full engine power and to reach deeper water. The gyro compass was out but the pilot-house magnetic compass appeared to be working.

(U) The ship remained at general quarters while the crew effected post-attack emergency measures. Sixth Fleet was notified that the *Liberty* has carried out the emergency destruction of all crypto publications and key cards. Her only means of communication remained the hi/lo circuits.[19]

(U) *Liberty*'s medical officer, Lieutenant Richard F. Hiegler, Medical Corps, USN, performed one major operation and gave emergency treatment to wounded men as best he could. He manned the main battle dressing station, together with one hospital corpsman, while the other corpsman operated a secondary station in the forward part of the ship. Both stations were flooded with seriously injured men and for a time there was little opportunity to do more than give first aid. Bleeding was stopped, men were given

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(U) The U.S.S. *America* was ordered by the Commander, Sixth Fleet to launch four Skyhawks to defend the *Liberty*.

(Photograph courtesy of the Department of the Navy.)
(Figure is UNCLASSIFIED)

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morphine for pain and treated for shock, and those with lung wounds were treated to ease breathing.

(U) At 1750 hours, Sixth Fleet advised the *Liberty* that destroyers were on the way at maximum speed and that the *Liberty* was to proceed on a course of 340° magnetic until 100 miles from present position, then turn 270° magnetic.

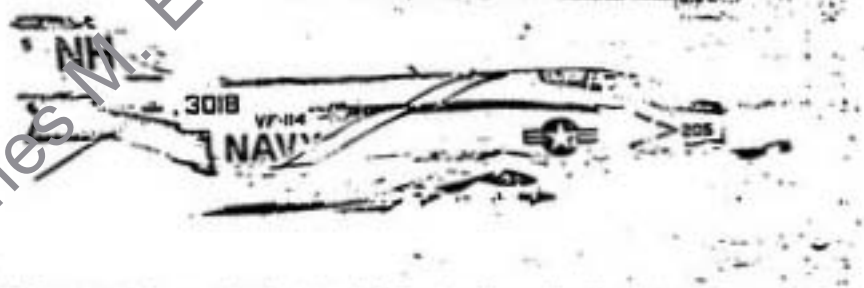
U.S. Naval Attaché Helicopters to the *Liberty* (U)

(U) Back in Tel Aviv, the Israeli Foreign Liaison Office was arranging for a helicopter to fly Commander Castle, U.S. Naval Attaché, to the *Liberty* so that he might communicate with its commanding officer. The helicopter left Duv Hoss (now Sde Dov) airfield on the northern side of Tel Aviv at 1810 hours and proceeded directly to the *Liberty*. By 1835 hours, the Israeli Sikorsky helicopter, carrying Commander Castle, was over the ship hovering at approximately 50 feet from bridge level. Lettering on the tail of the helicopter was SA32K and on the fuselage were the numerals 06 or 06. The helicopter had neither an electric megaphone nor hand-held signal light with which to communicate with the *Liberty*."

(U) Wearing civilian clothes, Commander Castle could not convey his identity to the bridge of the *Liberty* but by visual means indicated that he wished to be lowered aboard the ship. At first, Commander McGonagle prepared to receive the attaché party, considering the obstructions in the forward area, signaled a wave-off to the transfer attempt. Simultaneously, the helicopter pilot said he could not make the transfer because of the *Liberty*'s speed. A few minutes later an impromptu package weighted with an orange was dropped from the helicopter onto the forecastle. Inside the package was a message written on a calling card of "Commander Ernest Carl Castle, United States Navy, Naval Attache for Air, Embassy of the United States of America, Tel Aviv." On the back of the card was written, "Have you casualties?" Using an Aldis lamp, the *Liberty* attempted for ten to fifteen minutes, to reply to this message with "affirmative casualties." It was not clear to those on the ship that the reply was understood. Castle, however, had received the message but was uncertain as to whether the number flashed was four or forty. The bodies of three crew members had not yet been removed from the forecastle and must have been observed by those in the helicopter. With the waning light and approach of dusk, the helicopter departed the ship at approximately 1900 hours."

Shortly thereafter, at 1915 hours, the *Liberty* transmitted to CNO a post-attack situation report."

Back at NSA, within an hour of learning that the *Liberty* had been torpedoed, the



(U) The *America* also was ordered to dispatch F4 Phantom fighters, like this one, to provide cover for the Skyhawks.

(Photograph courtesy of the Department of the Navy.)
(Figure is UNCLASSIFIED)

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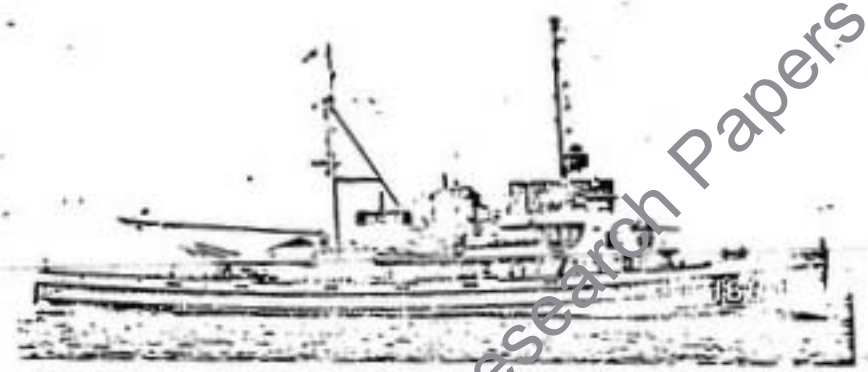
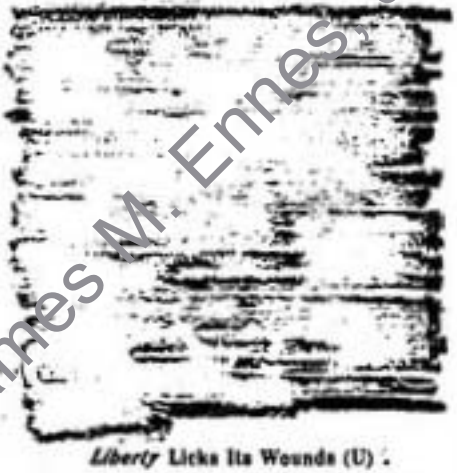


(U) U.S.S. *Papago*, ocean tug of the Sixth Fleet, was sent to aid the *Liberty* and was used to recover classified material adrift from the torpedo hole in the *Liberty*'s hull.
(Photograph courtesy of the Department of the Navy.)
(Figure is UNCLASSIFIED)



Liberty Licks Its Wounds (U) .

(U) As darkness settled over the *Liberty*, Commander McGonagle remained on the bridge, still suffering from the loss of blood and experiencing a great deal of pain from his wounds. By remaining on the bridge, McGonagle believed his presence there would give reassurance to the crew. The *Liberty*'s doctor, Lieutenant Hiepfer, had seen McGonagle on the bridge but made no effort to get him below to a battle dressing station. In Lieutenant Hiepfer's words,

> 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 gravely wounded, yet having the conn and helm and ... calling every change of course, was the thing that told the men "we're going to live." When I went to the bridge and saw this, I should say that I knew that I could only benefit this man by suggesting that he be taken below for treatment of his wounds. I didn't even suggest it."

(U) The attack had demanded the very best from the *Liberty*'s crew and they had responded exceptionally well. Damage control competence minimized *Liberty*'s structural wounds and kept her afloat. The engineering crew under Lieutenant George Golden maintained power to the engines so that the *Liberty* could move away from dangerous shoals in the attack area and head toward the Sixth Fleet. The medical officer and his two corpsmen needed help and they got it. In Hiepfer's words,

> Any time we needed one volunteer, we'd get ten. If anything had to be done — there were hands everywhere. When we

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asked for two pints of blood for transfusions, we had people on the adjoining tables who were saying, "If you need some, I have the type." There were [illegible] wounded.

NSA civilian, [redacted] remembered, too, that surprisingly there was no panic. When the men were ordered to do something, they did it. Everyone was kept busy. Though some were obviously scared to death, there was simply no panic; nobody ran rampant through the ship. No one slept much that night. Helping the wounded became everyone's job — even those with no medical training. Men learned to dress wounds or do stitches. In some cases to quiet a man, he was given a bottle of rum to drown his pain. With the lengthening hours of darkness, deepening depression and shock caused some men to break down and succumb to the fears they had been able to restrain during the attack and immediately thereafter."[1]

(U) Alone, battered, and scarred but unvanquished, the *Liberty* steamed steadily on throughout the night toward a rendezvous with Sixth Fleet destroyers. Three musters were taken to identify the dead, the seriously injured, and those who were missing. Casualty messages were completed as quickly as possible and necessary message notifications [illegible].

Notes

Source, documents are in the [redacted] of the NSA *History Collection*.

[illegible] U.S.S. *Liberty* msg 080824Z Jun 1967.

[illegible] U.S.S. *Liberty* Ship Weather Observation Sheet," 8 Jun 1967.

[illegible] COMUSNAVEUR msg 151003Z Jun 1967.

[illegible] U.S. Navy Court of Inquiry 7816-67; *Liberty* Incident, 8 Jun 1967; Record of Proceedings.

[illegible] Ibid.

[illegible] U.S.S. *Liberty* msg 080714Z Jun 1967.

[illegible] U.S. Navy Court of Inquiry 7816-67; *Liberty* Incident, 8 Jun 1967; Record of Proceedings.

[illegible] [redacted] oral testimony transcripts, 6 May 1980.

[illegible] U.S.S. *Liberty* msg 080824Z Jun 1967.

[illegible] U.S. Navy Court of Inquiry 7816-67; *Liberty* Incident, 8 Jun 1967; Record of Proceedings.

[illegible] U.S.S. *Saratoga* msg 081335Z Jun 1967.

[illegible] U.S. Naval Court of Inquiry 7816-67, *Liberty* Incident, 8 Jun 1967; Record of Proceedings.

[illegible] MG J.H. Rye, USA, JCS "[illegible]" Fact Finding Team, U.S.S. *Liberty* Incident, 8 Jun 1967, p. 19 (Hereafter cited as the Rye Report.)

[illegible] U.S.S. *Saratoga* msg [illegible]Z Jun 1967.

[illegible] U.S.S. *Saratoga* msg [illegible]Z Jun 1967.

[illegible] COMSIXTHFLT [illegible] Jun 1967.

[illegible] CTF 60 msg [illegible] Jun 1967.

[illegible] COMSIXTHFLT msg [illegible] Jun 1967.

[illegible] COMSIXTHFLT msg [illegible] Jun 1967.

[illegible] [redacted] oral testimony transcripts, 6 May 1980; CTC Clyde W. Way, 6 Jun 1980; and CTC Terry L. McFarland, 22 June 1980.

[illegible] White House Daily Diary, 8 Jun 1967, 9:40 a.m. telephone call from Walt Rostow; p. 2; and The White House Memorandum to the President from W.W. Rostow, 9:50 a.m., 8 Jun 1967.

[illegible] The White House Daily Diary, 8 Jun 1967, 10:15 a.m. telephone call from Walt Rostow; p. 2; and Memorandum to the President from W.W. Rostow, 10:15 a.m., 8 Jun 1967.

[illegible] Other addressees for U.S. Defense Attache Office, Tel Aviv, msg 081614Z Jun 1967, were OSD, CNO, JCS, Sixth Fleet, and NAVEUR. USDAO, Tel Aviv msg 151615Z Jun 1967.

[illegible] Yuri Nikolayevich Chernyakov was Minister Counselor at the Soviet Embassy in Washington, D.C., from 1962 to 1968. He often substituted for the Ambassador.

[illegible] The White House Daily Diary, 8 Jun 1967, p. 3 and "hot line" msg to Chairman Kosygin for President Johnson, 8 Jun 1967, 11:17 a.m.

[illegible] The White House Daily Diary, 8 Jun 1967, p. 4.

[illegible] JCS msg 081535Z Jun 1967, and COMSIXTHFLT msg 081640Z Jun 1967.

[illegible] CINCUSNAVEUR msg 081517Z Jun 1967.

[illegible] COMSIXTHFLT msg 081514Z Jun 1967.

[illegible] USDAO, Tel Aviv msg 151615Z Jun 1967.

[illegible] U.S. Navy Court of Inquiry 7816-67; *Liberty* Incident, 8 Jun 1967; Record of Proceedings.

[illegible] U.S.S. *Liberty* msg 081712Z Jun 1967.

[illegible] DIRNSA msg [illegible] Jun 1967.

[illegible] [redacted]

[illegible] U.S. Navy Court of Inquiry, 7816-67; *Liberty* Incident, 8 Jun 1967; Record of Proceedings.

[illegible] Ibid.

[illegible] Oral testimony transcripts [redacted]

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Chapter V

The Israeli Explanation (U)



Chronology of Israeli Actions (U)

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(U) Israeli motor torpedo boat of the class which attacked the *Liberty*.
(Photograph courtesy of Jane's Fighting Ships.)
(Figure is UNCLASSIFIED)



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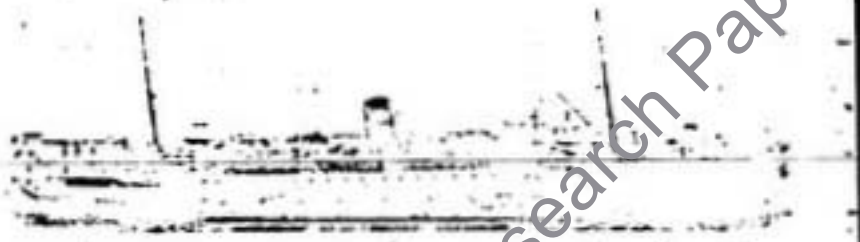
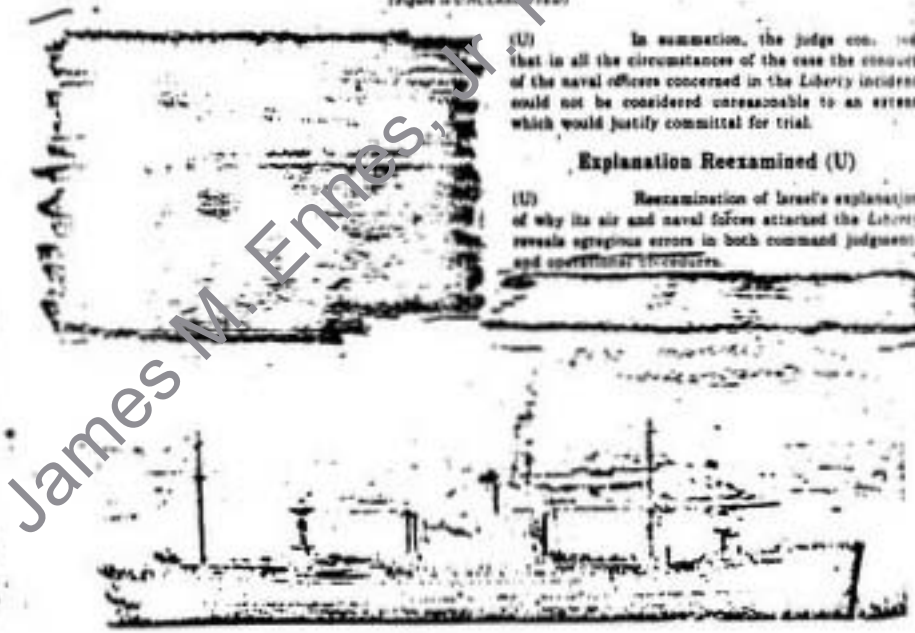


(U) U.S.S. *Liberty* was mistaken by the Israelis for this Egyptian ship, *El-Kasir*.
(Photograph courtesy of [illegible])
(Figure is UNCLASSIFIED)

(U) In summation, the judge concluded that in all the circumstances of the case the conduct of the naval officers concerned in the *Liberty* incident could not be considered unreasonable to an extent which would justify committal for trial.

Explanation Reexamined (U)

(U) Reexamination of Israel's explanation of why its air and naval forces attacked the *Liberty* reveals egregious errors in both command judgments and operational procedures.



(U) U.S.S. *Liberty* arriving in Malta after the attack.
(Figure is UNCLASSIFIED)

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[redacted]

(U) [redacted] Department of State expressing its view of the torpedo attack in these words:

> The subsequent attack by Israeli torpedo boats, substantially after the [illegible] or should have been identified by Israeli military [illegible], manifests the same reckless disregard for [illegible]. The [illegible] and conduct of U.S.S. Liberty [illegible] distinguished it from any vessel that could have been considered hostile. It could and should have been [illegible] visually at close range before torpedos were [illegible]. The United States Government expects the Government of Israel also to take the disciplinary measures which [illegible] law requires in the event of wrongful conduct by the military personnel of a State [and] to [illegible] instructions necessary to ensure that United States personnel and property will not again be endangered by the wrongful actions of Israeli military personnel.'

(U) When NSA's Deputy Director read the decision of the Israeli Defence Forces Preliminary Inquiry, he summed up his personal feelings on the subject by calling it "a nice whitewash."

Notes

Source documents are in the [redacted] of the NSA Society Collection.

[redacted]

(U) Department of State Telegram No. [illegible], to the U.S. Embassy, Tel Aviv, 11 June 1967.

(U) Ibid.

(U) A pensed long-hand comment by [illegible] Tordella, Deputy Director, NSA, 28 August [illegible]

[redacted]

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Chapter VI

Recovery and Initial Assessment (U)

(U) Sixteen and one-half hours after the *Liberty* was attacked, U.S. assistance finally reached her. At 0623 hours (local time) on 8 June, the destroyers U.S.S. *Davis* (DD-937) and U.S.S. *Massey* (DD-778) rendezvoused with the ship at 33-08N, 31-59E, a position 420 miles east-southeast of Souda Bay, Crete. The carrier, U.S.S. *America*, was still 150 miles from the *Liberty*, closing at 20 knots.[1]

Medical Assistance (U)

(U) The Commander of Destroyer Squadron Twelve, Captain H.G. Leahy, and other personnel from the *Davis* and *Massey* immediately boarded the *Liberty* to assist in controlling damage and in treating the injured. Only after his rescuer did Commander McGonagle relinquish his watch on the bridge. He was exhausted and in danger of having his wounds become infected. Temporary command of the *Liberty* was assumed by the Operations Officer of Destroyer Squadron Twelve. Upon completion of medical assessment, the Commander, Sixth Fleet was advised that the *Liberty* was ready to transfer 15 seriously wounded and 9 dead to the *America* when its helicopters arrived. The possibility of anyone being alive in the flooded spaces was deemed unlikely. Bulkheads were firm and the flooding contained, so that the *Liberty* was completely mobile to 10 knots. The *Davis* assumed all communications functions for the *Liberty*. Further, Sixth Fleet was advised that, upon arrival of the fleet oiler, U.S.S. *Papago*, the destroyer *Massey* could return to fleet duties.[2]

(U) While *Liberty*'s on-board needs were being tended to, two boats from the destroyers searched the area around the *Liberty* for two hours looking for classified papers that might be washing out from the pear-shaped, gaping hole in the flooded [redacted] spaces; no classified items were recovered.[3]

(U) At approximately 0915 hours, all ships got under way and headed toward the carrier *America* at 10 knots. By 1020 hours, two helicopters from the *America* reached the *Liberty* and began evacuating the seriously wounded [redacted] to the carrier. One hour later, the *America* rendezvoused with the *Liberty*. Thereafter, the group of ships set a course for Souda Bay, Crete, some 1,000 miles away.

Commander, Sixth Fleet Arrives (U)

(U) Later that afternoon, Vice Admiral William I. Martin, Commander, Sixth Fleet, boarded the *Liberty* for one hour to visit its captain and crew and to personally survey the damages sustained. Following his visit, Vice Admiral Martin recommended to the Commander-in-Chief, U.S. Navy Europe, Admiral John S. McCain, Jr., that the *Liberty* proceed directly to Malta for dry docking rather than to Souda Bay, Crete because of the primary necessity to protect the cryptomaterial and equipment. Admiral McCain gave his approval.[4]

(U) Also visiting the *Liberty* during the late afternoon of the 9th was Captain Russell Arnold, Sixth Fleet Maintenance Officer, who reported to the U.S. Commander-in-Chief, Europe the following corrective actions: "established watertight boundaries at frames 52 and 78 and at second-deck level and made repairs to gyro, engine-order telegraph, rudder-angle indicator, fathometer, sound-powered phones and bridge-steering control." The *Liberty*'s crew was augmented as necessary, and accompanied by the U.S.S. *Papago*, and the destroyer, *Davis*, she proceeded toward Malta at 10 knots.[5]

Replacement Inquiries (U)

[redacted]

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(U) U.S.S. *Davis*, one of the two destroyers to reach the *Liberty*, runs a line to the stricken ship. The *Davis* assumed all communications functions for the *Liberty*.

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there was, quite naturally, a clamor for specific information about casualties — their names and extent of injuries. The *Liberty* forwarded the best information obtainable, but data about three men was elusive. During the Israeli attack and immediately thereafter, the *Liberty* conducted no search for personnel because none had been reported overboard and she was trying to clear the area as quickly as possible. On 10 June, the U.S. Commander-in-Chief, Europe notified JCS that the *Liberty*'s flooded compartment could not be opened to account for missing personnel until the ship was drydocked, to do otherwise would risk further flooding and jeopardize the ship and the lives of the survivors who were making the crippled vessel to port.[11]

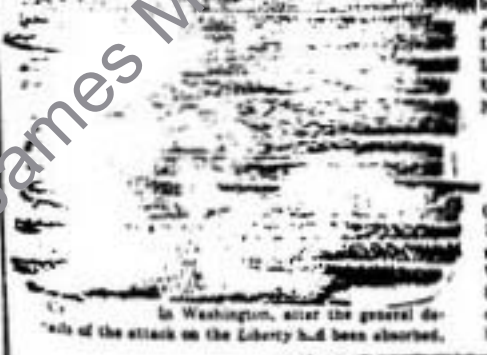


(U) VADM William I. Martin (right), Commander of Sixth Fleet, visited the *Liberty* on the afternoon of 9 June.

(C) Photograph courtesy of [redacted] (Figure is UNCLASSIFIED)

the *Papago* picked up the classified item ten miles behind *Liberty*.[9]

(C) [redacted]



In Washington, after the general details of the attack on the *Liberty* had been absorbed,

Assistance to NSA Personnel

(C) At NSA, when it was learned through the personnel channels that its employees Donald L. Blalock and Allen M. Blue were listed among *Liberty*'s casualties, steps were taken to obtain more definite information and to notify next of kin. Late on the night of 8-9 June, the Chief and Deputy Chief, NSA Civilian Personnel (Messrs. William M. Holleran and Albert W. Ulmer) drove to the Silver Spring home of Allen Blue's wife, Patsy, to notify her that Allen was missing in action.[10]

(C) On 10 June, the Director, NSA sent a message to NSA Europe directing that a representative be sent to meet the *Liberty* at Malta to provide maximum assistance and guidance in respect to NSA personnel, local liaison, and informational reporting to NSA. The Director, NSA directed NSA Europe to arrange for [redacted] transportation home by quickest means and to relay messages for his wife. All appropriate assistance was to be given to Donald L. Blalock in arranging for his return to the U.S. Information copies of the message were sent to Senior U.S. Liaison Officer, London and to the Director, Naval Security Group Europe.[11]

Cleanup Continues (U)

(U) As the *Liberty* steamed westward on 10 June, Commander McGonagle had the shrapnel removed from his leg and was resting comfortably. With adequate provisions of food, fuel, and water on board ship to reach Malta, there was concern about crew morale and Sixth Fleet was requested to have a helicopter pick up the *Liberty*'s outgoing mail as soon

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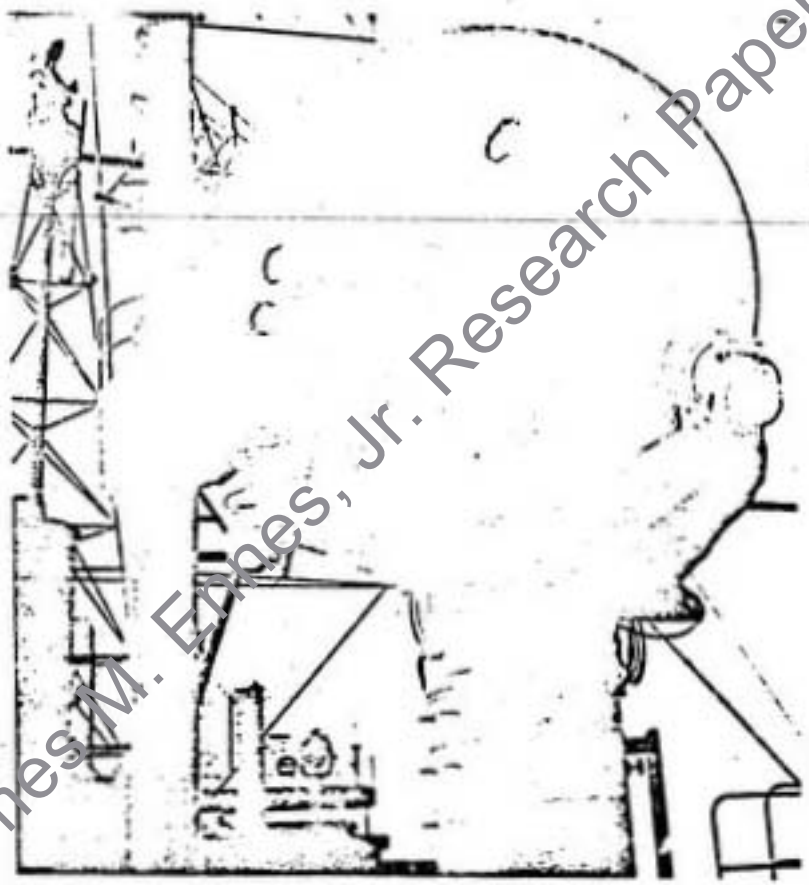

(U) *Liberty*'s forward dish antenna after the strafing attack by Israeli jets.
DC- [redacted]; Photograph courtesy of [redacted], NSA.)
(Figure is UNCLASSIFIED)

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as possible and at the same time deliver mail addressed to the ship's company.[14] The *Liberty* continued clean-up operations aboard ship as well as the grisly task of accounting for personnel that were missing. On 11 June, the *Papago* recovered one body floating six miles astern of the *Liberty*; another person previously reported missing was now confirmed dead after recovery aboard ship.[15]

Command Investigations Initiated (U)

(U) While the *Liberty* limped steadily toward Malta under the watchful protection of the *Davis* and *Papago*, U.S. military commands in the Pentagon and in Europe were feverishly arranging for the drydocking of the ship plus full-scale investigations of the events and circumstances surrounding the attack itself. The Joint Chiefs of Staff appointed a fact-finding team on 9 June and initiated plans for the team to visit, in turn, the Commander-in-Chief, U.S. Navy Europe; U.S. Commander-in-Chief, Europe; Commander, Sixth Fleet; and the U.S.S. *Liberty*.[16]

(U) On the 10th, after conferring with the Commander-in-Chief, U.S. Navy Europe, the U.S. Commander-in-Chief, Europe recommended to JCS that a Navy Court of Inquiry be established. In his message to JCS, CINCEUR gave his rationale for this action as follows:

> Have reviewed available data with respect to *Liberty* with CINCUSNAVEUR in general frame of reference before accidental attack, during attack and subsequent thereto. We both have many very pertinent and as yet unanswered questions as we appreciate Washington has at the same time. [It] must be recognized [that] crew members [are] in [from whom answers must be gotten are] a state of exhaustion, suffering from wounds and shock, deaf or hearing. It simply does not make sense, legally or otherwise, to initiate barrage of concentrated questioning in long-haul communications at this time. Obviously facts must be developed involving actions and judgments of men, [the] command and chain of command, and also legal basis must be established for possible claims against government of Israel. Therefore, I strongly endorse establishment Court of Inquiry by Commander-in-Chief, U.S. Navy [to] set up proper procedure...although it may be somewhat time consuming and create inconvenience among those who desire more rapid answers.

JCS gave immediate concurrence and on 11 June, the Commander-in-Chief, U.S. Navy Europe convened the court in London with directions to proceed promptly to the Mediterranean and board the *Liberty* at sea as soon as possible.[17]

(U) In Israel, too, high-level investigations were being considered. On 13 June, the Israeli Defense Force Chief of Staff, General Rabin, appointed an official Court of Inquiry to examine the *Liberty* incident.[18]

Preparations at Malta (U)

(U) To provide for the handling of the *Liberty* when she arrived at Malta, Admiral [illegible] activated Task Force (TF) 100, effective [illegible], under the command of Rear Admiral Horace A. Rayken, Commander, Service Force Atlantic Fleet stationed in Norfolk, Virginia. CTF 100 was charged with:

1. Supervising the drydocking, removal, and shipment of remains of personnel killed in action;
2. Preventing disclosure of classified information and material to unauthorized personnel; and
3. Readying the *Liberty* for repair by Commander, Service Force Sixth Fleet.

These functions were expected to be completed within two days of the *Liberty*'s expected arrival in Malta on 13 June. Subordinate task group commanders were instructed to be prepared to report in person to Rear Admiral Renken at the U.S. Embassy in Malta by 1200 12 June.[19]

(U) Of the eight subordinate task groups that comprised Task Force 100, the Director, Naval Security Group Europe was directed to provide personnel for TG 100.4, (Security); this group was to assume responsibility for all materials requiring special handling, including their removal from the *Liberty*, transfer to secure storage, and continuous security at all times.[20]

(C) [illegible]

(U) After Rear Admiral Renken left Norfolk, guidance for his TG 100.3 (Public Affairs was

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(C) NSA civilian, Donald L. Blalock, was [redacted] aboard the *Liberty*. Slightly wounded, he was evacuated to the *America* with the rest of the *Liberty*'s wounded.

(C) Photograph courtesy of [redacted]
(Figure is CONFIDENTIAL)

compiled and redlined for delivery [redacted] was to be passed through Rota, Spain, enroute to Malta. TG 100.3's mission was to satisfy the legitimate interests of newsmen without compromise of classified information, unwarranted interference with operations, or invasion of individual rights of privacy. Further, it was directed that all public affairs activities be conducted [redacted]

[redacted] was a communications research ship that was diverted from her research assignment to provide improved communication-relay links with the several U.S. embassies around the entire Mediterranean during the current troubles.[28]

Specific ground rules were set forth for press coverage of *Liberty*'s arrival in Malta. Newsmen were not to be permitted in the immediate vicinity of the dockyard while the *Liberty* entered the dock, unless CTF 100 was satisfied that the torpedo hole was adequately covered; while the drydock was pumped out, regardless of covering; and after the dock was pumped out, until all remains were removed and classified matter safeguarded. If newsmen asked about these restrictions, they were to be told that the actions were being taken primarily out of consideration for families of missing personnel, since remains may be in the exposed compartment and visible to photographers; and because communications spaces normally contain classified equipment and are not open to the public, since it must be assumed that some classified equipment is exposed. Additionally, [redacted] interviews of the officers or crew of the *Liberty* were to be granted until authorized by Commander-in-Chief, U.S. Navy Europe, after completion of the Court of Inquiry. If queried by the press about the reason for such policy, the security officer (TG [redacted]) was to say that these men are potential witnesses before the Court of Inquiry and it is the desire of the convening authority and the President of the Court that recollections of witnesses remain as fresh as possible and not be influenced in any way by outside discussions. The doctrine of security at the source was to be followed at all times and there was to be no censorship of newsmen's material.[27]

(U) Upon arriving at Malta, Rear Admiral Renken met with his task group commanders and American embassy officials on Tuesday, 13 June, to complete plans for docking operations, which would commence on *Liberty*'s arrival — then estimated at about 2300 hours that night.[28]

Blalock Returns Home (U)

(C) That same afternoon, NSA civilian, Donald L. Blalock (earlier evacuated from the *Liberty* to the U.S.S. *America* with minor shrapnel wounds) was released from *America*'s medical department and flown to Athens. There he was met by NSA Europe representative, Charles Cowardin, who arranged for Blalock's travel to the United States. Blalock arrived at Washington National Airport the following day.[29]

Liberty's Arrival at Malta (U)

(C) *Liberty*'s arrival in Malta was delayed until 0830 hours, 14 June. Precautionary safety measures had required additional shoring of damaged bulkheads and her speed was reduced. Divers from the *Papago* immediately began an underwater inspection of the ship's hull to determine whether or not changes in the keel blocks would be necessary before drydocking could begin. The keel was found to be straight and undamaged. At 1400 hours the *Liberty* entered the drydock; by 1530 hours a canvas net had been tied across the damaged side of the ship and canvas had

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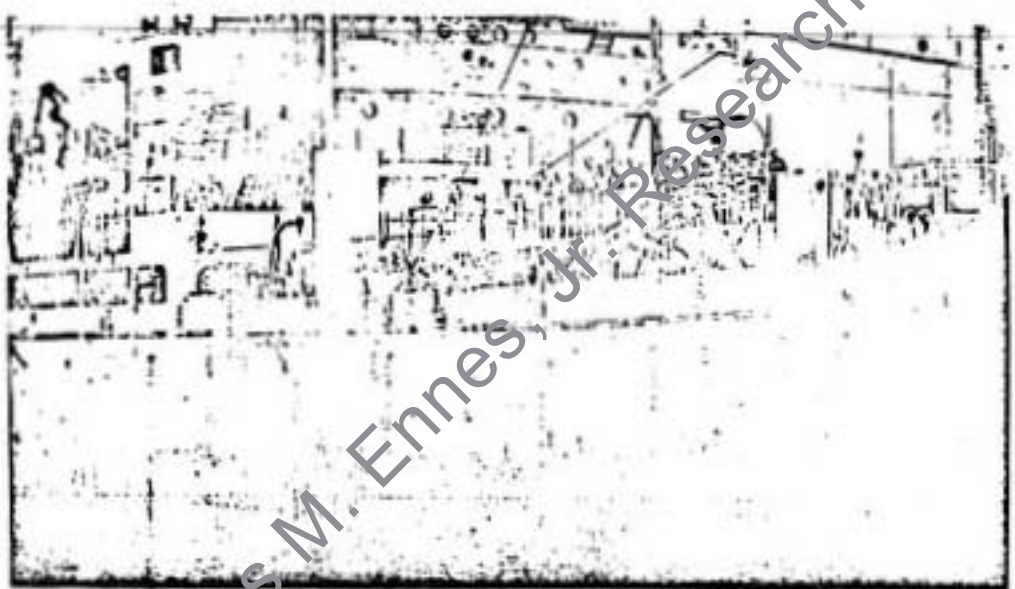

(U) The *Liberty* arrived in Malta on 14 June. The torpedo hole is visible just above the water line, and the ship is riddled with holes from the rocket fire.

(Photograph courtesy of the Department of the Navy.)
(Figure is UNCLASSIFIED)

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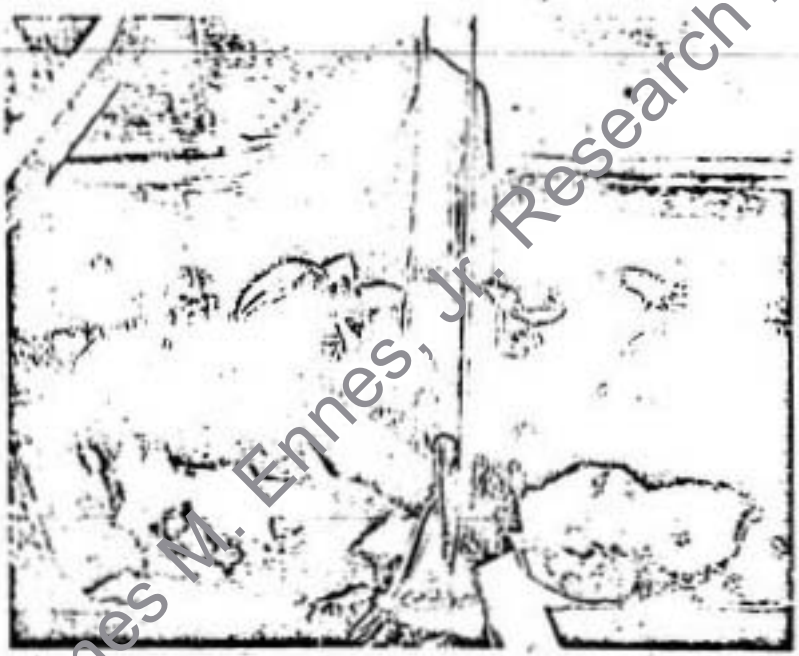

(U) At the drydock in Malta, workmen inspect the torpedo-damaged hull of the *Liberty*. In comparison to the huge pieces of twisted metal, the workmen appear very small.
(Photograph courtesy of the Department of the Navy.)
(Figure is UNCLASSIFIED)

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been installed across all drydock drains. During the pump down, navy swimmers and men in a rubber raft picked up oil-covered paper as it floated out of the ship. When the drydock was completely drained, a thorough search of the entire drydock and each drain screen was conducted by [redacted] Naval Security Group personnel. NSA Europe personnel, sent to Malta, witnessed all drainage operations.[28]

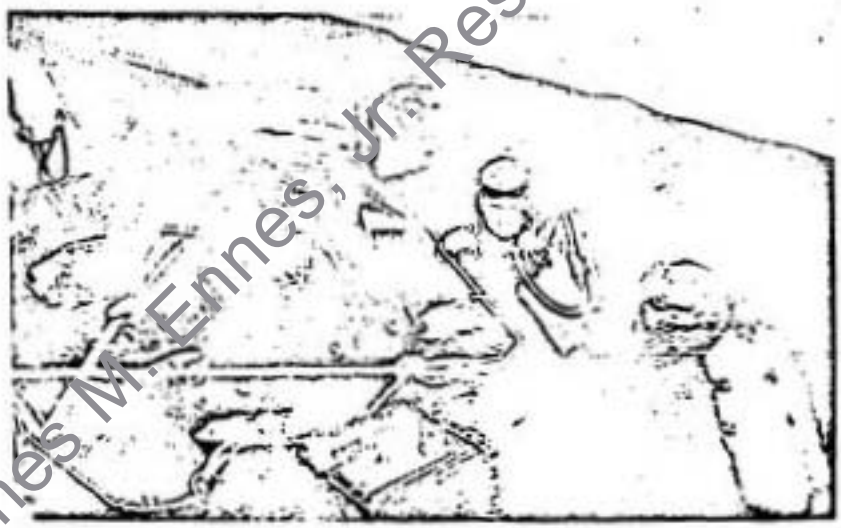
Evacuation of [redacted] (U)

(C) Earlier, as soon as the *Liberty* entered Malta, NSA Europe personnel boarded the ship to see NSA civilian [redacted]. When [redacted] said he did not wish to stay aboard any longer, he was quickly ushered to the U.S. Consulate in Valletta for a short debriefing. Immediately thereafter, accompanied by Lieutenant Colonel Green (from the NSA Europe staff), he returned home. Later [redacted] learned that his wife had been continually informed by NSA personnel of what was going on from the time the attack incident began; they had even offered to have someone stay with her.[29]

Clearing Damaged Areas (U)

(U) In Malta the search and removal of bodies began at 1830 hours on the 14th and continued until approximately midnight, by which time the remains of 20 men, including Allen Blue, had been recovered. Bodies of the remaining five missing men were presumed [redacted] en route to Malta. *Liberty*'s death toll stood at 34.

(C) [redacted] clearance of the damaged areas continued. Prior to [redacted] the hatch leading down to the



(U) Navy divers Gilbert Damelio, John P. Highfill, and Daniel McDuffie recover classified debris adrift as the pump-down operations continue on the *Liberty* in Malta.
(Photograph courtesy of the Department of the Navy)
(Figure is UNCLASSIFIED)

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[redacted] space, a guard was posted and all personnel were required to log in when authorized access. Crews of [redacted] personnel began removing all classified equipment and documents to a secure space one deck above the damaged area. This recovery process proved to be very slow because the classified equipment and material was mixed with the mass of twisted wreckage. Of course, no repair to the ship's side could begin until the damaged area was freed of all classified papers and equipment. By 10 June, all classified matter (including [redacted]) had been stowed under guard in a secure space aboard the *Liberty*.[9]

(U) On the afternoon of Thursday, 15 June, newsmen and photographers were given a rigidly controlled tour of *Liberty*'s topside area plus several compartments on the lower decks, near the point of impact, from which all classified equipment had been removed. Later that afternoon, Task Force 100 was officially dissolved. Some task force personnel remained with the *Liberty*, however, to help wind up administrative, public affairs, and supply matters. The Sixth Fleet Maintenance Officer also remained to supervise *Liberty*'s repairs.[11]

Damage Survey at Malta (U)

[redacted]

(C) With the exception of the TRSSCOM [redacted] antenna, all antennas were either destroyed, damaged, or burned to some degree; almost complete replacement of the antenna system would be required. [redacted] equipment not completely destroyed by the torpedo explosion had been totally submerged in heavy oil and salt water for six days, rendering it beyond salvage. [redacted] maintenance shop and [redacted] severely damaged; all equipment was either destroyed by the explosion or removed from the spaces at Malta because of extensive damage. In the [redacted] and development areas on the second deck very little outward damage was noticeable. However, the shifting of the racks and breaks in the air-conditioning ducts indicated considerable shock damage; each and every piece of gear would require complete checks. Additionally, interconnecting and patching facilities between all remaining spaces would have to be checked. From the initial inspection, it was obvious that considerable replacement of internal wiring would be required. Preliminary, informal estimates made by the engineers inspecting the *Liberty* indicated that the [redacted] to restore the platform would range between [redacted] dollars.[12]

JCS Fact Finding Team's Interviews (U)

(U) While the *Liberty* was being cleaned and surveyed in the Malta shipyard, the Navy and [redacted] investigative bodies were busily interviewing appropriate personnel aboard the *Liberty* and at various European command headquarters.

[redacted]

(U) On 15 June, the team spent two hours visiting Vice Admiral William I. Martin, Commander-in-Chief, Sixth Fleet, and staff aboard his flagship, the U.S.S. *Little Rock*. The team arrived in Malta at 1815 hours on the 15th and departed for London at

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0100 hours the next morning. At Malta, Major General Rose and his team visited the *Liberty* and also spoke with Rear Admiral I. C. Kidd, President of the Naval Court of Inquiry. The JCS team returned to Washington in the early evening of 18 June.

Accounting for Classified Material (U)

(C) Though activities aboard the *Liberty* immediately upon arrival at Malta had centered on readying the ship for repair, the requirement to account for all on-board classified material had not been overlooked. Not only had many classified documents been lost, but the records and inventories of sensitive materials and registered publications carried aboard ship had also been destroyed. To reconstruct *Liberty*'s list of holdings, [redacted] to compile detailed lists of all technical support materials that had been forwarded to the *Liberty*."[1]

(U) In Malta, *Liberty* personnel attempted to make an inventory of registered publications but found it to be fragmentary at best. The registered publications vault and cryptospaces were completely destroyed by the torpedo attack. In spite of the fact that, just before the attack, most registered publications had been put in weighted canvas bags, it was discovered that these bags were torn apart by the blast of the torpedo explosion; no bags remained intact. Further, those publications that were recovered were unusable: they were either saturated in oil and salt water or damaged by the blast. None could be page checked for completeness. All paper and metal residue from the damaged area was placed in canvas bags and secured in locked spaces aboard ship under twenty-four-hour guard."[2]

[redacted]

(Photograph courtesy of [redacted])
(Figure is CONFIDENTIAL)

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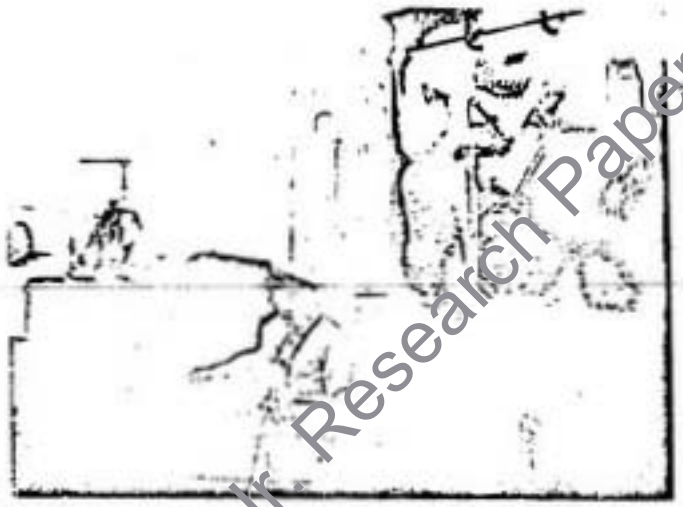

(U) The Captain of the *Liberty*, CDR William L. McGonagle, surveys the damage done below the bridge from the rockets fired by the Israeli aircraft.

(Photograph courtesy of the Department of the Navy.)

(Figure is UNCLASSIFIED)

(U) After Liberty personnel had completed this action, Captain Carl M. Smith (who had been TG 100.4 commander) informed the Director, Naval Security Group that

> despite [the] fact that all classified material cannot be accurately accounted for [as] less at scene [of] unknown, [am] confident that possibility of compromise is reasonably unlikely while Liberty [was] en route [to] Malta and seen thereafter. It was a time-consuming task under difficult conditions but thoroughness of all [illegible] in maintenance of highest degree of security integrity. All can take justifiable pride in dedication, willingness, and high morale of those participating in the salvage operation.[17]

Joint Survey at Norfolk (U)

(U) Recognizing that the *Liberty* had had extensive reserve [redacted] that might require replacement Navy-wide and DoD-wide, the Chief of Naval Operations proposed that a joint survey team meet the *Liberty* when she returned to Norfolk and take a sampling of the residue to determine whether a sorting operation was pos[illegible] and to make recommendations for further act[illegible] disposition of material. The survey team member[illegible] would be drawn from the Naval Security Group, N[illegible] Intelligence Center, and NSA.[18]

[redacted] -NSA representatives to this [illegible] were: Billy Durham, [redacted] and Lieutenant John T. McTigue, [illegible] On 31 July, these [illegible] traveled to Norfolk, Virginia, and boarded the *Li*[illegible] just returned from Malta. There they were [illegible] other members of the survey team, principally [illegible] personnel. Following a brief tour of the ship, [illegible] was taken below decks to the [redacted] where the canvas bags of residue were [illegible] sailors from the *Liberty's* [redacted], dr[illegible] in rubber overalls and gloves, selected and [illegible] at random from the grimy, oily [illegible] total and, one by one, opened each and dumped

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contents on the floor in front of the survey team. It was not a pretty sight and had malodorous qualities resulting from the combination of oil, brackish sea water, burned metal, paper, and pieces of human flesh. The team immediately agreed that it would be impossible to make a page-by-page check of the bags' contents. From looking at this sampling, the survey team concluded that:

1. Eighty percent of the material was unidentifiable;

2. Some of the material was definitely discernible, readable, and classified; and

3. Some of the classified material was identifiable, in part, by short titles and cover markings or name-plate designations; e.g., large bound volumes or books.

The team recommended that:

1. No attempt be made to conduct a detailed bag-by-bag search for the sole purpose of identifying classified material;

2. The Commanding Officer of the *Liberty* be authorized to destroy the bagged material held on board; and

3. Prior to the process of burning, an effort be made to empty each bag at the incinerator to determine the possible existence of identifiable registered publications and that each such complete publication be accounted for prior to its destruction."

(U) CNO concurred with the survey team's recommendations and authorized destruction as requested. At the Director, NSA's request, all remaining Comsec material (excluding that in canvas bags) aboard the *Liberty* at the time of attack was segregated and forwarded to NSA for inspection."

(C-[redacted]) With this command approval, *Liberty's* CO arranged the appropriately cleared personnel to [redacted] and burn it at the Norfolk incinerator. A list of documents identified in the burning process was forwarded to CNO. At NSA, [redacted] determined that there was only minimal security damage and no compromise had occurred.

[redacted]

[redacted]

Notes

Some documents are on the [redacted] of the NSA History Collection.

(U) COMSIXTHFLT msg [illegible] Jun 1967.
(U) Commander, Task Group [illegible] msg [illegible] Jun 1967.
(U) Commander, Task Group [illegible] msg [illegible] Jun 1967.
(U) CINCUSNAVEUR msg [illegible] Jun 1967.
(U) COMSIXTHFLT msg [illegible] Jun 1967.
(U) DIRNAVSECGRUEUR msg [illegible] Jun 1967.
(U) [redacted] msg [illegible] Jun 1967.
(U) CINCUSNAVEUR msg [illegible] Jun 1967.
(U) CTG [illegible] Jun 1967.
(U) [redacted] msg [illegible] Jun 1967.
(U) USCINCEUR msg [illegible] Jun 1967.
(U) DIRNSA msg [illegible] Jun 1967.
(U) DIRNSA msg [illegible] Jun 1967.
(U) CTG [illegible] msg [illegible] Jun 1967.
(U) U.S. Navy Court of Inquiry [illegible], *Liberty* Incident, [illegible] Jun 1967; Record of Proceedings.
(U) Joint Chiefs of Staff msg [illegible] Jun 1967.
(U) USCINCEUR msg [illegible] Jun 1967, and CINCUSNAVEUR msg [illegible] Jun 1967.
(U) U.S. Defense Attache Office, Tel Aviv msg [illegible] Jun 1967.
(U) CINCUSNAVEUR msg [illegible] Jun 1967.
(U) Ibid.
(U) DIRNAVSECGRUEUR msg [illegible] Jun 1967.
(U) DIRNAVSECGRUEUR msg [illegible] Jun 1967.
(U) DIRNAVSECGRUEUR msg [illegible] Jun 1967.
(U) CINCUSNAVEUR msg [illegible] Jun 1967.
(U) Ibid.
(U) Commander, Task Force (CTF) 100 msg [illegible] Jun 1967.
(U) DIRNAVSECGRU msg [illegible] Jun 1967 and NSAEUR msg [illegible] Jun 1967.
(U) CTF 100 msg [illegible] Jun 1967 and NSAEUR msg [illegible] Jun 1967.
(U) [redacted] oral interview transcript, 6 May 1980.
(U) [redacted] msg [illegible] Jun 1967.
(U) CTF 100 msg [illegible] Jun 1967.
(U) NAVSHIPENGCTR msg [illegible] Jun 1967.
(U) [redacted] Eugene Shara and Lt. Deposit, 27 Jun 1967.
(U) NSA [illegible] msg for Gen. Carter through NSA Rep NORAD, circa 21 Jun 1967.
(U) [redacted]
(U) U.S.S. *Liberty* msg [illegible] Jun 1967.
(U) DIRNAVSECGRUEUR msg [illegible] Jun 1967.
(U) CNO msg [illegible] Jun 1967.
(U) U.S.S. *Liberty* msg [illegible] Aug 1967 and [redacted], oral interview transcript, 9 May 1980.
(U) DIRNSA msg [illegible] Aug 1967 and CNO msg [illegible] Aug 1967.

[redacted]

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Chapter VII

The Incident under Review (U)

(U) Following the attack on the *Liberty*, both the Executive and the Legislative Branches set about ascertaining the basic facts surrounding the incident. Other than the U.S. Navy Court of Inquiry and the cursory Israeli Board of Inquiry immediately after the event, reviews went forward under the auspices of the House Appropriations Committee, the JCS, and NSA. In addition, a Special Committee of the National Security Council elicited information to answer the Administration's questions on the incident.

The NSA Review and Reaction (U)

(U) The eighth of June proved to be a busy *day* for NSA's directorate. Having received a Critic message on the *Liberty*'s dilemma, Brigadier General John Morrison of NSA's Production Organization, notified the directorate of the event at about 0900 hours, Washington time. Some 45 minutes later, the directorate learned that the attack had been by the Israelis.

(S) Immediate concern was for the safety of the personnel and the security of the materials on board. During the day urgent requests went out from NSA to the National Military Command Center (NMCC), other offices in the Pentagon, and the Bureau of Naval Personnel to ascertain if the names of [redacted] NSA civilians on board appeared on the casualty list. Both General Marshall S. Carter and Dr. Louis W. Tordella became aware that the [redacted] were in shallow water, 25-40 fathoms, and they knew, of course, that the ship held [redacted]

[redacted] Accordingly, Dr. Tordella asked JRC's Captain Merriwell W. Vineyard, USN, to have all documents on board the *Liberty* burned and all equipment saved, if possible. General Carter was prepared to recommend all necessary action to insure the security of the [redacted] material and equipment, should the ship founder but, in discussions with the JRC, ruled out the deliberate scuttling of the ship since its presence in shallow water made compromise of material and equipment a distinct possibility.

[redacted]

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[redacted]

As was its custom, NSA's staff worked closely with the Pentagon's Public Information Office and referred all public queries NSA received to that Pentagon Office.

(C) There was, finally, on that long day of 8 June, the need to establish quickly a core of information on the incident to prepare for the many questions being asked and decisions to be made. Already the Secretary of Defense, Robert S. McNamara, had called General Carter asking for "precise information" on the ship's complement, the number of civilians, the meaning of "AGTR" which appeared on the ship's hull, and other matters which he felt would be needed for a public release. Discussions also took place with White House staff members Patrick Cayse and Bromley Smith, who elicited details on the incident.

(C) [redacted]

The main function of this group was to gather information on the event and to anticipate the numerous questions to be directed to NSA over the coming weeks.

(S) With timely help from agency components, the group assembled basic data on the ship itself, [redacted] on operational and technical responsibilities, and on the [redacted] it also compiled a chronology of events and a compendium of key documents and messages. Assembling the information in a large red notebook entitled "Report to the Director NSA - U.S.S. *Liberty* (AGTR-5), 23 May-8 June 1967," the group presented the completed report to the Director on 12 June — rather respectable staff work in view of the timeliness and quality of the report. NSA was then in a position to give copies of this comprehensive report to the JCS Fact Finding Team and to the Special Committee of the National Security Council (NSC).

(C) Directed as it was to develop a core of information on the event, the NSA group did not attempt to identify remedies for faulty procedures or, for that matter, to make any recommendations at all. The major responsibility for that fell to the JCS and others. The group did have to field searching questions being asked the Agency by others.

(C) The JCS Fact Finding Team was asking specific questions such as these:

[redacted]

(U) Although questions remained which would require answers, the work of the NSA group was essentially complete by the middle of June 1967.

The JCS Review (U)

(U) On 9 June, immediately after the *Liberty* incident the JCS fielded a five-man team from its organization, all with the necessary clearances, to examine communications and control aspects of the event. Senior member of the JCS team was Major General Joseph R. Russ, USA. Other team members were Rear Admiral Francis J. Fitzpatrick, USN; Colonel William A. Garrett, USAF; Captain William D. Owen, USN; and Major Harlan E. Priddle, USAF.

(U) In spelling out the terms of reference for the team, Lieutenant General B. E. Spivy, Director of the Joint Staff, asked the team to examine the

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means employed in issuing operational directives of the JCS to the U.S.S. *Liberty* and the specific orders to the *Liberty* between 1 June and 8 June 1967, and to identify and develop information on conflicting directives, delays in message traffic, and nonreceipt of orders. The team was to report its findings, along with recommendations, to the JCS.

(C) [redacted]

(U) As the work of the fact-finding team was drawing to a close, General Russ provided on 18 June a preliminary report to the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Earle Wheeler, USA. He apprised the Chairman of the four messages from higher headquarters on 7/8 June to subordinate commands designed to change the *Liberty*'s CPA, receipt of which by *Liberty* "would undoubtedly have resulted in the ship's being a greater distance from the scene of action...." Despite the *Liberty*'s having been either an action or an information addressee on each of these messages, General Russ's team found no evidence that the ship received any one of them. Nor did his team find, for that matter, any evidence conflicting directives governing the *Liberty*'s operation. General Russ also made note of the innovative procedure JCS itself had adopted in bypassing Commander-in-Chief, Europe when it passed operational instructions to Commander-in-Chief, U.S. Navy, Europe; and he recounted the reasons for delays at NAVEUR and Sixth Fleet in translating the JCS directive into action.

(U) By 20 June the JCS Fact Finding Team had completed its work, had prepared its report, and had made its recommendations to the JCS. Of the 17 recommendations made, 9 concerned the mission, functions, operational responsibilities, and operational control/technical tasking and guidance matters; the other 8 related to communications, traffic management, methods, facilities, and availability of trained personnel. In reviewing and commenting on the report's recommendations for the JCS, the J3 and J6/JCS reserved follow-on action for the first category of recommendations to the Joint Staff but assigned responsibilities to various other agencies for study and implementation actions in the second category of recommendations. NSA drew assignments on three recommendations dealing with emphasis on dedicated command-and-control circuitry rather than on common-user circuitry, with measures to improve fleet control communications via communications satellite technology, and with the amalgamation of NATO and U.S. military communications.

(C) Other than the three recommendations on which it participated as an action agency, NSA was concerned about some of the other findings in the report. One recommendation was, for example, that [redacted]

[redacted] As far as NSA was concerned, this recommendation was off the mark since [redacted] NSA commented formally on this point in a letter to Major General [redacted] Vickett, Vice Director for Operations (J-3); in the commentary on the Russ report for the JCS, the J-3 discounted this recommendation.

(U) When copies of the JCS Fact Finding Team's report reached NSA at the end of June, General Carter instructed the chief of his telecommunications organization, Colonel Leslie J. Bolstridge, USAF, to review the report in minute detail with a view to "correcting our procedures wherever we can profit from this debacle of military communications." Since the Russ report primarily dealt with command-and-control communications, the Russ recommendations had only marginal pertinence to NSA's own communications.[4]

Congressional Review (U)

(U) Following a hearing focusing on the JCS message which failed to reach the *Liberty*, the House Appropriations Committee on 14 August 1967 directed its Surveys and Investigations staff to examine the effectiveness of the DoD worldwide communications system. The staff studied the delays and nondelivery of messages originated on 7 and 8 June directing the withdrawal of the *Liberty* as a springboard to its broader review of DoD's worldwide communications. The staff produced a two-volume report for the chairman of the congressional committee. Volume I reviewed the communications problems in the *Liberty* incident, volume II the worldwide communications systems and networks of the DoD.

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Chapter VIII

A Final Look (U)

(C) Perhaps the *Liberty* has undergone scrutiny long enough. First the Israeli Court of Inquiry examined the event, exculpation of Israeli nationals apparently not being hindmost in the court's calculations. Then the U.S. Navy Court of Inquiry studied the incident. The JCS review actively sought to identify faulty procedures and practices for corrective action. The NSA review was essentially fact-finding in nature. And the House Appropriations Committee review, made as it was without all the information available to the JCS team, nonetheless reconstructed many of the basic findings of that team and sought to use them as a mirror in which to observe problem areas in DoD's worldwide communications. Despite the official scrutiny, it is still necessary to comment briefly on a few subjects of interest and concern to

[redacted]

(U) JCS/JRC looked to the unified and specified commands to provide for the safety of the [redacted] The regional commands were in close touch with political and military conditions in which [redacted] and which JCS/JRC believed, in the best position to evaluate safety factors.

(C) In the [redacted] safety incident, the Commander, Sixth Fleet, was responsible for the safety of the ship. But Vice Admiral Martin was not in a [redacted] told Dr. Tordella in mid-June that he believed NSA could not really absolve itself totally from the safety considerations. He believed that NSA may have to demonstrate [redacted]

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(C) In reflecting on the [redacted] in an oral history interview, General Marshall S. Carter said

> as a result of both of these traumatic experiences, we have reviewed our procedures and found there was little change needed in NSA-JCS relationships, but there were some changes needed in the chain of command supervision and monitoring... of just where the ship is, and what it is doing, and was it necessary.

[redacted]

(U) NSA should not yield or should yield grudgingly to others, this review would suggest, in safety evaluations of mission-

[redacted]

(U)

Communications Problems (U)

(U) Errors made in the handling of communications [redacted], in some measure, for the *Liberty* trauma, studied in great detail by the JCS Fact Finding Team and reviewed by the staff of the House Armed Services Committee, the communications problems posed a challenge for the JCS and for DoD agencies in the immediate post-*Liberty* period.

(U) NSA was not the DoD action office for correcting faulty communications procedures, but it was indeed a very interested party to corrective actions stimulated by the Russ Report. Doing what he could, General Carter called Army Chief of Staff, General Harold K. Johnson, about the considerable number of mishandled messages in the Department of Army's communications center in the Pentagon, particularly those coming to NSA, and on 3 July provided General Johnson's staff with examples of message mishandling during the *Liberty* incident. Department of Army's response was positive, and soon thereafter its Communications Staff added page monitors on its circuits to NSA to check assignment of address groups. Errors diminished from some 40 to 7 a day out of an average daily total of 1,000 transmissions. General Carter also insisted, as noted earlier, that his staff examine the Russ Report recommendations relating to DoD communications for any possible application to NSA's Criticomm network.

File Reduction for [redacted] (U)

(TS- [redacted] NF) The Six Day War and the *Liberty* incident created conditions [redacted]

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[redacted]

[redacted] The report stated:

Technical documents, operational aids, etc., should be limited to those required to carry out the mission. Also held and containing information that may or may not be needed at some future date should be eliminated. The library of training manuals ought to be limited to those covering items of equipment in use at the government [illegible]

[redacted]

[redacted]

(C) [redacted] The Liberty's experience [illegible] with [redacted] led to some emphasis on file reduction and on measures to facilitate destruction of [redacted] equipment. The incidents pointed up, as no others had done before, the need for scaling the distribution of technical documentation to specific and minimal levels necessary for execution of tasks, and following the incidents some moderation in the supply of documentation was in evidence.

[redacted]

(U) In the 1970s NSA initiated two projects to examine the use of technical support materials by [redacted]

[redacted]

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[redacted]

(C) Speculation as to Israeli motivation varied. Some believed that Israel expected that the complete destruction of the ship and killing of the personnel would lead the U.S. to blame the U.A.R. for the incident and bring the U.S. into the war on the side of Israel. Ironically, even though the *Liberty* had [redacted] others felt Israeli [illegible] wanted the ship and men out of the way [redacted]

(C) In part because of the press speculation at the time, President Johnson directed the Director of Central Intelligence, Richard Helms, to prepare a report by 13 June, five days after the attack, assessing the Israeli intentions. The CIA assessment drew [illegible] [redacted]

Denouement (U)

(U) On [illegible] June 1968, exactly one year and three days after the attack on the *Liberty*, her commanding officer, Captain William Loren McGonagle (promoted [illegible] the attack), was presented the Congressional Medal of Honor by the Secretary of the Navy for gallantry and courage displayed during *Liberty's* hours of trial. Following that award, the Presidential Unit Citation was conferred upon the *Liberty* and crew on 14 June 1968 at Portsmouth, Virginia.

(C) Scores of individual decorations (Bronze Star, Silver Star, etc.) were given to crew members, and 170 Purple Hearts were earned by *Liberty's* complement, including two NSA civilians, Donald L. Blalock and Allen M. Blue (the latter, posthumously).

(U) Claims against the government of Israel for compensation concerning deaths and injuries of U.S. personnel and damage to the *Liberty* were initiated by the Department of State. In May 1968, Israel paid the U.S. Government $1,323,570 as full payment on behalf of the families of the 34 men killed in the attack.[11] Eleven months later, Israel paid $3,666,457 in compensation to the men who had been wounded.[12] The U.S. claim of $7,644,[illegible] for material damage to the *Liberty* itself was not [illegible] until 18 December 1980 when Israel agreed to pay [illegible] million.

(U) After returning to Norfolk in [illegible] 1967, the *Liberty* languished there while [redacted] When this effort failed, the *Liberty* was [illegible] on [illegible] June 1968. In 1970 the ship was turned over to the Maritime Administration and sold for scrap for $101,665.66. In 1973 the ship came to an ignominious end as she was cut up in Baltimore's Curtis Bay shipyard.

(U) There was one aspect of the *Liberty* tragedy which should not go unnoted. This was its adverse and lingering effect on the *Liberty's* survivors. Oral interviews with [redacted] some 13 years after the event, show that time has not healed all the scars.[13] Apart from bitterness toward the Israeli Government, there still remains dismay that the U.S. Government or Sixth Fleet did not come to *Liberty's* aid in timely fashion.

(U) The contributions of [redacted] but rather for budgetary considerations by the Department of Defense.

Notes

Source documents are in the [redacted] *of the NSA History Collection.*

(U) The Rose Report, pp 9-10, Richard Harvey interview, 16 Jul 1969.

(U) [redacted] Memorandum for the D/DIR - "U.S.S. *Liberty*," 14 Jun 1967.

(U) DIRNSA msg to JCS/JRC, 061103Z Jun 1967.

(U) [illegible] msg to JCS, 121616Z Jun 1967.

(U) [illegible] with Gene Shark, 11 [illegible]

(U) [redacted] pp. 24, 28.

(U) NSA Staff, Memorandum for the Record, "Telephone Conversation with Mr. Morton A. Bull, OPCE, 5 Jul 1967; NSA, [redacted]," 14 Jul 1967.

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Rhoden, Paddy E., CTC. Interview, 13 June 1980. [redacted]
Shack, Eugene. Interview, 11 August 1980. [redacted]
Way, Clyde W., CTC. Interview, 6 June 1980. [redacted]
[redacted] Interview, 6 May 1980. [redacted]

Messages

(Listed by Date/Time Group.)

CINCLANT. 1216142 Jun 67. (S)

CNO. 142227Z Jun 67. (S)
1021362 Aug 67. (S)

COMSERVRON 8. 240020Z May 67. (C)

COMSIXTHFLT. 062016Z Jun 67. (S)
0623482 Jun 67. (C)
0708382 Jun 67. (S)
0716032 Jun 67. (S)
0813402 Jun 67. (C)
0813302 Jun 67. (U)
0813482 Jun 67. (C)
0816142 Jun 67. (C)
0816492 Jun 67. (C)
0906132 Jun 67. (C)
092[illegible]Z Jun 67. (C)

CTF 60. 0813162 Jun 67. (S)

CTF 100. [redacted] Jun 67. (C)
[redacted] Jun 67. (C)

CTF [redacted]. 0607582 Jun 67. (C)
0821182 Jun 67. (S)
1017502 Jun 67. (C)

DIRNAVSECGRU. 1311062 Jun 67. (S) [redacted]

DIRNAVSECGRUEUR. 0910582 Jun 67. (C) [redacted]
0918142 Jun 67. (S)
1114422 Jun 67. (S)
1119012 Jun 67. (S)
1913362 Jun 67. (S)
1915072 Jun 67. (S)

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DDNSA. 231725Z May 67. (S)
232133Z May 67. (S)
252317Z May 67. (S)
2——6Z May 67. (S)
270006Z May 67. (S)
292013Z May 67. (S)
292201Z May 67. (S)
022333Z Jun 67. (S)
072104Z Jun 67. (S)
081356Z Jun 67. (S)
081502Z Jun 67. (S)
091345Z Jun 67. (S)
101718Z Jun 67. (S)
ca. 21——Z Jun 67. (S)
081648Z Aug 67. (S)

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081850Z Jun 67. (S)
081357Z Jun 67. (C)
081517Z Jun 67. (C)
091459Z Jun 67. (S)
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SAMPLE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN PORTIONS
OF AUTHENTIC VERSION OF WITHHELD PORTION
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TO BE A RELEASED COPY OF THAT PORTION

	PLAINTIFF'S VERSION	ACTUAL DOCUMENT
MARKINGS:	None	CONFIDENTIAL designation at the top and bottom of every page. Identification number on first page. Statement of rules governing declassification on first page: Group 1 "Excluded from automatic downgrading and declassification."
FORMAT:	Single Spaced	Double spaced
	More words to the line	Fewer words to the line
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SOME EXAMPLES OF TEXTUAL DIFFERENCES	Omission of words Section 4 line 4 omits three words included in actual document	
	Spelling differences	
	Section 5 line 3:	
	pressure	pressured
	Section 18 line 1:	
	Prosecturo	Prosecutor
	Section 25, para 2 line 2	
	misgiving	misgivings
	Section 26, para 4 line 11	
	Defense	Defence
	Section 26, para 4 line 16	
	prima facei	prima facie
	Section 26, para 5 line 2	
	Rav-Saren Kedmi	Rav-Seren Kedmi

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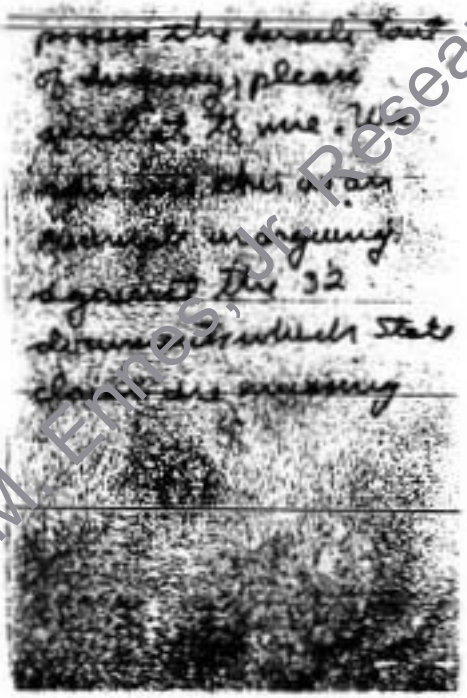

James M. Ennes, Jr. Research Papers

GEORGE CHRISTIAN

January 5, 1978

Mr. James M. Ennes, Jr.
[redacted]

Dear Mr. Ennes:

In regard to your letter of December 21, I can give you the following information.

When the President first learned that USS LIBERTY had been attacked, he feared the act had been committed by Russian planes and submarines. Obviously, he was relieved when he learned an hour or so later that the Israelis were the ones involved.

When the Israeli government apologized, the initial reaction in the White House was to take the apology at face value.

Nevertheless, the President asked Clark Clifford, who was then on the Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board, to head an immediate investigation into the matter. It was on the basis of this report that the President concluded there was no evidence that the attack was intentional, and he so reported in his memoirs after he left office (without referring to the Clifford investigation).

Frankly, there was considerable skepticism in the White House that the attack was accidental, even though tragic mistakes are rather common during warfare. It must be remembered that the major consideration facing the President at the time was whether the war could be stopped before a confrontation was precipitated with the Soviet Union. It was imperative that the United States maintain enough leverage with Israel to bring about a cease-fire. The attack on USS LIBERTY was extremely serious, but not of the crisis proportions of the threats made by the Soviet Union a few days later to intervene militarily.

In later years when there was renewed speculation in various publications about the attack, together with the eyewitness accounts of some of the men on USS LIBERTY, I became convinced that an accident of this magnitude was too much to swallow. If it were a deliberate attack the question remains, of course, of whether it was a tactical decision on the part of elements of the Israeli military or whether it was ordered by high officials. Even in 1967 there was a strong

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feeling in the White House that the Israeli government had nothing to gain and much to lose in ordering the attack on USS LIBERTY. Consequently, it was felt that if the attack were indeed deliberate it was not a premeditated move by high authorities. I still accept this premise but not the notion that the attack itself was an accident.

Sincerely,

George Christian

George Christian

GC:js

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been in battle know, under the stress of battle conditions, snap decisions must be made with the best available data. The history of war, let alone naval war, is full of incredible incidents involving mistaken identity that under normal peaceful conditions would never have occurred. In Vietnam the USA attacked an Australian destroyer and in 1974 we have the spectacle of a Turkish war plane sinking a Turkish destroyer during the invasion of Cyprus.

Events that led up to the attack on the Liberty have been described in a report issued by the Israeli Court of Inquiry set up to investigate the attack and determine what took place.

On the morning of the attack, Israeli troops stationed at El Arish reported to Army HQ in Israel that they were being fired upon from the sea. It later turned out that the explosions which caused the report were due to other causes, but in response to this report the Israeli Navy and Air Force were instructed to seek out any ship that might be responsible for the shelling.

The Liberty was traveling in a war zone 12 miles off the coast near El Arish, an area where tank battles larger than those of World War 2 were taking place. On June 6 Egypt had declared the area to be dangerous for shipping and had in fact stated that it considered the war zone to extend 40-60 miles off the coast and that this area should be avoided by shipping. Since this was an area that merchant shipping had avoided and Israel had not been told the Liberty was operating there, it is not too surprising that when the Israelis spotted an obvious naval ship in warship gray, apparently headed for Port Said, they concluded that it was an Egyptian ship and attacked.

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To bolster his case, Ennes places great emphasis on the fact that the American flag was flying from the Liberty. While a ship is undoubtedly clearly visible to the men on deck of a ship, it is not necessarily visible from the air, and certainly not easily identifiable.

Ennes writes about a report that Israeli jets had radioed the sighting of an American ship. He gives no source for the report or any details. In fact, no such radio message was sent or received.

Ennes claims that Israel sent many low level reconnaissance flights including one which came within 200 feet of the ship. Thus he concludes Israel must have been aware of the identity of the ship. His claim is disputed by the Commander of the Liberty, William McGonagle, in his testimony to the Court of Inquiry.

In an attempt to make the Israeli attack seem more bloodthirsty, Ennes describes the appearance of 2 Israeli troop laden helicopters apparently sent to finish off the survivors. While there is no mystery regarding the arrival of the two Israeli helicopters, what is a mystery is how the author knows they were carrying armed troops and were not there for rescue. The truth of the matter is that as soon as Israel Defense Forces headquarters realizes that a mistake had been made the torpedo boats offered their assistance, two helicopters were sent with medical aid and a tugboat was ordered out of ashdod to help the Liberty. It should also be mentioned that the Prime Minister of Israel sent a personal message of sympathy to President Johnson after the incident.

It is understandable that a person who was wounded as Ennes was in this unfortunate incident should tend to impute the worst motivation to the attacker, but Ennes allows his overly evident rancor and subjectivity to override objective analysis.

The reason he attributes to Israel for staging a premeditated attack on an American ship is illogical and unrealistic, while the military facts clearly show that the attack could not have been premeditated. The attack on the Liberty was a case of mistaken identity, and when the mistake was noticed all practical steps were taken to assist the ship and compensate the wounded.

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[The following Israeli rubuttal to Assault on the Liberty by James Ennes is distributed by the Israeli Foreign Office in Jerusalem to interested newsmen and Israeli spokesmen in the United States. The arguments in this paper are routinely sent by area Anti-Defamation League leaders in letters to editors and radio or television station managers when Ennes is interviewed or his book is mentioned publicly.]

James M. Ennes Jr.'s book ASSAULT ON THE LIBERTY attempts to prove that the Israeli attack on the American intelligence-gathering ship, the USS Liberty on June 8, 1967, during the Six-Day War was a deliberate, premeditated attack on an American ship by Israel. Furthermore, he charges Israel and the United States with a cover up conspiracy to keep the facts hidden.

In reality, Ennes's conclusions fly in the face of logic and the military facts. The attack on the USS Liberty occurred because it was mistakenly believed to be an Egyptian warship located in the war zone during the height of hostilities. The following should make this clear.

Why should Israel deliberately attack an American ship and risk a dispute with the United States whose friendship is the cornerstone of Israel's foreign policy? Several hypotheses have previously been suggested by proponents of the deliberate attack theory.

An article published in the US Naval Institute Proceedings by Richard Smith presented the thesis that the attack took place because Israel was trying to delay knowledge of its victories from reaching the superpowers.

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This concept was shown to be absurd, since Israel's victories were already general knowledge by June 8. Several articles had appeared in the American press and on June 7, Chief of Staff Yitzhak Rabin had announced that "the Egyptians are defeated...The whole area is in our hands."

Realizing the weakness of Smith's argument, Ennes has simply changed venue and blames the Liberty attack on the Israeli desire to keep secret the forthcoming attack on the Golan Heights lest United States pressure prevent it.

Since the Liberty was patrolling off the Sinai coast near El Arish, the Smith thesis at least had the credibility of relating to the same theatre of war, the Egyptian front. Ennes's conclusion defies logic; why should Israel attack an American spy ship located in Sinai waters because of a future event which was to occur far away in Syria? While Israel was certainly concerned with information the Russians and Syrians were picking up, it is unbelievable that Israel would risk the friendship of the United States at a critical time for what would have been a pointless attack. The Liberty was simply not in a position to obtain vital information about the Golan while sailing off El Arish.

Even more telling, however, are the military facts themselves. If the attack on the Liberty was premeditated and planned, as Ennes claims, then Israeli planes would have been loaded with heavy bombs used to sink ships. The Israeli planes were not, however, armed with heavy bombs but were equipped with weapons used to assist ground troops, the action in which they were engaged at the time prior to the Liberty attack.

The Liberty was also attacked by torpedo boats. In a premeditated, planned attack, Israel would not have wasted torpedo boats on an attack which could easily have been handled from the air.

What actually occurred on June 8 was a tragic mistake. The author gives the impression that the Liberty was easy to recognize and could not have been mistaken for any other ship. If more than 12 years ago, the Israelis had the same 20/20 hindsight as Ennes and the time to leisurely contemplate matters, the attack could not have taken place. However, as those who have

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The U.S.S. Liberty

On June 8, 1967 – day four of the Six Day War – an American intelligence gathering ship, the USS Liberty, was attacked off the Sinai coast by the Israel air force and navy. The facts surrounding this incident have long been subjected to serious speculation and anti-Israel propaganda. Israel, however, has insisted that the attack on the vessel was a regrettable error, but one caused by a combination of factors tempered by the heat of battle.

The past few months have seen a revival in the international – and specifically the American – media of the Liberty affair. Israel is seen as having knowingly and with malice aforethought attacked the spy ship since it was interfering with Israel's conduct of the war. These reports, it is believed, were put out by parties with an interest in undermining the developing Israel-American military and strategic cooperation.

Hereunder follows the first full and unedited accounting of Israel's version of the actual events of June 8, 1967. It is based on the findings of the official board of inquiry into the affair. This report was never intended for public consumption and has been filed away in the Israel national archives. The report substantiates the Israeli claim that the attack was an unfortunate accident caused by a series of errors in judgment. But it also shows that the American vessel refused to identify itself when asked to do so, thereby compounding the error of identification and contributing to the torpedoing of the ship.

- At 05:30 on June 8, an aircraft on a routine patrol mission in the Mediterranean spotted what was described as a destroyer sailing in the direction of Gaza. Two Israel naval patrol boats were placed on alert. At 06:03 the ship was positively identified as a U.S. navy supply vessel. This was duly registered on the battle map at Naval H.Q. and the state of alert was cancelled.
- At 09:01 another report was received from aircraft returning from a combat mission in the Sinai concerning the presence of an unidentified warship 24 nautical miles north of the El-Arish coast and sailing west.
- At 09:05 the pilot [illegible] the aircraft reported that he had been fired at by the ship, and Israeli destroyers, positioned 24 nautical miles away, were immediately [illegible] course of interception. At 09:41, after another conversation with the pilot in question, officials at H.Q. came to the conclusion that the pilot's report was inaccurate. Another check, completed at 10:58, again identified the ship as a supply vessel. As a result, the state of alert was cancelled, the destroyers recalled and the ship removed from the target acquisition board at H.Q.
- At 11:24 more reports started to flow into H.Q. from the air force on the presence of an unidentified vessel. Simultaneously, reports were received that El-Arish was being shelled from the sea. At 11:50 a report was received from Southern Command that two unidentified naval vessels were firing at El-Arish, but that their shells were falling short of the beach. This report was repeated at 11:58, and at 13:09 general command H.Q. Operations Section asked Navy H.Q. to verify that there were no Israel navy vessels in the area of El-Arish, so that the two ships in question could be attacked from the air.
- The Navy opposed this plan, and after some deliberation between naval H.Q. and the General Staff Command it was decided instead to send Israel's torpedo naval patrol boats from home base at Ashdod port to intercept the ships.
- At 13:18 an order was transmitted to the commander of the Israeli patrol, now 22 miles west of Ashdod, to tune into air force communications and to be ready for a possible attack.
- At 13:41 the target was sighted by the patrol's radar and at 13:45 the patrol was ordered to move in and positively identify the targets. At 13:47 the patrol boats reported that the target was sailing at 30 knots and that it was therefore impossible for them to achieve an interception for identification. The patrol boats were ordered to conduct a cross-check on the estimated speed of the target (the speed of a target is considered an integral indicator of the nature of the vessel in question – a ship moving at 30 knots was, in 1967, without doubt a vessel of war). Naval H.Q. decided that a second check of the ship's speed be done, since it was not believed that a mistake could not have been made in the first estimate which took [illegible] than seven minutes to calculate.

  At this point all information (namely the vessel's speed, the combined intelligence reports from the spotter aircraft and southern command, coupled with the unexplained shelling of the El-Arish shore), led commanders at naval H.Q. to the conclusion that the ship was an enemy vessel, most probably a destroyer of the 'R' or 'Z' class. An attack on the ship was ordered. An order to attack was given to the commander of the Israeli patrol tracking the target, but he reported that a naval attack would be impossible due to the target vessel's speed and his inability to close the gap between them.
- At 14:00 the ship was attacked from the air, as requested by the naval commander. It was first strafed by two aircraft (identified in the report by their Hebrew code names) and then bombed less than two minutes later by a pair of Mystere jets. The ship immediately exploded into flame and was covered by a thick blanket of smoke.
- At 14:05 the aircraft were ordered to leave the area by the chief of naval operations, and simultaneously an order was handed down to the naval torpedo patrol boats to close in for a supplementary attack. At 14:18 the attacking craft were reported by the commander to be in attack formation. Four minutes prior to that, at 14:14, one of the pilots involved in the aerial attack reported to H.Q. that the letters G.T.N.S.P.-3 had been seen on the ship's side (information which led to renewed doubts as to the true identity of the ship under attack). An immediate order was transmitted to the commander of the naval force preparing the attack (since there could be a problem with the identity of the craft pending further verification. He was ordered to stand by for [illegible] operation.
- At 14:03 the torpedo boats, which were now four minutes from the ship, reported that they were unable to identify the craft visually. The commander signaled the ship and requested that it identify itself by lamp (Morse code signalled the letters AA, the code for refusal to identify and a question for reverse identification). The patrol boats continued to close range until 14:38 the commander of the attacking force identified the ship as an Egyptian supply ship, the "Al-Katar". His message continued that the target was burning and covered in black smoke. After receiving this report, and following a series of consultations at naval H.Q., an order was handed down to the torpedo boats to attack.
- At 14:40 the attacking craft opened fire on the ship. Fire was not returned. At 14:42 the attacking force went in for a final torpedo assault.
- Five torpedoes were fired within [illegible] minutes of each other, at distances 1,000, 550, 2,000 and 1,500 yards. [illegible] was recorded and was seen to explode.
- After the initial attack the patrol commander decided to send one of the torpedo boats around the side of the ship to attack from the other side. While moving around the aft section of the stricken ship, the torpedo boat's captain reported that he could make out some letters on the side of the ship. He received a command to get in as close as possible to make a final identification and reported back that it seemed that the ship was Russian. It was only after a lifeboat was pulled out of the water that the ship was identified as an American vessel.
- After the identification, the torpedo boats attempted to offer rescue services. They received a negative response. Israeli helicopters dispatched to the area were informed by the stricken vessel that their help was not needed. The ship continued to move its own way, and no further contact was maintained between the ship and the Israel Navy.

MIDDLE EAST [illegible]
INSIGHT
[illegible]
Volume I, No. 1 February-March, 1982

Published by the International Affairs Division of the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith, 823 United Nations Plaza, New York, N.Y. 10017. Maxwell E. Greenberg, National Chairman; Nathan Perlmutter, National Director; Kenneth J. Bialkin, Chairman, National Executive Committee; Abraham H. Foxman, Associate National Director, Director of the International Affairs Division; Irving Shapiro, Chairman, Robert B. Goldmann, Co-Chairman, Middle Eastern Affairs Committee; Kenneth Jacobson, Director, Middle Eastern Affairs Department, Harry Wall, Director, ADL's Israel Office.
Editors: Kenneth Jacobson, Harry Wall

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Commander-in-Chief
ISRAEL NAVY

Tel-Aviv, 19th May, 1983

Mr. Stan White
MCPO USN (Ret)
[redacted]

Dear Mr. White,

I hereby acknowledge receipt of your letter of January 8, 1983, as well as that of Mr. Ennes.

In reply to your letter, I would like to inform you, that our documents in regard to the tragic "Liberty" incident, was officially forwarded to the authorities of the U.S. Navy, after a thorough and professional examination of all our findings.

Sincerely Yours,
Ze'ev Almog, RADM.
C. I. M.
Israeli Navy.

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CRYPTOLOG

NAVAL CRYPTOLOGIC VETERANS ASSOCIATION

Vol. 8, No 8 | Eugene, Oregon | July 1984

SPECIAL ISSUE

U.S.S. LIBERTY

ATTACK ON THE U.S.S. LIBERTY by William D. Gerhard, National Security Agency/Central Security Service. Released to National Archives (NARS) as SRH-256. (Abridged for CRYPTOLOG by Graydon Lewis.). Complete copy available for loan to members by writing Ralph Cox, 593 Clarmar Drive, NE, Salem OR 97301 and sending $2 for postage.



Official U.S. Navy Photo

U.S.S. LIBERTY (AGTR-5)

CONSIDERATIONS LEADING TO THE SHIP'S DEPLOYMENT

Looking back upon the Liberty incident today, Americans might well question why the U.S. introduced [deleted] into a war theater in which Americans were not direct participants and expose that ship to the risk it did. The decision to deploy, it should be noted, came before the Six Day [Israeli - United Arab Republic June 1966] war erupted. It came after careful [deleted], from this troubled region, of technical factors which would govern the [deleted] and the need to develop [deleted] in the event future U.S. involvement in Middle East hostilities should bring a requirement to support U.S. forces.

U.S.S. LIBERTY'S MODUS OPERANDI

U.S. reconnaissance operations came under the purview of the J-3, Joint Chiefs of Staff. A Deputy Director for Reconnaissance assisted the J-3 in the exercise of operational control over reconnaissance activities of the unified and specified commands. The Joint Reconnaissance Center (JRC) worked for the Deputy Director for Reconnaissance and had authority over U.S. reconnaissance operations. NSA had a representative to the Joint Reconnaissance Center, Mr. John Connell.

In 1966 the JCS had [illegible] Operational control of the ships was to be effected by unified and specified commanders "through the naval component commander to a specific fleet or force commander." In May 1967, the U.S.S. Liberty, an auxiliary general technical research ship (AGTR) was operating under the control of the Commander-in-Chief, Atlantic. The TRS commanding officer was Commander William L. McGonagle.

LIBERTY AT ROTA, 31 MAY to JUNE 1967

When the Liberty arrived at Rota on 31 May, it came under the operational control of the U.S. Commander-in-Chief, Europe (General L.L. Lemnitzer) who turned over control to the Commander-in-Chief, U.S. Navy Europe. While delegating his control, General Lemnitzer still wanted operational [illegible] (Pim) reports from the Liberty arrive at his headquarters daily and that any incidents be reported as soon as possible in accordance with the exisitng reconnaissance reporting instructions. After taking control, Admiral John S. McCain, Jr. Commander-in-Chief, U.S. Navy Europe, directed the Liberty to send to his headquarters daily Sitreps and position reports and in those reports to include the Pim for the next 24 hours and any comments on status of the ship. He directed the Liberty to depart for the eastern Mediterranean when ready, provided guidelines for its staying within international waters, and asked for adherence to established communications procedures for the region.

At Rota, the Liberty prepared for its deployment to the eastern Mediterranean, taking on provisions and fuel, acquiring the military documentation necessary for its assignment to Commander-in-Chief, U.S. Navy Europe and later to the U.S. Sixth Fleet and repairing its TRSSCOMM [See Assault on the Liberty by Jim Ennes] which had a faulty hydraulic system.

With the territorial limits established by Middle East countries in mind, JCS subsequently directed the Commander-in-Chief, Europe to deploy the Liberty to operational area three with closest point of approach (CPA) to Algeria, Libya, and the U.A.R. of 13 nautical miles during transit. On arrival in operational area three, CPA was to be 12.5 nm to the U.A.R. and 6.5 nm to Israel." Acting upon the JCS message for Commander-in-Chief, Europe and after hearing from the Liberty that it had completed repairs to the TRSSCOMM hydraulic system, Admiral McCain directed [illegible] the schedule

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reported Rota on 2 June at 1700Z through the Strait of Gibraltar on a course paralleling the North African coastline.

ENROUTE TO OPERATIONAL AREA THREE

Liberty's move into the Mediterranean proceeded according to plan. It reported that it overtook and passed three Soviet ships during its passage through the Strait of Gibraltar following the North African coastline.

At 1330Z, 2 June the Liberty informed the Navy Movement Report Office in London and 33 other addressees including the commander, Sixth Fleet that as of 0001Z, 7 June, the Liberty would be guarding the fleet broadcast from the Naval Communication Station at Asmara, Ethiopia, which served the eastern Mediterranean. In accordance with customary communications procedures, the Liberty would guard the fleet broadcast of the Naval Communications Station, Morocco, until it reached the eastern Mediterranean.

The Commander-in-Chief, U.S. Navy Europe apprised Commander, Sixth Fleet, Vice Admiral William I. Martin, on 3 June, that the Liberty's mission was to conduct an "extended independent surveillance operation in the eastern Mediterranean" and that Sixth Fleet might be called upon to provide logistic and other support.

With the outbreak of the war on 5 June, the Commander-in-Chief, U.S. Navy Europe in a message to the Commander, Sixth Fleet and others took note of the movement of some 20 Soviet warships with supporting vessels and an estimated 8 or 9 Soviet submarines into the eastern Mediterranean and Aegean and, along with other guidance, instructed Vice Admiral Martin to keep his ships and aircraft at least 100 nm away from the coasts of Lebanon, Syria, Israel, and the U.A.R. and at least 25 nm away from Cyprus. The Commander, Sixth Fleet directed his units to comply later that day. Neither the Commander-in-Chief, U.S. Navy Europe nor the Commander, Sixth Fleet directives included specific instructions to the U.S.S. Liberty.

While it was neither NSA's responsibility nor intention to abridge the safety factors of the Liberty's mission, in view of the outbreak of hostilities, NSA's Gene Sheck and [deleted] did ask the NSA liaison officer to the JCS/JRC, Mr. J. Connell, on 5 June if any consideration was being given there to a change in the Liberty's operational area.

The NSA liaison officer discussed the matter with JRC's ship-movement officer and then advised Sheck and [deleted] that no action was then under consideration.

On 6 June, as it was passing between Libya and Crete, the Liberty reported to Sixth Fleet that its TRSSCOMM, which had malfunctions in its power supply and hydraulic systems on the trip from Rota, was again operating satisfactorily and, in reply to a Commander-in-Chief, U.S. Navy Europe query concerning Pims not being received, provided the date-time group of Pims previously sent.

On this same day, 6 June, the Liberty was to come under its operational control at 0001Z, 7 June 1967 in order "to facilitate area command and control and any possible requirement for protection during the Middle East hostilities" and pointed out that the Liberty's schedule might be revised for safety reasons "as dictated by the local situation." Liberty acknowledged the instructions concerning its operational control at 2036Z on the 6th. Liberty's commanding officer, Commander McGonagle, also told the Commander, Sixth Fleet that the ship was in a "Readiness Condition Three-Modified" and reminded his superior that the ship's "self-defense capability" was limited to four .50-caliber machine guns and small arms.

Three hours later the commander, Sixth Fleet cautioned its new charge by message to "maintain a high state of vigilance against attack or threat of attack" in view of the "unpredictability of U.A.R. actions." He directed the Liberty to report by Flash precedence any threatening actions or "any diversion from schedule necessitated by external threat" and to submit "reports of contact with ships, aircraft, and submarines which are unidentified, of intelligence interest, or engage in harassment." Admiral Martin also instructed the Liberty to copy the fleet broadcast and to use his fast carrier task force (TF-60) tactical circuits if necessary. Liberty did not receive, for one reason or another, this message.

On 7 June at 0600Z the Liberty was off the coast of the U.A.R. and approaching operational areas two and three. Despite the Immediate Precedence assigned to the Liberty's Sitrep/Posit report at 0908Z, 7 June, giving its position at 0600Z at 33-06N 28-54E, it took, according to a JCS postmortem report, some fifteen and one-half hours for the Liberty's position report to reach the Commander, Sixth Fleet, the action addressee. Liberty was now guarding the fleet broadcast of the Naval Communications Station, Asmara.

On this day a number of actions were underway to minimize the appearance of U.S. involvement in the Middle East hostilities and to change the Liberty's operational area.

DIRECTIONS TO WITHDRAW THE LIBERTY

Following a question from the U.S. Chief of Naval Operations about the wisdom of Liberty's assignment in the war zone, the JCS/JRC made a new assessment of the danger inherent in the Liberty's operations. JRC considered the distance of the Liberty from the Sixth Fleet, some 300 to 400 miles.

In a message conveying the sense of urgency then developing in the Pentagon staff, JCS expressed concern in a message at 2230Z to Commander-in-Chief, Europe over the Middle East situation and stated that the JCS-directed operational area for the Liberty was "for guidance only" and could be "varied as local conditions dictate." JCS also instructed the Commander-in-Chief, Europe to change CPA to the U.A.R. to 20 nm, to Israel 15 nm. Although a copy of the message was to have gone to the Liberty, it would not [illegible] it to the Naval Communications Station in the Pacific.

Further deliberation within the JCS/JRC following discussions with the Chief of Naval Operations, who was pressing for a 100-mile CPA for the Liberty, now resulted in a JCS decision to move the Liberty well off the hostile shoreline. Contributing to the decision, as JRC's Captain Merriwell Vineyard (USN) told NSA's JRC representative, John Connell, Chairman, JCS, to support in any way the U.S. position taken at the U.N. in answer to U.A.R. charges of complicity. U.S. Ambassador Arthur J. Goldberg had stated on the 6th to the Security Council that "All Sixth Fleet aircraft are and have been several hundred miles from the area of conflict."

At 2350Z, one hour after the JCS had given its instructions resulting the Liberty to their 15-20 [illegible] CPA, JRC's Major Breedlove, [illegible] normal Commander-in-Chief, [illegible] channels, on Vocom (Voice) called [illegible] Commander-in-Chief, U.S. Navy Europe command center to convey the JCS/JRC decision and to direct that the Liberty be moved back to a CPA of 100 nm to the coasts of Israel, U.A.R., and Syria and a CPA of 25 nm to Cyprus. As indicated to Lieutenant E.L. Galavotti, the operations duty officer there, that a confirming JS message would follow, Breedlove explained the urgency of the matter "because time [is] getting short to where she will be in those limits." Galavotti said he would go to Sixth Fleet right away and had an appropriate message ready by 0800Z for release by his superiors to Sixth Fleet. Some fourteen minutes after calling Commander-in-Chief, U.S. Navy Europe, Breedlove called the Commander-in-Chief, Europe JRC watch officer, informing him of the verbal request to NAVEUR and telling him that NAVEUR had promised to take action.

Within the Commander-in-Chief, U.S. Navy Europe command center, an unfortunate delay took place, however, in relaying this JCS/JRC instruction to the Sixth Fleet for action. Mindful that this directive had skipped channels and was only verbal, Galavotti's superior, Captain W.J. Hawley, Jr., Deputy Chief of Staff, U.S. Navy Europe, directed that the message to Sixth Fleet not be released until the date-time group of the

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The Naval Cryptologic Veterans Association CRYPTOLOG, (ISSN 0740-7602) is published quarterly by the Association. Association correspondence should be addressed to the Executive Director Ray Boyer, 333 South 61st Avenue, #3, Pensacola FL 32506. Address CRYPTOLOG correspondence to the Editor Graydon Lewis 3421 Stark Street, Eugene, OR 97404. CRYPTOLOG production correspondence to T.F.T. Warren, photographer and Judy Warren, typist and layout, 1010 SW Eleventh Street, Corvallis OR 97333.

Contributions are encouraged and should be addressed to the Editor.

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JCS confirming message was at hand. NAVEUR policy allowed for acceptance of oral instructions from higher headquarters to move ships and aircraft only if given by flag or general officers or if firm evidence of a message directive were provided--for example, the date-time group of a confirming message. Instead of releasing the message, Captain Hanley told the NAVEUR command center duty officer, Commander C.G. Jorgensen, to apprise Commander-in-Chief, Europe of the matter and ask headquarters to obtain the date-time group of the confirming JCS message. Jorgensen then called the U.S. European Command's (EUCOM) command duty officer at 080030Z, who directed he would check and call back. The JCS confirming message, JCS 080110Z was, of course, not yet released at the time of the call. Its transmission by the Department of Army Communications Center in the Pentagon to Commander-in-Chief, Europe was at 080211Z*.

Not hearing from the higher headquarters, Commander Jorgensen repeated his call at 0325Z on 8 June to check again on the status of the action and again asked EUCOM to obtain a date-time group, this time speaking with a duty officer in the JRC section of EUCOM, Lieutenant Colonel C.K. Russell. European Command's delay of three hours in responding to NAVEUR had resulted from its assumption, based on Breedlove's call from the JCS/JRC, that NAVEUR was already taking action. Shortly thereafter, Russell was able to give Jorgensen the required JCS date-time group, the message having just arrived in the EUCOM JRC duty officer's hands, but this was about the same time as NAVEUR's information copy of JCS 080110Z, the confirming message, arrived in the NAVEUR command center itself -- the time, 0325Z, 8 June. A precious four hours had gone by since Major Breedlove's call.

Commander Jorgensen then asked for a telecon with Sixth Fleet's staff duty officer and at 080355Z was experiencing difficulties in establishing contact because of atmospheric conditions. He then had his radio operator contact Sixth Fleet by single sideband radio and request the telecon as soon as possible. The two-way telecon with Sixth Fleet began at 080410Z.

When the Sixth Fleet staff duty officer told Jorgensen his copy did not have JCS 080110Z as yet (the Army Communications Center, Pentagon, having misrouted this message to Hawaii), Jorgensen passed it to him three times before gaining an acknowledgement at 080440Z from the Sixth Fleet's duty officer, who was having difficulty in hearing NAVEUR. Jorgensen then sent a confirming message: "From CINCNAVEUR Command Duty Officer to COMSIXTHFLT Duty Officer.Be advised that JCS 080110Z FORAC.[For action] Official msg follows."

Ironically, the Sixth Fleet's duty officer then indicated to Jorgensen that Sixth Fleet did not hold reference (s) on the critical JCS message and asked for a copy. Since NAVEUR also was without a copy of the referenced message, [illegible]

7337/072230Z), Jorgensen would obtain it from Commander-in- Chief, Europe and later, on obtaining a copy, outline to the Sixth Fleet's duty officer its contents which had, by that time, been overtaken by events.

From 080440Z June 76 it became the commander, Sixth Fleet's responsibility to direct the Liberty to a safer area of operations than the one in which she was then steering. Vice Admiral Martin's message to the Liberty, directing it not to approach the coast of the U.A.R. Syria, or Israel closer than 100 nm, went out some four and one-half hours later, at 080917Z, the delay in this case being attributed to preparations on board the U.S.S. America for a press conference relating to the U.A.R. charges of U.S. complicity with Israel in the prosecution of the war and to Sixth Fleet's need to transmit other traffic of equal or higher precedence.

Meanwhile Liberty was, of course, already in its operational area. Its position at 080800Z was within 30 nm of 31-45N 33-30E in area three.

When it rains, it pours, and there would be even further delays in the attempts to get the word to the Liberty.



Photo courtesy NSA

Liberty's forward dish antenna after the pirating attack by Israeli jets.

JCS's investigating team, the U.S. Navy Court of Inquiry, and later a congressional staff gave close attention to the Sixth Fleet message to the Liberty, following the status of the message in the critical hours before it came under attack. Essentially, the findings were these.

0630Z, 8 June Sixth Fleet Duty Officer had message ready for release by Assistant Chief of Staff (Operations).

0917Z Message released with Immediate Precedence.

1035Z Message transmitted to the Naval Communications Station, Morocco, for relay to the Liberty, the delays owing to the transmission of equal or high precedence messages. Unaware that the Liberty, pursuant to its instructions, was now guarding the fleet broadcast of the Naval Communications Station, Asmara, the Sixth Fleet routing clerk erred in [illegible] passed over Defense Communications System to DCS station, Asmara. Through error, the Asmara DCS station sent the message to the Naval Communications Station, Greece, at 1238Z. The latter sent it back to the Asmara DCS station.

1510Z Asmara DCS station delivered the message to the Naval Communications Station.

1525Z Naval Communications Station, Asmara, put the message on its fleet broadcast.

The Liberty would not receive the critical message in time.

The action messages directing withdrawal of the Liberty to a CFA of 100 nm were three in number: JCS 080110Z, Sixth Fleet 080917Z referred to in the foregoing, and Commander-in-Chief, Europe's 080625Z to NAVEUR confirming informal exchanges giving action on the JCS message to NAVEUR. Information copies of the JCS and the CINCEUR action messages were to have gone to the U.S.S. Liberty, and it is, of course, entirely possible that timely receipt of these might have triggered a withdrawal action on the part of the Liberty's Commander McGonagle. But the same unkind fate guarding the action messages was also looking after the information copies. These too ran into communications problems of one kind or another, and the Liberty would not receive them.

THE ATTACK

Thursday morning, 8 June 1967, found the Liberty cruising slowly in international waters on station as directed. At approximately 0830 hours (local time), the Liberty notified the Commander, Sixth Fleet that her position for the next 24 hours would be within 30 nautical miles of coordinates 31-45N and 33-30E. The sea was calm and the clear sky permitted visibility of ten miles; a light breeze ruffled the Liberty's ensign.

Liberty's projected course for that day was to proceed to a point 13 nautical miles from the U.A.R. coast at 31-27.2N, 34-00E (Point Alpha), thence to 31-22.3N, 33-42E (Point Bravo), thence to 31-31N, 33-00E (Point Charlie) retracing this track until new orders were received. Normal steaming speed was to be five knots and typical steaming colors (which indicated conditions were normal) were flown. A "condition of readiness three, modified" was set; i.e., a normal steaming watch, except that one man was stationed at each of the forward two .50-caliber machine guns, numbers 51 and 52. Lookouts on the bridge were designated to man machine guns 53 and 54 just aft of the bridge, in the event of a surprise air or surface attack.

At about 0830 hours, it was possible to visually sight the minaret at Al 'Arish on the U.A.R. coast. This was used as a navigational aid and the ship's position was verified as being within its operating limits. There were no other conspicuous or outstanding navigational features in the area.

RECONNAISSANCE OF THE LIBERTY

Shortly before 0900 hours (local [illegible] single-engine jet

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at 31-27N, 34-40E. The planes' altitude was estimated at 5,000 feet, at a distance of approximately two miles. Liberty notified the Commander, Sixth Fleet and others of this reconnaissance, stating that identification was unknown and that no amplifying report would be submitted.

Later in the morning, at 1056 hours, an aircraft similar to an American flying boxcar crossed astern of the Liberty at a distance of about three to five miles. The plane circled the ship around the starboard side, proceeded forward of the ship and headed back toward the Sinai peninsula. This reconnaissance was repeated at approximately 30-minute intervals. It was impossible to see any identifying markings on the aircraft. The plane never approached the Liberty in a provocative manner and made no attempt to signal the ship. Nor did the Liberty attempt to signal it. Subsequent investigations of the attack on the Liberty identified the aircraft as a French-built Noratlas NORD 2501, piloted by Israeli Air Force.

Though this plane was unidentified, the thoughts of civilians aboard (the Liberty) must have been shared by his shipmates. [A crewman] remembered thinking when he saw the plane, that "it must be Israeli because what else is flying out here at this point in the war and also it's coming from the direction of Israel and it's going back to Israel, so it was obvious that it was Israeli. I didn't think much of it. They were just out there checking us out. That's what I would do too."

Being sensitive to its exposed and unprotected position, the Liberty reported to the Naval Security Station Command, at approximately 1100 hours, that she had destroyed all superseded Muy publications [deleted] and intended to destroy all irregular superseded material ally because of the "current situation and shallow water in operating area."

GENERAL QUARTERS DRILL

After the lunch hour, at 1310 hours, THE Liberty's crew was exercised at general quarters for drill purposes for a mandatory noncompetitive exercise to train the crew in chemical-attack procedures. This was a routine activity, part of the ship's training program established by the Commander, Service Force, Atlantic Fleet, and was not related to her mission in the eastern Mediterranean. The drill was performed satisfactorily and the ship returned to her "modified condition three" at 1345.

Following the general quarters drill, the Liberty's Commanding Officer, Commander William L. McGonagle, fixed her position by radar as being 25.5 nautical miles from the minaret at Al 'Arish, which was to the southeast (bearing 142 degrees true.)

AIR ATTACK BEGINS

During the general quarters (GQ) drill, Lieutenant James G. O'Connor (Assistant Technical Operations Officer of the Research Department) had been officer of the deck on the bridge. At the conclusion of the drill, he went up to the 04 level [deleted]



Photo courtesy USS

During the attack, severe damage was done to one of the two forward area 50-caliber gun mounts.

airplanes that had been picked up on radar by the lookouts. It was 1400 hours. From the starboard wing of the bridge, Commander McGonagle observed a single jet aircraft that appeared similar, if not identical, to those that had been sighted earlier in the day and about which a sighting report had been submitted. The relative bearing of this plane was about 135 degrees, its position angle was about 45 degrees-50 degrees, its elevation approximately 7,000 feet, and it was approximately five to six miles from the ship. It appeared to McGonagle that the plane was traveling parallel to, and in the same direction as the Liberty. With his binoculars trained on the aircraft, the Commander was unaware of a second plane swooping in from the port side to launch a rocket directed toward the bridge. When the rocket exploded two levels below the bridge, McGonagle ordered the general alarm to be sounded.

CT3 Paddy E. (Dusty) Rhodes was headed below decks from his GQ station, damage control deta[illegible]. At the end of the GQ drill, the Commander had ordered the whaleboat engine tested and, when Dusty heard a muffled explosion, he thought, "Those damned deck apes blew that boat up and I've got to go back up and fight the fire." Simultaneously, Dusty heard the general quarters alarm. Scampering back up the ladder, he could smell burning powder and started "dogging down" doors when a rocket tore through a bulkhead to his right ripping steel all about.

Down in the [deleted], Terry McFarland wearing his headphones, was vaguely aware of flickers of light coming through the bulkhead. He didn't realize that these were armor-piercing tracer bullets slicing through the Liberty's skin. The "flickers" were accompanied by a strange noise that sounded to Terry like chains being pulled across the bottom of the ship. Next, he saw Seaman "Red" Addington race down the ladder from above with blood running down his right leg from a wound in the knee. "Somebody's up there shootin' at us," said Red. Nobody spoke, but Terry could see the fear in the faces about him. Someone ordered the men to perform emergency destruction, and they turned to dumping classified material in [illegible]

Topside, one level above the main deck, the exploding rocket had started a blazing fire in two 55-gallon gasoline drums stowed below the bridge on the port side. McGonagle quickly ordered his Executive Officer, Lieutenant Commander Philip M. Armstrong, to go down and release the gasoline cans. Lieutenant O'Connor joined the Exec. Just as both reached the top of the ladder to proceed down, a bomb hit near the whaleboat on the starboard side, immediately aft of the bridge. Armstrong and O'Connor were thrown back onto the bridge and other personnel in the pilot-house were blown from their feet. McGonagle grabbed the engine order annunciator and rang up all hood flank speed -- an order for maximum speed. At the same time, he ordered Lieutenant Maurice H. Bennett to report to the Chief of Naval Operations (CNO) via the high-command radio circuit (HICOM) that the Liberty was under attack by unidentified jet aircraft and required immediate assistance. This Flash message, giving the Liberty's position as 33-25E, 31-23N, was received by the aircraft carrier U.S.S. Saratoga (CVA-60) and relayed to Commander, Naval Forces Europe; Sixth Fleet; and Commander, Task Force 60 (CTF 60). Liberty's transmission was not made without difficulty. During the attack and intermittently thereafter, the HICOM voice circuit was subjected to loud jamming regardless of frequency. This electronic interference was described as a steady carrier without modulation.

After being blown back onto the bridge floor, Lieutenant O'Connor realized he had no feeling in his body from the waist down. To get out of the way, he dragged himself into the combat information center (CIC) behind the bridge, where several others had also sought safety. Lying face down, O'Cunnor soon noticed that there was a lot of blood on the floor and then realized it was his. About this time, Ensign O'Malley stepped into the CIC and helped stop O'Connor's bleeding by stuffing a T-shirt into the holes in his back.

A few moments after the bomb blast on the starboard side, Commander McGonagle was hit by flying shrapnel and knocked off his feet, but, though shaken up, he remained on the bridge, totally in command.

For the next five or six minutes, aircraft made criss-cross attacks on the Liberty at about one-minute intervals, hitting her with rockets and machine-gun fire. A final count entered into the Court of Inquiry's record, showed 821 separate hits on the ship's hull and superstructure. The attacking aircraft were later identified as French-built Dassault Mirage jet fighters whose armament consisted of two 30mm cannon, two 1,000-pound bombs, and four rocket pods (18 rockets each).

During the first or second strafing run, the ship's public-address system, the electrically powered intercom system, and most sound-powered phone circuits were destroyed.

In the first minutes of the air attack a complete loss of [illegible] of badly

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damaged radio transmitting antennas and antenna systems. In spite of this, emergency restoration of hicom voice capability was completed within minutes. All U.S.S. Liberty communications immediately thereafter were via the hicom voice network.

The coordinated strafing, rocket, and incendiary air attacks created three major fires topside that covered large areas of the Liberty with flames and heavy smoke. Eight men were killed or died of injuries received during the air attack: two killed or mortally wounded on the bridge, two killed at machine gun 51, one killed at machine gun 52, one died from wounds received on the main deck starboard side, and two died of wounds received on the 01 level portside. Throughout the topside area, 75 men had been wounded by shrapnel and shock by exploding rockets.

During this period, the Liberty gradually built up speed from five knots; her exact speed was not known but it is doubtful that she exceeded 11 or 12 knots while under attack.

TORPEDO-BOAT ATTACK

At about 1424 hours, lookouts sighted three highspeed boats approaching the Liberty from the northeast on a relative bearing of approximately 135 degrees at a distance of about 15 miles. The boats appeared to be in a wedge-type formation, spaced about 150 to 200 yards apart, and closing in a torpedo-launch attitude at an estimated speed of 27 to 30 knots. Commander McGonagle ordered a sailor from the bridge to man the starboard gun and take the boats under fire. Using the hicom circuit, the Liberty's radiomen reported the approach of the torpedo boats. This was received and relayed by the U.S.S. Saratoga to Commander-in-Chief, U.S. Navy Europe and to the Commander, Sixth Fleet.

It was then that the Commander noticed that the Liberty's American flag had been shot down. He immediately ordered a signalman to hoist the "holiday ensign" -- the largest flag aboard (approximately 7 x 13 feet) -- from the yardarm, the normal flag halyard having been destroyed. There was smoke from the burning whaleboat and other topside fires in the vicinity of the bridge.

Commander McGonagle passed the word, "Stand by for torpedo attack." He held his course, since turning away from the boats would bring the ship closer to land, and turning toward them would swing the ship broadside toward the attackers, giving them a larger target.

When [deleted] heard the torpedo attack warning, he remembered one of the seamen telling him to sit on the floor and brace his feet against the wall.

In the processing and reporting area, CT Terry McFarland was told to "tuck pant legs into your socks, button top collar, get rid of loose material, and lie flat on floor and hold your head in your hands to protect your face."

When the motor torpedo boats were approximately a mile away, the center boat was seen flashing a signal light. Because of smoke and flames in the [deleted] area, the signal could not be read. One of the boats was believed to be an Israeli flag. As the air attack had knocked out the Liberty's starboard signal light, he attempted to signal with a handheld Aldis lamp. This may not have been powerful enough to penetrate the smoke pouring from the fires started by the attackers. Believing that the air attack might have been in error, Commander McGonagle quickly shouted to the starboard forward gun to withhold fire. The gunner fired a short burst at the motor torpedo boats before he understood the CO's order. At the same time, though unattended, the after gun on the starboard side opened fire: flames from the burning whaleboat had ignited bullets in the gun and in the ammunition box, causing the gun to fire in the direction of the attacking boats.

At this time, the motor torpedo boats opened fire with their gun mounts, killing the Liberty's helmsman. In a matter of seconds one torpedo crossed astern of the ship at about 25 yards. The time was then 1434 hours. A minute later, a second torpedo struck the ship on the starboard side, just forward of the bridge and a few feet below the water line. Again, using the hicom net, the Liberty broadcast that the ship had been torpedoed and was listing badly. The Saratoga picked up the transmission and relayed it to the Commander-in-Chief, U.S. Navy Europe and to the Commander, Sixth Fleet.

To Lieutenant O'Connor, lying on the floor of the combat information center, the torpedoes deafening explosion seemed to lift the ship right out of the water, and when it settled back he thought it was going to roll over.

In the [deleted] where the torpedo struck, everything went black; oil and debris were everywhere. Water rushed in and equipment. Engineman Terry McFarland, but he managed to keep clear and make his way in the darkness to the ladder to go topside. When he got out there was about a [deleted] and a half of air space left.

[deleted] Clyde W. Way was in [deleted] spaces above the [deleted]. With the explosion below, all equipment fell to the floor and smoke poured from the hatch. Way started pulling men out as they came up the ladder. There was no panic. A Marine went down the ladder to help locate men possibly trapped in the water. As the water rose in the [deleted] Lieutenant Maurice Bennett realized that he had to close the hatch to contain the flooding. Attempts to contact the Marine who had gone back failed, and Lieutenant Bennett reluctantly and sorrowfully ordered the hatch closed. McFarland and Way then went topside to help fight fires and attend the wounded.

The torpedo explosion had torn a hole in the side of the ship that extended from a few feet above the water line to below the turn of the bilge. It was shaped like a teardrop, and was 39 feet across at its widest point. Its immediate effect was to flood all compartments on two decks below the water line from frame 53 to frame 66. These rooms [illegible]

blast, others drowned.

The torpedo hit did not start a major fire, probably because of the immediate flooding of the affected area, but the Liberty immediately listed nine degrees to starboard. Power and steering control were lost temporarily and the ship came dead in the water. The time was 1440 hours.

The three torpedo boats also stopped and then milled around astern of the Liberty at a range of approximately 500 to 800 yards. One of the boats signaled by flashing light, in English, "Do you require assistance?" Not being able to signal by light, Commander McGonagle ordered a signalman to hoist the international flag signal for "not under command," meaning that the ship was maneuvering with difficulty and that they should keep clear. One of the torpedo boats was identified by hull number of 204-17. All boats retired toward shore at 1505 hours. The attacking torpedo boats were later identified as French built motor torpedo boats of the Israeli Ayah class. They were 62-ton craft, capable of 42 knots, with a crew of 15 and armament consisting of one 40mm cannon, four 20mm cannon, and two torpedoes.

POST-ATTACK RECONNAISSANCE

At about 1515 hours, two helicopters approached the Liberty and circled around the ship at a distance of about 100 yards. The Star of David insignia was clearly visible. One of the helicopters was numbered 04 or 04, the other 06 or 08. The helicopters departed, returned, and departed again.

Commander McGonagle designated the mess decks as a casualty collection station, and the wounded were taken there by repair party personnel and other crew members able to assist.

Reports received from damage control central indicated that the flooding was under control. Power was restored to the bridge at 1520 hours, but steering control could not be regained from the bridge, making it necessary to give rudder orders by telephone to men in the "after steering" compartment, and for some time they operated the ship's heavy rudder by hand.

At 1536 hours, the Israeli torpedo boats again approached the Liberty from the starboard, at a range of five miles. During the next hour and a quarter, the boats returned toward the ship several times before disappearing over the horizon without further signal or action.

Communications were restored at about 1600 hours, and Commander McGonagle dictated a message to Lieutenant Bennett providing additional information concerning the attack by unidentified aircraft and the fact that the torpedo boats had been identified as Israeli. A preliminary estimate of the number of dead and casualties, as well as the condition of the ship, was also provided. Transmission of this message was delayed because shipboard emergency measures demanded immediate attention to preserve the ship and

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USS.S. DAVIS, one of the two destroyers to reach LIBERTY made a line to the stricken ship. The DAVIS assumed all communications functions for the LIBERTY.

Fifteen minutes later two unidentified jet aircraft approached the Liberty from the starboard side and reconnoitered from a distance before disappearing from the scene.

SIXTH FLEET REACTS

Aboard his flagship, the guided-missile light cruiser U.S.S. Little Rock (CLG-4), the Commander, Sixth Fleet received (from the Saratoga) the Liberty's message about the air and torpedo boat attacks. At 1450 hours, fifty minutes after the attack began, he ordered the aircraft carrier U.S.S. America (CVA-66) to launch four armed A-4 Skyhawks and the carrier U.S.S. Saratoga (CVA-60) to launch four armed A-1 attack planes to defend the Liberty. The America was also directed to provide fighter cover and tanker aircraft to refuel the fighters, if necessary. At this time, the Sixth Fleet was located south of Crete, approximately 450 miles west of the Liberty.

At 1516 hours, Commander, Task Force 60, implemented Sixth Fleet's directive and instructed his carrier pilots to "destroy or drive off any attackers who are clearly making attacks on the Liberty. Remain over international waters. Defend yourself if attacked."

On the heels of this action, at 1534 hours, the Commander, Sixth Fleet informed U.S. Commander-in-Chief, Europe (CINCEUR) of the attack and aircraft being deployed to defend the Liberty. It was estimated that the first aircraft would be on the scene at 1730 hours.

Following this, at 1549 hours, the Commander, Sixth Fleet relayed to the Chief of Naval Operations (CNO) and the Commander-in-Chief, U.S. Navy Europe, (CINCUSNAVEUR) his message of instruction to the carriers concerning the use of force and observance of Israeli and Egyptian territorial limits.

Commander, Task Force 60, reacting to the Liberty's plight, sent a message to Sixth Fleet at 1610 hours recommending that fleet ocean tug U.S.S. Papago (ATF-160) of the Abnaki class be diverted to proceed at maximum speed to assist the Liberty.

Military Command Center (NMCC) in the Pentagon was phoned by CINCEUR and told of the situation as known. At 0915 hours (DST), 8 June, NMCC phone the [DELETED] to notify NSA of the attack.

At the White House, President Lyndon B. Johnson was busy telephoning cabinet members and congressional leaders when he was interrupted at 0949 hours (DST) by Walt Rostow, his Special Assistant for National Security Affairs, and told that "the Liberty, has been torpedoed in the Mediterranean. The ship is located 60-100 miles north of Egypt. Reconnaissance aircraft are out from the 6th fleet. ...no knowledge of the submarine or surface vessel which committed this act....shall keep you informed."

Rostow phoned again at 1014 hours to advise the President that the Liberty was "listing badly to starboard. The Saratoga has launched 4-AA's and 4-A1's....

ISRAEL REPORTS ERROR

In Tel Aviv, Israel, the U.S. Naval Attache, Commander E.C. Castle, was called to the foreign Liaison Office, Israel Defense Force at approximately 1600 hours (local time) and told that Israeli air and sea forces had attacked the Liberty in error. Immediately the U.S. Defense Attache office sent a Flash message to advise the White House, Department of State, and others of this development.

JOHNSON INFORMS KOSYGIN

The message was received by the White House, NMCC, and other members of the U.S. military and intelligence community at 1045 hours (DST). Walt Rostow informed the President and immediately drafted a "hot line" message to the Kremlin. President Johnson approved the following text which was sent to Chairman Kosygin at 1117 hours (DST).

We have just learned that U.S.S. Liberty, an unarmed military ship, has apparently been torpedoed by Israeli forces in the area off Port Said. We have instructed our carrier, Saratoga now in the Mediterranean to dispatch aircraft to the scene to investigate. We wish you to know that investigation is the sole purpose of this flight of aircraft, and hope that you will take appropriate steps to see that proper parties are informed. We have passed the message to Charenyahov but feel that you should know of this development urgently.

The message was received in Moscow at 1124 hours (DST). At 1410 hours Kosygin replied by "hot line" that he had passed the message to President Nasser of Egypt. Thereafter instructions were issued by JCS and Commander, Sixth Fleet to withdraw the aircraft launched to defend the Liberty. By 1849 hours Sixth Fleet reported all planes recalled and accounted for.

Deputy Secretary of Defense Vance notified the Commander-in-Chief, U.S. Navy Europe, by phone at 1700 hours that all news releases on the Liberty affair would be made at the Washington level -- no releases were to be made aboard ships. This information was relayed to the Commander [illegible]

Aviv, the Liberty was struggling to regain full engine power and to reach deeper water. The gyro compass was out but the pilothouse magnetic compass appeared to be working.

The ship remained at general quarters while the crew effected post-attack emergency measures. Sixth Fleet was notified that the Liberty had carried out the emergency destruction of all crypto publications and key cards. Her only means of communication remained the hicom circuits.

Liberty's medical officer, Lieutenant Richard F. Kiepfer, Medical Corps, USN, performed one major operation and gave emergency treatment to wounded men as best he could. He manned the main battle dressing station, together with one hospital corpsman, while the other corpsman operated a secondary station in the forward part of the ship. Both stations were flooded with seriously injured men and for a time there was little opportunity to do more than give first aid. Bleeding was stopped, men were given morphine for pain and treated for shock, and those with lung wounds were treated to ease breathing.

At 1500 hours, Sixth Fleet advised the Liberty that destroyers were on the way at maximum speed and that the Liberty was to proceed on a course of 340 degrees magnetic until 100 miles from present position, then turn 270 degrees magnetic.

U.S. NAVAL ATTACHE
HELICOPTERS TO THE LIBERTY

Back in Tel Aviv, the Israeli Foreign Liaison Office was arranging for a helicopter to fly Commander Castle, U.S. Naval Attache, to the Liberty so that he might communicate with its commanding officer. The helicopter left Dov Hoss (now SdeDov) airfield on the northern side of Tel Aviv at 1810 hours and proceeded directly to the Liberty. By 1835 hours the Israeli Sikorsky helicopter, carrying Commander Castle, was over the ship hovering at approximately 30 feet from bridge level. Lettering on the tail of the helicopter was SA32K and on the fuselage were the numerals 06 or 06. The helicopter had neither an electric megaphone nor handheld signal light with which to communicate with the Liberty.

Wearing civilian clothes, Commander Castle could not convey his identity to the bridge of Liberty but by visual means indicated that he wished to be lowered aboard the ship. At first, Commander McGonagle prepared to receive the attache but, considering the obstructions in the forecastle area, signaled a wave-off to the transfer attempt. Simultaneously, the helicopter pilot said he could not make the transfer because of the Liberty's speed. A few minutes later an impromptu package weighted with an orange was dropped from the helicopter onto the forecastle. Inside the package was a message written on a calling card of "Commander Ernest Carl Castle, United States Navy, Naval Attache for Air, Embassy of the United States of America, Tel Aviv." On the back of the card was [illegible] "casualties?" Using an

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message with "affirmative casualties." It was not clear to those on the ship that the reply was understood. Castle, however, had received the message but was uncertain as to whether the number flashed was four or forty. The bodies of three crew members had not yet been removed from the forecastle and must have been observed by those in the helicopter. With the waning light and approach of dusk the helicopter departed the ship at approximately 1900 hours.

Shortly thereafter, at 1915 hours, the Liberty transmitted to CNO a post-attack situation report.

Back at NSA, within an hour of learning that the Liberty had been torpedoed, the [deleted].

LIBERTY LICKS ITS WOUNDS

As darkness settled over the Liberty, Commander McGonagle remained on the bridge, still suffering from the loss of blood and experiencing a great deal of pain from his wounds. By remaining on the bridge, McGonagle believed his presence there would give reassurance to the crew. The Liberty's doctor, Lieutenant Kiepfer, had seen McGonagle on the bridge but made no effort to get him below to a battle dressing station. In Lieutenant Kiepfer's words,

> The Commanding Officer at that time was like a rock upon which the rest of the men supported themselves. To have had he was on the bridge grievously wounded, yet having the conn and helm and ... calling every change of course, was the thing that told the men "we're going to live." When I went to the bridge and 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."

The attack had demanded the very best from the Liberty's crew and they had responded exceptionally well. Damage control competence minimized Liberty's structural wounds and kept her afloat. The engineering crew under Lieutenant George Golden maintained power to the engines so that the Liberty could move away from dangerous shoals to the attack area and head toward the fleet. The medical officer and his two corpsmen needed help and they got it. In Kiepfer's words,

> Anytime I needed a volunteer, we'd get two. If they had to be done ... there were hands everywhere. When we asked for two pints of blood for transfusion, we had people at the adjoining tables who were saying, "If you need some, I have this type." Those were people already wounded..

NSA civilian, [deleted] remembered, too, that surprisingly there was no panic. When the men were ordered to do something, they did it. Everyone was kept busy. Though some were obviously scared to death, there was simply no panic; nobody ran rampant through the ship. No one slept much that night. Helping the wounded became everyone's job -- even those with no medical training. Men learned to dress wounds or do stitches.

Deepening depression and shock caused some men to break down and succumb to the fears they had been able to restrain during the attack and immediately thereafter.

Alone, battered, and scarred but unvanquished, the Liberty steamed steadily on throughout the night toward a rendezvous with Sixth Fleet destroyers. Three musters were taken to identify the dead, the seriously injured, and those who were missing. Casualty messages were completed as quickly as possible and necessary message notifications sent.

THE ISRAELI EXPLANATION [pages deleted]

In summation, the [Israeli] judge concluded that in all the circumstances of the case the conduct of the naval officers concerned in the Liberty incident could not be considered unreasonable to an extent which would justify committal for trial.

EXPLANATION REEXAMINED

Reexamination of Israel's explanation of why its air and naval forces attacked the Liberty reveals egregious errors in both command judgments and operational procedures.

The Department of State expressed its view of the torpedo attack in these words:

> The subsequent attack by Israeli torpedo boats, substantially after the vessel was or should have been identified as Israeli military forces, exhibits the same reckless disregard for human life. The silhouette and conduct of U.S.S. Liberty readily distinguished it from any vessel that could have been considered hostile.... Should and should have been scrutinized visually at close range before torpedos were fired....the United States Government expects the government of Israel also to take the disciplinary measures which international law requires in the event of wrongful conduct by the military personnel of a State...[and] to issue instructions necessary to insure that United States personnel and property will not again be endangered by the wrongful actions of Israeli military personnel.

When NSA's Deputy Director read the decision of the Israeli Defense Forces Preliminary Inquiry, he summed up his personal feelings on the subject by calling it "a nice whitewash."

RECOVERY AND INITIAL ASSESSMENT

Sixteen and one-half hours after the Liberty was attacked, U.S. assistance finally reached her at 0625 hours (local time) on 8 June, the destroyers U.S.S. Davis (DD-937) and U.S.S. Massey (DD-778) rendezvoused with the ship at 33-01N, 31-59E, a position 420 miles east-southeast of Soudha Bay, Crete. The carrier, U.S.S. America, was still 138 miles from the Liberty, closing at 30 knots.

MEDICAL ASSISTANCE

The Commander of Destroyer Squadron Twelve, Captain H.G. Leahy, and other personnel from the Davis and Massey immediately boarded the Liberty to assist in controlling damage and in treating the danger of having his wounds become infected. Temporary command of the Liberty was assumed by the Operations Officer of Destroyer Squadron Twelve. Upon completion of a medical assessment, the Commander, Sixth Fleet was advised that the Liberty was ready to transfer 15 seriously wounded and 9 dead to the America when its helicopters arrived. The possibility of anyone being alive in the flooded spaces was deemed unlikely. Bulkheads were firm and the flooding contained, so that the ship was completely mobile to 10 knots. The Davis assumed all communications functions for the Liberty. Further, Sixth Fleet was advised that, upon arrival of the fleet ocean tug, U.S.S. Papago, the destroyer Massey could return to fleet duties.

While Liberty's on-board needs were being tended to, two boats from the destroyers searched the area around the Liberty for two hours looking for classified papers that might be washing from the pear-shaped, gaping hole in the flooded [deleted] spaces; no classified items were recovered.

At approximately 0915 hours, all ships got underway and headed toward the carrier America at 10 knots. By 1030 hours, two helicopters from the America reached the Liberty and began evacuating the seriously wounded back to the carrier. One hour later, the America rendezvoused with the Liberty. Thereafter, the group of ships set a course for Soudha Bay, Crete, some 300 miles away.



Photo courtesy NSA

Helicopter from the U.S.S. AMERICA leaves a litter to receive the LIBERTY's wounded. The helicopter took the wounded back to AMERICA, which was several miles away.

COMMANDER SIXTH FLEET ARRIVES

Later that afternoon, Vice Admiral William I. Martin, Commander, Sixth Fleet, boarded the Liberty for one hour to visit its captain and crew and to personally survey the damages sustained. Following his visit, Vice Admiral Martin recommended to the Commander-in-Chief, U.S. Navy Europe, Admiral John S. McCain, Jr., that the Liberty proceed direct to Malta for dry docking rather than to Soudha Bay first because of the primary necessity to protect the cryptomaterial and equipment. Admiral McCain gave his approval.

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Russell Arthur, Sixth Fleet Maintenance Officer, who reported to the U.S. Commander-in-Chief, Europe the following corrective actions: "established water-tight boundaries at frames 82 and 98 and at second-deck level and made repairs to gyro, engine-order telegraph, rudder-angle indicator, fathometer, sound-powered phones and bridge-steering control." The Liberty's crew was augmented as necessary, and accompanied by the tug Papago, and the destroyer, Davis, she proceeded toward Malta at 10 knots.

RECOVERY OF SENSITIVE MATERIAL

Mounting concern over the possible loss of sensitive documents drifting out of the Liberty's ruptured space prompted NAVEUR to direct Sixth Fleet on 9 June to "do whatever is feasible to keep any Soviet ships out of Liberty's wake....maintain observation of Liberty's wake and if possible find out what sort of documents are being lost in the wake....take whatever steps may be practicable and appropriate to reduce possibility of compromise, noting that a compromise could have both political and technical aspects."

Liberty's escorts reacted quickly and most effectively to minimize the uncontrollable loss of sensitive materials. Though a Soviet guided-missile destroyer (DDG 626/4) of the Kildin class remained in the vicinity of the Liberty between 1320 and 1600 hours on the 9th, she was kept under constant surveillance and did not stop or recover anything. The Davis, Massey, or Papago trailed in Liberty's wake constantly to recover papers adrift. The first night, the Papago picked up one classified item ten miles behind the Liberty.

In Washington, after the general details of the attack on the Liberty had been absorbed, there was, quite naturally, a clamor for specific information about casualties --- their names and extent of injuries. The Liberty forwarded the best information obtainable, but data about those missing was elusive. During the Israeli attack and immediately thereafter, the Liberty conducted no search for personnel because none had been reported overboard and she was trying to clear the area as soon as possible. On 10 June the U.S. Commander-in-Chief, Europe notified JCS that the Liberty's flooded compartments could not be opened to account for missing personnel until the ship was drydocked. To do otherwise would risk further flooding and peril the ship and the lives of the survivors who were taking the crippled vessel to port.

ASSISTANCE TO NSA PERSONNEL

At NSA, when it was learned [through Navy personnel channels] that its employees Donald L. Blalock and Allen M. Blue were listed among Liberty's casualties, steps were taken to obtain more definite information and to notify next of kin. Late on the night of 8-9 June, the Chief and Deputy Chief, NSA Civilian Personnel [Messrs. William M. Holleran and Albert W. Uline] drove to the Silver Spring home of Allen Blue's [illegible]



Photo courtesy NSA

NSA Civilian, Donald L. Blalock was aboard the LIBERTY. Slightly wounded, he was evacuated to the U.S.S. AMERICA with the rest of Liberty's wounded.

message to NSA Europe directing that a representative be sent to meet the Liberty at Malta to provide maximum assistance and guidance in respect to NSA personnel, local liaison, and information reporting to NSA. The Director, NSA directed NSA Europe to arrange for [deleted] transportation home by quickest means and to relay messages for him to see. All appropriate assistance was to be given to Donald L. Blalock in arranging for his return to the U.S. Information copies of the message were sent to Senior U.S. Liaison Officer, London and to the Director, Naval Security Group Europe.

CLEANUP CONTINUES

As the Liberty steamed westward on 10 June, Commander McGonagle had the shrapnel removed from his leg and was resting comfortably. With adequate provisions of food, fuel, and water on board ship to reach Malta, there was concern about crew morale and Sixth Fleet was requested to have a helicopter pick up the Liberty's outgoing mail as soon as possible and at the same time deliver mail addressed to the ship's company. The Liberty continued cleanup operations aboard ship as well as the grisly task of accounting for personnel that were missing. On 11 June, the Papago recovered one body floating six miles astern of the Liberty; another person previously reported missing was now confirmed dead after recovery aboard ship.

COMMAND INVESTIGATIONS INITIATED

...e the Liberty limped steadily to Malta under the watchful protection of the Davis and Papago, U.S. military commands in the Pentagon and in Europe were feverishly arranging for the drydocking of the ship plus full scale investigations of the events and circumstances surrounding the attack itself. The Joint Chiefs of Staff appointed a fact finding team on 9 June and initiated plans for the team to visit, in turn, the Commander-in-Chief, U.S. Navy Europe; U.S. Commander-in-Chief Europe; Commander, Sixth Fleet; and the U.S.S. Liberty.

On the 10th, after conferring with the [illegible]

Inquiry be established. In his message to JCS, CINCEUR gave his rationale for this action as follows:

Have reviewed available data with respect to Liberty with CINCSTRIKE in general frame of chronology before accidental attack, during attack and subsequent thereto. We both have many very pertinent and as yet unanswered questions as we appreciate Washington has. At the same time, [it] must be recognized [that] ... ex members of Liberty from whom answers must be gotten are at point of evacuation, suffering from wounds and shock and on closing. It simply does not make sense, legally or otherwise, to initiate barrage of uncorrelated questioning via long haul communications at this time. Obviously facts must be developed revealing actions and judgments of crew, Liberty command and chain of command, and also legal base must be established for possible claims against government of Israel. Therefore, I strongly endorse establishment of Court of Inquiry by Commander-in-Chief, U.S. Navy Europe, as proper procedure. ... although it may be somewhat time consuming and create impatience among those who desire more rapid answers.

In Israel, too, high-level investigations were being considered. On 13 June, the Israeli Defense Force Chief of Staff, General Rabin, appointed an official Court of Inquiry to examine the Liberty incident.

PREPARATIONS AT MALTA

To provide for the handling of the Liberty when she arrived at Malta, effective 12 June, under command of Rear Admiral Henry A. Renken, Commander, Service Force Atlantic Fleet stationed in Norfolk, Virginia. CTF 100 was charged with:

1. Supervising the drydocking, removal and shipment of remains of personnel killed in action;

2. Preventing disclosure of classified information and material to unauthorized personnel; and

3. Readying the Liberty for repair by Commander, Service Force Sixth Fleet.

These functions were expected to be completed within two days after Liberty's expected arrival in Malta on 13 June. Subordinate task group commanders were instructed to be prepared to report in person to Rear Admiral Renken at the U.S. Embassy in Malta by noon, 12 June.

Of the eight subordinate task groups that comprised Task Force 100, the Director, Naval Security Group Europe was directed to provide personnel for TG 100.4 [Security]; this group was to assume responsibility for all materials requiring special handling, including their removal from the Liberty, transfer to secure storage, and continuous security at all times.

After Rear Admiral Renken left Norfolk, guidance for his TG 100.3 [Public Affairs] was compiled and radioed for delivery to him as he passed through Rota, Spain, enroute to Malta. TG 100.3's mission was to satisfy the legitimate interests of newsmen without compromise [illegible] information, unwarranted

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it was directed that all public affairs activities be conducted [deleted].

She was a communications research ship that was diverted from her research assignment to provide improved communication-relay links with the seven U.S. embassies around the entire Mediterranean during the current troubles.

Specific ground rules were set forth for press coverage of Liberty's arrival in Malta. Newsmen were not to be permitted in the immediate vicinity of the dockyard while the Liberty entered the dock, unless CTF 100 was satisfied that the torpedo hole was adequately covered; while the drydock was pumped out, regardless of covering; and after the dock was pumped out, until all remains were removed and classified matter safeguarded. If newsmen asked about these restrictions, they were to be told that the actions were being taken primarily out of consideration of families of missing personnel, since remains may be in the exposed compartment and visible to photographers; and because communications spaces normally contain classified equipment and are closed to the public, since it must be assumed that some classified equipment is exposed. Additionally, no interviews of the officers or crew of the Liberty were to be granted until authorized by Commander-in-Chief, U.S. Navy Europe, after completion of the court of inquiry. If queried by the press about the reason for such policy, the security officer (TG 100.4) was to say that these men are potential witnesses before the Court of Inquiry and it is the desire of the convening authority and the President of the Court that recollections of witnesses remain as fresh as possible and not be influenced in any way by outside discussions. The doctrine of security at the source was to be followed at all times and there was to be no censorship of newsmen's material.

Upon arriving at Malta, Rear Admiral Renken met with his task force group commanders and American embassy officials on Tuesday, 13 June, to complete plans for docking operations, which would commence on Liberty's arrival --- then estimated at about 2300 hours that night.

BLALOCK RETURNS HOME

That same afternoon, NSA civilian, Donald L. Blalock (civilian evacuated from the Liberty to the U.S.S. America with minor shrapnel wounds) was released from America's medical department and flown to Athens. There he was met by NSA Europe representative, Charles Cowardin, who arranged for Blalock's travel to the United States. Blalock arrived at Washington National Airport the following day.

LIBERTY'S ARRIVAL AT MALTA

Liberty's arrival in Malta was delayed until 0630 hours, 14 June. Precautionary safety measures had required additional shoring of damaged bulkheads and her speed was reduced. Divers from the Papago immediately began an underwater inspection of the ship's hull to determine whether or not charges [illegible]

1400 hours the Liberty entered the drydock; by 1830 hours a canvas mat had been tied across the damaged side of the ship and screens had been installed across all drydock drains. During the pump down, navy swimmers and men in a rubber raft picked up oil-covered paper as it floated out of the ship. When the drydock was completed drained, a thorough search of the entire drydock and each drain screen was conducted by Naval Security Group personnel. NSA Europe personnel, sent to Malta, witnessed all drainage operations.

CLEARING DAMAGED AREAS

In Malta the search for and removal of bodies began at 1830 hours on the 14th and continued until approximately midnight, by which time the remains of 20 men, including Allen Blue, had been recovered. Bodies of the remaining five missing men were presumed lost at sea enroute to Malta. Liberty's death toll stood at 34.

Clearance of the damaged area continued. Prior to opening the hatch leading down to the [deleted] space, a guard was posted and all personnel were required to log in when authorized access. Crews of personnel began removing all classified equipment and documents to a secure space one deck above the damaged area. This recovery process proved to be very slow because the classified equipment and material was caked with the mass of twisted wreckage. Of course, no repair to the ship's side could begin until the damaged area was freed of all classified papers and equipment. By 19 June, all classified matter had been stowed under guard in a secure space aboard the Liberty.

On the afternoon of Thursday, 15 June, newsmen and photographers were given a tightly controlled tour of Liberty's topside area plus several compartments on the lower decks, near the point of impact, from which all classified equipment had been removed. Later that afternoon, Task Force 100 was officially dissolved. Some task force personnel remained with the Liberty, however, to help wind up administrative, public affairs, and supply matters. The sixth Fleet Maintenance Officer also remained to supervise Liberty's repairs.

DAMAGE SURVEY AT MALTA

With the exception of the TRSSCOM system antenna, all antennas were either destroyed, damaged, or burned to some degree; almost complete replacement of the antenna system would be required. [Deleted] equipment not completely destroyed by the torpedo explosion had been totally submerged in heavy oil and salt water for six days, rendering it beyond salvage.

JCS FACT FINDING TEAMS'S INTERVIEWS

While the Liberty was being cleansed and surveyed in the Malta shipyard, the Navy and JCS investigative bodies were busily interviewing appropriate personnel aboard the Liberty [illegible] at various

Branches set about ascertaining the basic facts surrounding the incident. Other than the U.S. Navy Court of Inquiry and the cursory Israeli board of inquiry immediately after the event, reviews went forward under the auspices of the House Appropriations Committee, the JCS, and NSA. In addition, a Special Committee of the National Security Council elicited information to answer the Administration's questions on the incident.

THE NSA REVIEW AND REACTION

The eighth of June proved to be a busy day for NSA's directorate. Having received a Critic message about the Liberty's dilemma, Brigadier General John Morrison of NSA's Production Organization notified the directorate of the event at about 0900 hours, Washington time. Some 45 minutes later, the directorate learned that the attack had been by the Israelis.

Immediate concern was for the safety of the personnel and the security of the materials on board. During the day urgent requests went out from NSA to the National Military Command Center (NMCC), other offices in the Pentagon, and the Bureau of Naval Personnel to ascertain if the names of [deleted] NSA civilians on board appeared on the casualty list. Both General Marshall S. Carter and Dr. Louis W. Tordella became aware that the ship was in shallow water, 35-40 fathoms. And they knew, of course, that the ship held [deleted].

Accordingly, Dr. Tordella asked JRC's Captain Merriwell W. Vineyard, USN, to have all documents on board the Liberty burned and all equipment sawed, if possible. General Carter was prepared to recommend all necessary action to insure the security of the technical material and equipment, should the ship go under but, in discussions with the JRC, ruled out the deliberate scuttling of the ship since its presence in shallow water made compromise of materials and equipment a distinct possibility.

As was its custom, NSA's staff worked closely with the Pentagon's Public Information Office and referred all public queries NSA received to that Pentagon Office. There was, finally, on that long day of 8 June, the need to establish quickly a core of information on the incident to prepare for the many questions being asked and decisions to be made. Already the Secretary of Defense, Robert S. McNamara, had called General Carter asking for "precise information" on the ship's complement, the number of civilians, the meaning of "AGTR" which appeared on the ship's hull, and other matters which he felt would be needed for a public release. Discussions also took place with White House staff members Patrick Coyne and Bromley Smith, who elicited details on the incident.

The main function of this group was to gather information on the event and to anticipate the numerous questions to be directed to NSA over the coming weeks.

With timely help from agency components, the group assembled basic data on the ship itself, on operational [illegible] responsibilities, and on

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Photo courtesy DIA

VADM William J. Martin (right), Commander Sixth Fleet, visited the LIBERTY on the afternoon of 9 June.

and messages. Assembling the information in a large red notebook entitled "Report to the Director NSA - U.S.S. Liberty (AGTR-5) 23 May - 8 June 1967," the group presented the completed report to the Director on 12 June -- rather respectable staff work in view of the timeliness and quality of the report. NSA was then in a position to give copies of this comprehensive report to the JCS Fact Finding Team and to the Special Committee of the National Security Council (NSC).

Directed as it was to develop a core of information on the event, the NSA group did not seek to identify remedies for faulty procedures or, for that matter, to make any recommendations at all. Major responsibility for that fell to the JCS and others. The group did have to field searching questions being asked the Agency by others.

Although questions remained which would require answers, the work of the NSA group was essentially complete by the middle of June 1967.

THE JCS REVIEW

On 9 June, immediately after the Liberty incident the JCS fielded a five-man team from its organization, all with the necessary clearances, to examine communications and control aspects of the event. Senior member of the JCS team was Major General Joseph R. Russ, USA. Other team members were Rear Admiral Francis J. Fitzpatrick, USN; Colonel William A. Garrett, USAF; Captain William D. Owen, USN; and Major Harlan E. Priddle, USAF.

In spelling out the terms of reference for the team, Lieutenant General B.E. Spivy, Director of the Joint Staff, asked the team to examine the means employed in issuing operational directives of the JCS to the U.S.S. Liberty and the specific orders to the Liberty between 1 June and 8 June 1967, and to identify and develop information on conflicting directives, delays in message traffic, and nonreceipt of orders. The team was to report its findings, along with recommendations, to the JCS.

As the work of the fact-finding team was drawing to a close, General Russ provided on 18 June a preliminary report to the Chairman of the [illegible] messages from higher headquarters on 7/8 June to subordinate commands designed to change the Liberty's CPA, receipt of which by Liberty "would undoubtedly have resulted in the ship's being a greater distance from the scene of action...." Despite the Liberty's having been either an action or an information addressee on each of these messages, General Russ's team found no evidence that the ship received any one of them. Nor did his team find, for that matter, any evidence of conflicting directives governing the Liberty's operation. General Russ also made note of the irregular procedure JCS itself had adopted in bypassing Commander-in-Chief, Europe when it passed verbal instructions to Commander-in-Chief U.S. Navy Europe, and he recounted the reasons for delays at NAVEUR and Sixth Fleet in translating the JCS directive into action.

By 20 June the JCS Fact Finding Team had completed its work, had prepared its report, and had made its recommendations to the JCS. Of the 17 recommendations made, 9 concerned the missions, functions, operational responsibilities, and operational control/technical tasking and guidance matters; the other 8 related to communications, traffic management methods, facilities, and availability of trained personnel. In reviewing and commenting on the report's recommendations for the JCS, the JS and JG/JCS reserved follow-up action for the first category of recommendations to the Joint Staff but assigned responsibilities to various other agencies for study and implementation action in the second category of recommendations. NSA drew assignments on three recommendations dealing with emphasis on dedicated command-control circuitry rather than on common-user circuitry, with measures to improve fleet control communications via communication satellite technology, and with the amalgamation of NATO and U.S. military communications.

Other than the three recommendations on which it participated as an action agency, NSA was concerned about some of the other findings in the report. One recommendation was, for example, that NSA commented formally on this point in a letter to Major General G.B. Pickett, Vice Director for Operations (J-3); in its commentary on the Russ report for the JCS, the J-3 discounted this recommendation.

When copies of the JCS Fact Finding Team's report reached NSA at the end of June, General Carter instructed the chief of his telecommunications organization, Colonel Leslie J. Bolstridge, USAF, to review the report in minute detail with a view to "correcting our procedures wherever we can profit from this debacle of military communications." Since the Russ report primarily dealt with command-and-control communications, the Russ recommendations had only marginal pertinence to NSA's own communications.

CONGRESSIONAL REVIEW

Following a hearing focusing on the Surveys and Investigations staff to examine the effectiveness of the DoD worldwide communications system. The staff studied the delays and nondelivery of messages originated on 7 and 8 June directing the withdrawal of the Liberty as a springboard to its broader review of DoD's worldwide communications. The staff produced a two-volume report for the chairman of the congressional committee. Volume I reviewed the communications problems in the Liberty incident, volume II the worldwide communications systems and networks of the DoD.

In its work, the Surveys and Investigations staff interviewed JCS, NSA, Naval Communications Command, Department of Army Communications Center, and JCS Message Center personnel in the Washington area, as well as of the military commands and communications centers in the Pacific and European regions which had been involved with Liberty's communications in one way or another.

Essentially the staff covered the same ground that General Russ's team plowed earlier. They worked their way through all the communications errors made during the attempts to withdraw the Liberty on 7/8 June. The staff was somewhat more critical than the JCS Fact Finding Team of the failure to deliver to the Liberty the information copies of the JCS and CINCEUR messages directing withdrawal (JCS 0801102 June 67 and CINCEUR 0806252 June 67). Specifically, they wanted to know if a typical commander would take action on an information copy of this kind from a higher command before receiving the implementing message of his immediate superior. They tested the matter with unnamed U.S. Navy officials who had commanded both large and small naval vessels and learned, according to the report, that there would have been no question that if the Liberty had received the information copies, "The Captain of the Liberty would have moved within minutes without waiting for an implementing order."

In its volume II, the congressional staff took full note of the breakdown of the precedence system in communications and drew upon DoD-provided information for the Middle East crisis. Of some 452 high-precedence, (Flash and Immediate) crisis-related DoD messages, only 22 percent of the Flash and 30 percent of the Immediate messages actually met established precedence criteria.

Part of the delay in transmitting the Immediate-precedence Sixth Fleet withdrawal message to the Liberty, it will be recalled, was owing to the urgency of equal or higher precedence Flash) messages . During the crisis, originators assigned Immediate precedence to messages on subjects such as these: enlisted mens assignments,[deleted], hospital-patient reports unrelated to the crisis, friendly ship locations and movements, setting up of press conferences, changes in reporting formats, U.S. military sales policies, and reorganization of Army Reserve units. In contrast, actual instructions called [illegible] Immediate precedence to

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populace, and which require immediate delivery to the addressees* -- for example, amplifying reports of initial enemy contact, reports of unusual major movements of military forces of foreign powers during peacetime or during strained relations, attack orders, and urgent intelligence messages.

While the congressional staff directed most of its attention to DoD command communications, it also took note of Criticomm which, they found functioned throughout the crisis relatively free of problems. The staff was aware of steps NSA took to keep Criticomm free of the overburdening traffic common in crisis situations, particularly an 8 June action in which NSA directed the curtailment of electrical fowarding of all routine reports so that crisis-related traffic could flow expeditiously.

A FINAL LOOK

Perhaps the Liberty has undergone scrutiny long enough. First the Israeli Court of Inquiry examined the event, exculpation of Israeli nationals apparently not being ritmost in the court's calculations. Then the U.S. Navy Court of Inquiry studied the incident. The JCS review actively sought to identify faulty procedures and practices for corrective action. The NSA review was essentially fact-finding in nature. And the House Appropriations Committee review, made as it was without all the information available to the JCS team, nonetheless reconstructed many of the basic findings of that team and sought to use them as a mirror in which to observe problem areas in DoD's worldwide communications. Despite the official scrutiny, it is still necessary to comment briefly on a few subjects of interest and concern to [deleted].

JCS/JRC looked to the unified and specified commands to provide for the safety of the [deleted].

The regional commands were in close touch with political and military conditions in which the [deleted] ship were, JCS/JRC believed, in the best position to evaluate safety factors.

In the Liberty incident, the Commander Sixth Fleet, was responsible for the safety of the ship. Rear Vice Admiral Martin was not in a [deleted] told Dr. Tordella in mid-June that he believed NSA could not really absolve itself totally from the safety considerations. He believed that NSA may have to demonstrate [deleted].

In reflecting on the incident in an oral history interview, General Marshal S. Carter said:

> as a result of both of these traumatic experiences, we have reviewed our procedures and found there was little change needed in NSA-JCS relationships, but there were some changes needed in the chain of command supervision and monitoring...of just where the ship is, and what it is doing, and was it necessary?

COMMUNICATIONS PROBLEMS

Errors made in the handling of reviewed by the staff of the House Appropriations Committee, the communications problems posed a challenge for the JCS and for DoD agencies in the immediate post-Liberty period.

NSA was not the DoD action office for correcting faulty communications procedures, but it was indeed a very interested party to corrective actions stimulated by the Russ Report. Doing what he could, General Carter called Army Chief of Staff, General Harold K. Johnson, about the considerable number of mishandled messages in the Department of Army's communications center in the Pentagon, particularly those coming to NSA, and on 3 July provided General Johnson's staff with examples of message mishandling during the Liberty incident. Department of Army's response was positive, and soon thereafter its Communications Staff added page monitors on its circuits to NSA to check assignment of address groups. Errors diminished from some 40 to 7 a day out of an average daily total of 1,000 transmissions. General Carter also insisted, as noted earlier, that his staff examine the Russ Report recommendations relating to DoD communications for any possible application to NSA's Criticomm network.

The Six Day War and the Liberty incident created conditions [deleted].

The report stated:

> Technical documents, operational aids, etc., should be limited to those required to carry out the mission. Files held and containing information that may or may not be needed at some future date should be eliminated. The library of training manuals ought to be limited to those covering items of equipment in use at the detachment. Those who cannot read a [deleted].

The Liberty's experience, together with [deleted], led to some emphasis on file reduction and on measures to facilitate destruction of [deleted] equipment. the incidents pointed up, as no others had done before, the need for scaling the distribution of technical documentation to specific and minimal levels necessary for execution of tasks, and following the incidents some moderation in the supply of documentation was in evidence.

SPECULATION

Speculation as to Israeli motivation varied. Some believed that Israel expected that the complete destruction of the ship and killing of the personnel would lead the U.S. to blame the U.A.R. for the incident and bring the U.S. into the war on the side of Israel. Ironically, even though the Liberty had [deleted] others felt Israeli forces wanted the ship and men out of the way.

In part because of the press speculation at the time, President Johnson directed the Director of Central Intelligence, Richard Helms, to prepare a report by 13 June, five days after the attack, assessing the Israeli intentions. The CIA assessment drew heavily [deleted].

William Loren McGonagle (promoted after the attack), was presented the Congressional Medal of Honor by the Secretary of the Navy for gallantry and courag displayed during Liberty's hours of trial. Following that award, the Presidential Unit Citation was conferred upon the Liberty and crew on 14 June 1968 at Portsmouth, Virginia.

Scores of individual decorations (Bronze Star, Silver Star., etc.) were given crew members, and 170 Purple Hearts were earned by Liberty's complement, including two NSA civilians, Donald L. Blalock and Allen M. Blalock (the latter, posthumously).

Claims against the Government of Israel for compensation concerning deaths and injuries of U.S. Personnel and damage to the Liberty were initiated by the Department of State in May 1968. Israel paid the U.S. Government $3,323,500 as full payment on behalf of the families of the 34 men killed in the attack. Eleven months later, Israel paid $3,566,457 in compensation to the men who have been wounded. The U.S. claim of $7,644,146 for material damage to the Liberty itself was not settled until 18 December 1980 when Israel agreed to pay $6 million.

After returning to Norfolk in July 1967, the Liberty languished there while [deleted].

When this effort failed, the Liberty was decommissioned on 28 June 1968. In 1970 the ship was turned over to the Maritime Administration and sold for scrap for $101,666.66. In 1973 the ship came to an ignominious end as she was cut up in Baltimore's Curtis Bay shipyard.

There was one aspect of the Liberty tragedy which should not go unnoted. This was its adverse and lingering affect on the Liberty's survivors. Oral interviews with [deleted] some 13 years after the event, show that time has not healed all the scars. Apart from bitterness toward the Israeli Government, there still remains dismay that the U.S. Government or Sixth Fleet did not come to Liberty's aid in timely fashion.

BOOKLET PRICE REDUCTIONS

Executive Director Ray Boyer has announced that prices for the two NCVA published books A HISTORY OF COMMUNICATIONS INTELLIGENCE IN THE UNITED STATES WITH EMPHASIS ON THE UNITED STATES NAVY and INTERCEPT STATION "C" FROM OLONGAPO THROUGH THE EVACUATION OF CORREGIDOR, 1929-1942, will be reduced in price for members only.

The few remaining copies of "History" will be sold for $4.50 and the "Station C" booklet will be sold for $6.50.

Executive Director boyer suggests members consider purchasing extra copies of the booklets for local libraries, station libraries at favorite duty stations or favored Colleges or Universities.

NCVA will mail the booklets to anyplace of your choice. Order from NCVA, Orin, Salem OR

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30-31 August, 1 September 1984

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	Evening at the Flying W 1700 - 2200 (1) (2).....	____	$24.50	____
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	Air Force Academy/Garden of the Gods Tour 1330 - 1630 (1) (2).....	____	$13.00	____
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Members RVing to the reunion should make space reservations now. The following RV parks are recommended.

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PROSPECTIVE REUNION HOSTS TAKE NOTE

In Colorado Springs the committee on site selection chaired by Jackson Koon, will make recommendations for the reunion site for 1985 and 1986 and those at the General Meeting will be asked to approve sites for both years. At present there is one prospective host for 1985, Ozzi Osborn in Carson City, Nevada and one for 1986, Graydon Lewis in Eugene, Oregon.

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August 15, 1967

14248

MEMORANDUM FOR: S/S - Mr. Walsh

FROM: M - Eugene V. Rostow

I attach a copy of the report of the judge who presided over the preliminary inquiry in the Liberty case. It was handed to me yesterday by Minister Even.

He requested that this be treated on a restricted and confidential basis. He did, however, indicate that we could, if we wished, show it to interested members of Congress and others.

In response to my inquiry, he repeated that Jerusalem had decided not to make any further public statement at this time, but would have no objection if we did so. I explained that my preliminary thought was that if the statement were to be made criticizing members of the Israeli Armed Forces, it would be more appropriate for it to originate with the Israeli Government than with our Government.

I said that we should reach a final decision later, after studying the decision, both on how to handle the distribution of the document, and whether to make a public statement.

Enclosure

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Comment on
THE ISRAELI VERSION

The enclosed report of an Israeli Judge was passed to the United States about two months after the Israeli attack on the USS Liberty. This and two earlier and less detailed reports were all withheld from the American public at the request of the Israeli government. The earlier reports [illegible] both condemned the cowardly attack on a defenseless ship. This report, by far the most detailed of the three, has never been released. The Department of State claims to be unable to identify such a report. The Jewish Chronicle of London and identify it, but refuses to release the report on grounds that such release would be damaging to the interest of the United States. The same report, however, was handed to a citizen by a civil servant who feared it as an unclassified file. It is not classified and can be published on an inquisitive grounds.

Careful reading of the Israeli report reveals many admissions different from the official stories told by both countries. Officially and publicly, both countries describe the assault on the USS Liberty as a brief and mistaken affair initiated by forces on the scene and later followed up by torpedo boats which happened upon a floating hulk which they supposed to be an enemy.

The report of the Israeli Judge, however, reveals (as previously reported by Israeli censors) that the air attack was two stage (high speed Mirage identification by low speed Mystère jets), that napalm bombs which caused fires" was used, and that the whole affair was coordinated from the Israeli air room where the ship was identified and its track plotted on a chart.

The report discounts many of the circumstances of the attack in order to reach a conclusion that the attack was an error. It is difficult to accept, for instance, that the Liberty's track was "crossed" from the air room chart or that such an erasure led to the attack. Furthermore, it is impossible to assign the claim that Israeli torpedo boats located the USS Liberty [illegible] (the Liberty's speed erroneously at 12 knots. The torpedo boats [illegible] at 1700). At that rate with [illegible] could not possibly have picked up the Liberty on their radar [illegible] boats have a radar horizon of 15 miles or less and could not possibly have spotted the Liberty on radar until about the moment the attack started (1800).

There are many other defects in the Israeli report. Most are evident from a careful reading. See a more detailed report of the circumstances of the attack and of the coverup that followed and [illegible] today, read ASSAULT ON THE LIBERTY (Random House, 1980), by [illegible] James, Jr., who was an officer on the bridge of the ship during the attack.

Russell Ewald, who was Liberty's signalman on the bridge as the torpedo boats approached, insists that no one signalled "identify yourself first," as the Israelis claim. See back cover for official Navy message which provides more information and documentation of the signalman's report.

James Ennes

[Note: See Navy message on back cover for long-secret answer to Israeli claim in paragraph 4 that the Liberty refused to identify itself.]

4. According to the division [illegible] target was located at [illegible] and on a distance of about [illegible] north on 22 March. The division was ordered to close in and identify the target, and reported that the unidentified target was moving at a speed of [illegible] knots, that is, at the time [illegible] back.

A few minutes later, the division commander reported that the target, now 3 miles from him, was moving at a speed of 24 knots, and since he could not overtake it, he requested [illegible] aircraft towards it. The division commander also requested that the [illegible] be changed [illegible].

5. As a result of the request of the Naval HQ, through its representative with the Air Force, [illegible] was dispatched to the target. The aircraft carried out a [illegible] to get straight to identify it. According to their statements they were unable to find a flag, but found none. Likewise no other identifying mark was found. As against them, it was established that the painting of the ship [illegible] the color of a warship, and two guns were situated on the bow [illegible] pointed to [illegible].

From the assumption that they were facing an enemy target an order was given to the aircraft to attack. During the first stage of the attack the aircraft circled the ship with cannon and machine guns, and during the second stage dropped napalm on it, which caused fires, and smoke was seen to rise from the ship.

The aircraft was ordered to leave the target, to allow the torpedo boats, which meanwhile had drawn near, to engage in attack, but during this [illegible] identifying aircraft observed the marking "GTR-5" on the hull of the ship.

6. Upon receipt of the information about the marking, as observed by the pilot, an order was transmitted to the torpedo boat division not to attack the ship, since the identification might not be correct.

The division Commander was ordered to approach the ship in order to establish visual contact and to identify it. The order was carried out, and the Commander reported that the ship appeared to be a merchant or supply vessel. The division Commander also signalled the ship and requested its identification, but the latter replied with a signal meaning "Identify yourself First!". Meanwhile the division Commander was consulting and perusing a book on the identification of Arab ships and making comparison with the target seen by him, he came to the conclusion that he was confronting an Egyptian supply ship by the name of "El Kahir". At the same time the commander of another torpedo boat of the division informed him, that he also had identified the ship as the Egyptian "El Kahir" - 2 days at 7.5 knots. The division Commander authorized the division to attack with torpedoes. And in fact a torpedo was fired at the ship and hit it. While at a [illegible] stage, when one of the torpedo boats approached the ship from the other side were the markings "GTR-5" noticed on the hull, and when the final order was given to break off the attack.

It is to be noted that throughout the contact no ensign or any other flag appeared on the ship, and it was only a half-an-hour, post after the attack in order to render assistance -- if necessary -- which noticed a small American flag flying over the target. At that stage the vessel was finally identified as an [illegible] ship of the U.S. Navy.

9. Although at no stage of the inquiry was any evidence brought on the results of the attack, it is reasonable to assume, in view of the testimony as to the nature of the hits, that loss of life, as well as material damage to the ship, was caused. Nevertheless, according to the evidence presented to me, the ship succeeded in leaving the area of the incident under its own power, without requiring the assistance offered.

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[illegible] DEFENCE [illegible]

Preliminary Inquiry Note 1/67

[illegible]

Subject: Operational Investigation

REPORT No. 6

1. On Thursday 8th June, 1967, at approximately 1400 hours, aircraft of the Israeli Air Force attacked a vessel steaming about 25 miles north-west of El Arish, and some 15 miles off the shore of Sinai. About half an hour later torpedo boats of the Israel Navy attacked the same vessel and hit it with a torpedo. Soon, during the attack by the torpedo boats, it became clear that the vessel thought to be an Egyptian ship, was a vessel named "Liberty", of the United States Navy. The attack was subsequently broken-off, but most regrettably, only after, as transpired, loss of life and material damage had been caused.

2. In order to understand the chain of circumstances which lead to this unfortunate incident, a number of the events which preceded it, must be reviewed.

3. The incident occured on the fourth day of the war. On that day the armies of Egypt and Si-Arish, as well as the area extending to the Suez Canal were already in the hands of our forces. Although our command of the air was absolute, our forces were still conducting battles in Sinai and Naval operations were being carried out on the sea of the coast. In the hours before noon, naval engagements were taking place along the coast of Israel and an enemy submarine was believed to be sunk by the Naval Forces (note: there is no confirmation for this from intelligence sources).

4. Before noon, between 1040 and 1200 hours, Navy H.Q. received reports from reliable sources, according to which El-Arish was being shelled from the sea. The Naval representative at Air Force H.Q. was ordered to check the credibility of the report. This officer got in touch with Air Force Operations Branch, and was told that the source of the report was the Air-Ground-Support Officer in Sharm-el-Sheikh (...) was informed by the Naval representative at G.H.Q. that the information about the shelling received by them originated from Navy Command.

It is to be noted that the reports from Southern Command were not accompanied by information, that two vessels had been observed approaching the coast.

5. At 1251 hours an order was given to three torpedo boats of the division at Haifa to proceed in the direction of El-Arish. (Report about the shelling continued to reach G.H.Q./Operations, and pressure was put on the Naval representative, on the lines that "the coast has been shelling for hours, and you -- the Navy -- are not reacting." The Naval representative contacted Navy H.Q. and proposed an immediate action. He was informed that torpedo boats had been sent to "the West to locate the target, and it had been agreed with the Naval representative at Air Force H.Q., that aircraft of the torpedo boats locate the target, aircraft would be dispatched. (...) operations, the commander of the torpedo boat division, who had already been proceeding to the direction ordered, was informed about the shelling of the Israeli coast and he was ordered to establish radio contact with the aircraft as they appeared over the target.

6. I have briefly described the events, in consequence of which a report has been submitted to me by the Chief Military Prosecutor, in accordance with the instructions of the Minister of Defence Mission, to hold a preliminary inquiry into the actions of persons who had been implicated which a military court-martial is to be held before I deal with the [illegible] aspects of the [illegible], I must therefore establish a number of facts which have a bearing on the background of the events, and without which it cannot be understood [illegible].

7. On the day of the event, at 08.30 hours, an aircraft with a senior officer on board, was ordered to reconnaissance mission, and reported, at 09.[illegible] hours, that it had taken off a ship "a ship answering to the description of the American ship "Liberty" (a supply vessel of the American Navy. It should be noted that an Israeli aircraft carrying out the same, reported that some 20 miles north of El Arish it had received a warning which had appeared from an Arab where he found to identify it. [illegible] deteriorating of the pilot at 09.30 hours, it appeared that the report about the sighting was unfounded, and that the ship was "coloured grey, [illegible] with [illegible] markings".

At 11 hours the Naval Liaison Officer at Air Force H.Q. reported to the Naval Operations Branch that the ship about which he had reported earlier on the morning was an electromagnetic, auto-surveillance ship of the U.S. Navy, named Liberty, whose [illegible] was G.T.R. - 5. At the time (the Acting Chief of Naval Operations was present at Navy H.Q.)

11. Upon receiving the information from the reconnaissance aircraft about the location of the ship, as mentioned above, it was marked on the Combat Information Centre Table at Navy H.Q. At first the object was marked in red, denoting an unidentified target, afterwards, when the ship was identified as a supply vessel of the American Navy, it was marked in green, i.e. a neutral ship. At about 12.00 hours, after the Acting Chief of Naval Operations had received the report, as above stated, from the Liaison Officer at Air Force H.Q., and had understood, as he testified, that it referred to the target, the location of which was plotted at 08.30 in the morning, he ordered the minister from the table, since he had the information as to the location at the time of the report.

Accordingly, it is clear that from the moment when reports about the shelling of the coast of El-Arish were received, and of the commencement of activity at Navy H.Q., in order to confirmed a presumed enemy, and until the said incident with the ship "Liberty", the latter was not to be found on the Combat Information Centre Table at Navy H.Q.

12. Upon receipt of the reports about the shelling of the El-Arish coast the Acting Chief of Naval Operations called the Head of the Naval Department to the Command Bridge, and the latter took over the command on the Bridge, ordered the dispatch of the torpedo boats and aircraft and their attack on the target.

At 14.20 hours G.C. Navy arrived at the Command Bridge and it was he who synthesized the remainder of the torpedo boat discussion to attack. At the first stage of activity, with the appearance of the Head of the Naval Department, there was present on the Bridge the Acting Chief of Naval Operations (a date which he took over at approximately 14.30 hours). At a later stage the Chief of Naval Operations returned to the Command Bridge.

13. The subject matter of the first two counts of the charge is the failure to report the fact that the American ship "Liberty" was seen in the morning hours of the day of the incident, sailing in the vicinity of the Israeli coast, under the first count - to the Head of the Naval Department, and under the second count - to the Air Force H.Q.

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According to the third count of the charge, the report of the presence and complicity of the reports on the shelling of [illegible] from the sea, which reached the Air Force, the Senior Naval representative at the Air Force and the Naval Attaché at [illegible], was not properly investigated."

The fourth and fifth counts are alternative, and charge negligence, in that an order to attack a target thought to be an enemy target, was given without checking its national identity and without taking into account that the ship "Liberty" was observed on the morning hours of that day sailing in the vicinity of the Israel coast.

In the sixth count, the Chief Military Prosecutor charges that the organs of the Naval Department had to attack the ship - which had by the attitude of being an enemy ship, "the fear of error and not of uncertainty with regard to the true identity of that ship", was not delivered to the Air Force.

Finally, in the seventh count, the Chief Military Prosecutor charges that "members of the Air Force and [illegible] Boats attacked the American ship "Liberty" on an unfounded assumption -- resulting from failure to take reasonable steps properly to establish her identity -- that she was an Egyptian warship".

To establish the charges, the Chief Military Prosecutor called 26 witnesses and also produced to me 27 various exhibits. In his final submission the Chief Military Prosecutor argued that on the evidence, the commission of each of the offences, that appear in the charge, can be attributed to various military personnel, whom he indicated by name, although the charge itself does not mention the accused (see section 294(a) (2) of the Military Justice Law, 1955).

II. In an interim decision dated 5th June, 1967, I held that "it appears to me, prima facie, that offences of negligence may have been committed by the Acting Chief of Naval Operations, because he did not report to the Chief of the Naval Department, that on the day of the incident the American ship "Liberty" was observed proceeding in the vicinity of and along the Israel coast"; and "that he may have been negligent in that after having informed that the target, which was reported to be allegedly shelling the Sinai coast was marked [illegible] - 5, he did not inform the Head of the Naval Department and/or the O.C. Navy, that a second ship identical or similar marking had earlier been identified."

As a result of this decision of mine, the Acting Chief of Naval Operations appeared as accused and was represented by the Chief Military Defence Counsel. He called 5 witnesses, made a statement under oath and produced 5 exhibits.

III. Before dealing with each count of the charge, I must observe that it is clear to me that it is not my function to determine, in any manner whatsoever, whether the ship "Liberty" acted properly at any stage prior to the incident or during the incident itself. My task is to decide whether any offence has been committed by any military personnel involved in this incident, i.e. as it is set out in section 297 of the Military Justice Law, 1955, "to decide whether or not there is sufficient amount of prima facie evidence to justify the committal of the accused for trial". At the same time, since the subject matter of the charge before me are offences of "negligence, I will be unable to determine the criminality or of the conduct of all those connected in the matter without examining the conduct of the ship, against the background of the general situation, as we described it to me.

As stated the incident occured in the midst of war, very close to the coast where battles were still raging, and on the morning of the incident -- in the hours of the evening -- an enemy submarine was even sunk by the Israel Navy. It was proved to me, [illegible] and any shadow of a doubt, that the ship was hit in an area described as "the naval battles arena" in the area which extends between the waters of Israel and Egypt. Although, when hit, the ship was outside territorial waters, it was [illegible] that to me that the area was declared by the Egyptian authorities as one dangerous

to shipping, a declaration which [illegible] all vessels to be found in the vicinity. Moreover, the place of the [illegible] does not entail a [illegible] shipping lane. It was explained to me [illegible], that it is customary for warring to abandon their approach to the shores of a foreign state, particularly in sensitive zones, which was the case in this case.

IV. I shall now deal with the counts of the charge.

The first complaint of the Chief Military Prosecutor as against the Acting Chief of Naval Operations is that he did not having given the attention of the Head of the Naval Department, he did not [illegible] on the hours of the morning, who ship [illegible] were sailing on the coastline of the Israel coast. This [illegible] to the stages the [illegible] to the attack of the aircraft, the naval [illegible] aircraft requested identifications of the marking on the hull of the ship.

In view of the evidence of the Head of the Naval Department [illegible] he did not know on the same day of the presence of the "Liberty" in the area. I thought [illegible] that the Acting Chief of Naval Operations had not acted in a negligent manner should have acted. But during the evidence and the address the counsel of the Match at hand [illegible] satisfied that on the [illegible] the light with the [illegible] the Head of th. Naval Department was present on the [illegible] bridge. [illegible] same time an American supply ship was active in and on the [illegible] [illegible] Table, and during a momentary lull on the fight, the O.C. Navy, who was directing the fight, inquired into the report of the marking, and ordered it to be [illegible] to greet.

The Acting Chief of Naval Operations testified that he was at the witness of the said event, and concluded therefrom that the Head of the Naval Department knew about the presence of an American supply ship in the area, as had already been reported in the hours of the morning. This presumption seems to me to be acceptable under circumstances, and therefore I agree the view that no negligence on his part has been proved, even prima facie. As regards the second stage -- that is, the failure to draw the attention of the Head of the Naval Department to the fact that the marking, which the pilot had reported as being on the hull of the ship, was similar to the markings of the "Liberty" -- it is my considered opinion, there was no reason for him to repeat this information to the Head of the Naval Department.

Witnesses related that the Naval Liaison Officer at the Air Force passed on to the Naval Command Bridge the report on the marking and its similarity to that of the "Liberty", and the officer with whom he spoke, repeated his words in a loud voice, so as they were heard by all present on the bridge, including the Head of the Naval Department and the Chief of Naval Operations. What reason, therefore, was there to draw the attention of the Head of the Naval Department to a fact which had been audibly announced by the said officer? Moreover, as I have already pointed out, the Acting Chief of Naval Operations had reasonable grounds that the facts of the presence of the "Liberty" in the area, was known to all concerned.

No one present, indeed, had connected this report with the target attacked, but I shall consider this question, when I deal with the reasonableness of the attack on the target, under the given circumstances.

VI. As to the second count the Chief Military Prosecutor argued that it was the duty of the Naval Liaison Officer at the Air Force to report to the Air Force, where he represented his service, the information about the presence of the "Liberty" in the area, and not having done so, was negligent in the discharge of his duty.

This argument is unfounded. The responsibility for the defence of Israel against enemy Naval actions rests solely with the Navy. It was quite clear to me in this instance that the Air Force fulfilled merely an auxiliary function, while the responsibility for identification and attack lay upon the Navy. Even though the Force e.g. issued the order to the pilot to attack, it was really an order issued

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by the Navy, passed on through Air Force H.Q., and the responsibility for it issue falls upon whoever issued it at Naval H.Q.

The Naval Liaison Officer at the Air Force will know, that the report on the "Liberty" was transmitted by him to Navy H.Q.; and he was entitled to assume, that whoever decided upon the attack, had done so after taking the above fact into consideration. What reason was there in feeding the Air Force with information and considerations which did not concern it?

19. It appears to me that it would be proper at this stage to deal with the stock count, in which the Chief Military Prosecutor alleges that the Torpedo Boat Division Commander was not provided with the order of the Naval Department not to attack a ship, suspected by the former to be an enemy vessel, for fear of action and unnecessary as to its true identity.

In the operations log-book of the flag boat, carrying the Division Commander on board, it was recorded that at approximately 18.30 hours an order in the following terms was received from Naval Operations Branch: "No not attack. It is possible that the aircraft have not identified correctly". A similar entry, made at the same time, is to be found in the war-diary of Naval Operations Branch, as an instruction transmitted to the Division.

When the entry was produced to the Division Commander, he claimed that no such message ever reached him, the deputy commander of the boat, through whom contact between Division Commander and Naval Operations Branch was maintained, testified, that he received the message and passed it on to the Division Commander.

Although considerations of the credibility of witnesses should not be part of my functions, it appears to me that in the normal course of events as described, the message was passed on in the normal course of reporting to the bridge of the Division Commander. It is possible that the message escaped the awareness of the Division Commander in the heat of battle.

In any event, be the matter as it may, there is insufficient evidence before me, justifying the comment for trial of any accused person on these grounds, and accordingly I so decide.

20. The third count concerns, as has been said, the insufficient investigation of the veracity of the report on the shelling of El-Arish by the Naval Liaison Officer at the Air Force, who was ordered to do so by the Head of the Naval Department.

It is not disputed that the Liaison Officer classified such Air Force H.Q. source of the report concerning the shelling, and was told that the source of the information was the Air-Ground Support Officer. Immediately thereafter he was incurred by L.H.Q., that reports of the shelling were being received from Southern Command. The Chief Military Prosecutor argued that as soon as the Head of the Naval Department had cast doubts upon the correctness of the report, it was the duty of the Naval Liaison Officer at Air Force H.Q. to establish its correctness by contacting the original source of the report.

This argument does not recommend itself to me at all. We are concerned with reports in lieu of our coming through the usual report channel, and it appears to me that a commander may assume that every such report is true by him to correct, and treat it with utmost seriousness as long as the information is within the limits of reasonableness. Since otherwise, if one is not to say that he is duty-bound to inquire into the correctness at the original source, one cannot rely upon reports at all, and it would be impossible in such circumstances to conduct any military operations whatsoever. The information itself was credible, and if the Head of the Naval Department cast doubts upon it, that was only because of previous reports which had been found incorrect, but not by reason of the responsibility of the information.

As soon as the Naval Liaison Officer at Air Force H.Q. had established the source of the report reaching the Air Force, and had immediately confirmed its content from another source, i.e. [illegible] transmitted through L.H.Q., the [illegible] of the information was, in his opinion, sustained sufficiently, and in a reasonable manner.

21. There counts remain to be dealt with -- the fourth, the fifth and the seventh, of the plaint -- which, as it seems to me, form one whole.

The Chief Military Prosecutor argued that it was negligence to give the order to attack a warship without [illegible] establishing, beyond doubt, its national identity and without taking into account the presence of the Nazis on ship [illegible] in the hours of the [illegible] on the vicinity of the coast of Israel.

In summing up the fourth count of the plaint, the Chief Military Prosecutor was negligence [illegible] of the order to the aircraft and torpedo boats to attack the [illegible] an unfounded presumption that it was an Egyptian warship, and that as a consequence of not having taken reasonable steps to ascertain properly its identity, the parties to the negligence, the Chief Military Prosecutor [illegible] the Head of the Naval Department, the Chief of Naval Operations and the Acting Chief of Naval Operations (who fulfilled his functions during a certain period on [illegible]), the Torpedo Boat Division Commander, and finally, although indirectly, the Naval Liaison Officer at Air Force H.Q.

It appears to me that the activity of our forces on the said incident, may be divided into three stages:

(a) the first stage, in which the order was given to Air Force planes to attack the target, and their attack;

(b) an intermediate stage, after the report of the aircraft about the marking of the attacked ship with the symbol "CH - 5";

(c) the identification of the target as the ship "El-Nasir" and the attack of it with torpedoes.

22. In my opinion, on the evidence I have heard, there are five factors, as a result of which the assumption arose, that the target was an enemy ship and should be attacked:

(a) the report on the shelling of the El-Arish coast for hours on end;

(b) the speed of the target, assessed by the torpedo boats as 28 to 30 knots;

(c) the course of the target towards Port Said;

(d) the report from the aircraft that the target was a warship and carried no naval or other identification marks;

(e) the location of the ship -- close to a battle zone.

There is no doubt that the dominant factors were the speed and the course of the target. Most remarkably, it were the torpedo boats of the Division, which determined the speed, although it was proved to be beyond a shadow of a doubt, that no ship of the class of the "Liberty" is capable of developing a speed above 15 knots, this being the theoretical maximum speed limit.

James M. Eames, Jr. Research Papers

[Note: See Navy message on back cover for [illegible] answer to Israeli claim in paragraph 26 that ... Liberty refused to identify itself.]

-6-

24. The Chief Military Prosecutor in summing up his argument with respect to this stage of the incident, reiterated with emphasis that the root of the negligence of the patrol lay in their disregard of the presence of the U.S.S. "Liberty" in the vicinity, and not in connecting the target discovered by the torpedo boats with this ship.

It seems to me that those concerned were entitled to assume, that they had "Liberty" flag a correct report as to the speed of the target, within the usual limits of reasonable error of 10% or 15%, bearing upon the existing means of determining the speed of the target.

The contact report of the target, determined by the torpedo boats at 36 knots, and received with doubts, was confirmed within minutes and finally confirmed as a speed of 28 knots, as is customary at sea.

It was therefore the speed of the target, which led to the final and definitive conclusion, that this was a military vessel, and that there was no reason for hesitating, in view of this factor that the target could possibly be the ship "Liberty". If we add to this the other factors mentioned above, their cumulative effect was to negate any presumption whatsoever as to a connection between the American supply ship, reported on that morning in another location, and the target discovered by the torpedo boats.

The Acting Chief of Naval Operations testified, th t upon assuming his duties, he was not informed of the reports received at 08.00 hours at Navy H.Q. about the presence of a ship at a distance of 20 miles north of El-Arish, while ... reports of 10 to twelve related to the presence of the "Liberty" 70 miles west of El-Arish in the early hours of the morning. I shall go further and say, that eff... having all the evidence, it appears to me that even on the assumption, that the ... report of the "Liberty" as such, 20 miles north of El-Arish, was known to the ... naval, that would not have altered the conclusion as to the nature of the target discovered by the torpedo boats, that it was an enemy warship, according to all the valid data.

Since I am of the opinion that the presumption as to an enemy ship was reasonable, I have come to the conclusion, that the proper grave to the aircraft to ... attack was in the said circumstances, justified.

25. At the second stage of the activity of our forces, upon the receipt of the report of the pilot with regard to the warship discovered on the bank of the ... selected ship, the order was given to cancel the attack, and at a later ... Division were ordered to draw near to the target and make a visual identification. During this stage the suspicion of the Acting Chief of Naval Operations that indeed examined, that possibly the target attacked was not an enemy target, but only that against it was the ship of the Naval Department who was directing the country, at whose side was the Chief of Naval Operations, who had access to, returned to the Command Bridge. In the course of deliberations and attempts at identification at Navy H.Q., the O.C. Navy arrived at the Command Bridge, and ... assumed the command from the Head of the Naval Department.

The visual identification by the Division Commander on the spot was united at Navy H.Q., following, apparently, weighing and the assessment of a possible landing of warfare by an Egyptian ship. This identification was not delayed, and the Division Commander reported the certain identification of the vessel as an Egyptian transport ship named "El-Kenir". In this connection that the identification of the target as the "El-Kenir" was made both by the Division Commander and the Commander of another torpedo boat, and on examining photographs of the two ships I am satisfied that a likeness exists between them, and that an error of identification is possible especially having regard to the fact, that identification was made while the ship was steaming in a ...

The Chief Military Prosecutor ... this identification as untenable in view of the fact that it was clear to all their involved in the incident, that it was inadmissible for this warship ... to sail the 13 knots [illegible], or its top pace or more at a speed of ... knots. He also argued that ... evidence of the ... of the incident was ... [illegible]. The answer to this submission, as explained to me, was that these ... [illegible] activities, on the assumption that the ... [illegible] subject matter, to numerous ... [illegible] perhaps, part of the vessels engaged in the "drilling of the ... [illegible] maneuvers, to get away from the ... [illegible] lagged behind them ... [illegible] of the witnesses commanded, the fact that he stood on the evacuation ... [illegible] various matters, struggling on the ... [illegible] to the future.

26. There ... [illegible] to the fact, that the refusal of the "Liberty" to identify herself to ... [illegible] boats, largely contributed to the error in identification. The Division Commander testified that by signalling the "Liberty" after the unlawful attack ... [illegible] its identification, and was answered "identify yourself first". If ... [illegible] of the capture of the "Liberty" was still to be explained to the ... [illegible] as I have heard in maritime tradition, that a ... [illegible] belonging to a ... [illegible] identify itself first to a warship ... [illegible] ... [illegible] ... [illegible]

[Note: This message documents the Liberty signalman's report that the Liberty did not refuse to identify itself as claimed by the Israeli government, [illegible] to the claims in paragraphs B & JS of the official Israeli [illegible] Inquiry File #67].

[illegible]

[illegible]
3 DECEMBER 1967 07
TO NAVCOMWKLANT MAILE

TO DIR

INFO DIRNSA
JCS [illegible]

E F T O T U.S. EYES ONLY

[illegible]

1. BIS ADD FOLLOWING AMPLIFICATION AS APPROPRIATE ADDENDUM TO LIBERTY INQUIRY PURSUANT YOUR REQUEST [illegible] PARTS.

2. FOLLOWING ATTESTED TO BY CO LIBERTY [illegible]:
[illegible] AND SIGNALMAN DAVID [illegible].

3. SIGNAL SITUATION NOTED BY C.O. AND SIGNALMAN DAVIS [illegible] AND NEITHER SAW NOR HEARD ANYTHING WHICH [illegible].

4. A FLAG IS FROM MTB WAS [illegible] BY LIBERTY [illegible].

5. CTF THOMPSON REVISED'S REACHING POSITION ON LIBERTY BRIDGE [illegible] AFTER TORPEDO HIT. THOMPSON NOW ESTIMATES FIRE [illegible], ON BRIDGE AND WING TO TEN MINUTES [illegible] TORPEDO HIT.

6. C.O. SAW [illegible] NOT KNOWN AS SIGN TO MTB SIGNS WE WERE [illegible] LIBERTY'S STAT OF DAVIS [illegible].

7. [illegible] FIRST IDENTIFIABLE ACTION TRANSMISSION FROM [illegible] TO SEPTIME IN LIBERTY AND WAS ONLY MTB [illegible] WAS OBSERVED BY [illegible] BEARING AFTER TORPEDO HIT.

8. TORPEDO [illegible] AFTER BLUE LAMP UNCOVERED, WHICH WAS AFTER WE GOT TO BRIDGE WHICH WAS AFTER TORPEDO ATTACK, AND ONLY THING SEEN BY LIGHT TO MTB WAS "WE THINK YOU" IN REPLY TO SIGN O" MEAN.

9. SUMMARY:
(A) DISTINGUISHABLE BY VISUAL TRANSMISSION WAS OFFER OF HELP AFTER TORPEDO HIT ALTHOUGH FLASHING LIGHT FROM CENTER OF BAR CONTINUED INTERMITTENTLY PRIOR THERETO.
(B) NO AA ORDERED OR ACTUALLY SENT FROM LIBERTY TO BEST OF WITNESS'S RECOLLECTION AT THIS TIME.
(C) WITH STOP SIGNAL LATE CAPABILITY WIRED OUT IN AIR ATTACK, BLUE LAMP NOT BROUGHT INTO USE UNTIL AFTER TORPEDO HIT.

10. PRESENT TIME SEQUENCING CONTINUES MOST DIFFICULT AS APPROVAL FROM ABOVE; HOWEVER, C.O. AND THOMPSON ARE UNDERSTANDABLE IN CIRCUITOUS IMPOSSIBLE HEAD INTO [illegible] BEFORE ATTACK AND BE SURE THAT LIBERTY'S BLUE LAMP NOT UNCOVERED UNTIL AFTER TORPEDO HIT. I AM CONVINCED THERE WERE NAVY UNIT THEY ARE CLAIMING BEING.

[illegible]

James M. Barnes Jr. Research Papers

45 b

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

June 21, 1967

TO: Hal Saunders, NSC

FROM: Harry McPherson

I hate to burden you with this, but I would appreciate a few sentences in response to Jim Cross's request. Time is important. It is not necessary to write a number of letters: just some lines for guidance.

Attachments

Lyndon B.

James M. Ennes, Jr. Research Papers

40 2

June 21, 1967

MEMORANDUM FOR JIM CROSS

I agree that some--though not all--of the middle paragraphs in these letters are inappropriate for those who died on the U.S.S. LIBERTY. As guidance for whoever revises them, I would suggest the following thoughts as appropriate:

1. The men who died in this tragedy served their country with great skill. Their contribution to the cause of peace will inspire other men to the same steady devotion to duty that is the heart and strength of our military forces everywhere.

2. It is my fervent hope that from the ashes of war in the Middle East may rise a new opportunity for peace ~~between ancient lands~~. We sought to avert that war, but now that we must deal with its consequences, we will do whatever is in our power to assure that those who died will have contributed to building a lasting peace.

3. The responsibility that I bear as Commander-in-Chief is made heavier by the sorrow I share with our bereaved families. I pray, however, that the memory of your son's service in the cause of peace will be as much a source of strength and pride to you as it is to me.

4. Your sacrifice is a monument to the determination of the United States that men everywhere must enjoy the blessings of lasting peace.

5. The death of your _____ is a monument to those men whose skill and knowledge is crucial to the support of our military and diplomatic efforts around the world.

6. This tragic loss makes us again mindful the steady pursuit of duty in itself is a tribute to a man's honor and courage.

COPY
Lyndon B. Johnson Library

Harry McPherson

James M. Ennes Jr. Research Papers

June 26, 1967

Bank the Liberty

FOR JIM CROSS

I agree that some -- though not all -- of the middle paragraphs in these letters are inappropriate for those who died on the U.S.S. LIBERTY. As guidance for whoever revises them, I would suggest the following thoughts as appropriate:

1. The men who died in this tragedy served their country with great skill. Their contribution to the cause of peace will inspire other men to the same steady devotion to [illegible] that is the heart and strength of our military forces everywhere.

2. It is my fervent hope that from the ashes of war in the Middle East may rise a new opportunity for peace. We sought to avert that war. Now that we must help deal with its consequences, we will do whatever is in our power to assure that those who died will have contributed to building a lasting peace.

3. The responsibility that I bear as Commander-in-Chief is made heavier by the sorrow I share with our bereaved families. I pray, however, that the memory of your son's service in the cause of peace will be as much a source of strength and pride to you as it is to me.

Harry C. McPherson, Jr.

Attachments - memo from Col Cross to [illegible] June 20 w/sample ltrs used in [illegible]

no copy retained

[illegible]

Mideast

James M. Eames, Jr. Research Papers

MEMORANDUM

(50) 1(G)

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

June 20, 1967

MEMORANDUM FOR HARRY MC PHERSON

31 Navy personnel were killed aboard the USS LIBERTY
of the accidental attack by Israeli forces. The attached
letters, which have been prepared using basic formats
Vietnam war casualties, strike me as inappropriate in
to the very sensitive nature of the whole Arab-Israeli
circumstances under which these people died, I would
review these drafts and provide me with nine to ten
which will adequately deal with this special situation.

JAMES U. CROSS

James M. Ennes, Jr. Research Papers

DECLASSIFIED

Under Secretary for Political Affairs

CONFIDENTIAL

August 15, 1967

14248

MEMORANDUM FOR: S/S - Mr. Walsh

FROM: M - Eugene V. Rostow

I attach a copy of the report of the judge who presided over the preliminary inquiry in the Liberty case. It was handed to me yesterday by Minister Evron.

He requested that this be treated on a restricted and confidential basis. He did, however, indicate that we could, if we wished, show it to interested members of Congress and others.

In response to my inquiry, he reported that Jerusalem had decided not to make any further public statement at this time, but would have no objection if we did so. I explained that my preliminary thought was that if the statement were to be made criticizing members of the Israeli Armed Forces, it would be more appropriate for it to originate with the Israeli Government than with our Government.

I said that we should reach a final decision later, after studying the decision, both on how to handle the distribution of the document, and whether to make a public statement.

Enclosure

CONFIDENTIAL

COPY
LBJ LIBRARY

James M. Ennes, Jr. Research Papers

DECLASSIFIED

USS Liberty: [illegible] vs. Opinion

It is unfortunate that Newsday [illegible] a little known 1979 book [illegible] of the USS Liberty ("Ship's Survivors Told [illegible] Witch[illegible] Data," June 7), which was the target of a tragic military error in 1967 during the Six Day War. Neither the book nor the event is, in any sense, "news" at this point, nor are the comments of retired Cmdr. Lloyd Bucher, who was on the other side of the world at the time of the event, and who was in North Korean captivity during the months following the Liberty incident.

All that is "news" about [illegible] gathering of the ship's survivors is that old charge [illegible] been rehashed without any information not [illegible] previously. Why such a story, [illegible] "Combin[illegible] Services," is worth [illegible] a half [illegible] the main news section is a mystery to me. It is the kind of display and placement one would expect of the National Enquirer or some other [illegible] scandal sheet. It is not worthy of Newsday's [illegible] high standards of news content.

Furthermore, Newsday chose to print the charges without any reference to the specific [illegible] that are part of the official U.S. Navy Board of Inquiry proceedings. [illegible] was also a factual error in the story. Israel paid $13 [illegible] in damages [illegible] $7 million figure stated.

Both sentences which mention James Ennes, author of the 1979 book, [illegible] suggesting a highly subjective viewpoint: "[illegible] argued" and "Ennes . . . theorizes." [illegible] is certainly entitled to an opinion, but it is [illegible] that [illegible] and not fact.

Turn[illegible] another item in that edition, "A History [illegible] a curiously selective chronology, omitting the 1948 all-out assault by combined Arab forces [illegible] newly proclaimed Jewish state, the blockade of [illegible] Straits of Tiran that constituted the first act of [illegible] 1967, and the important fact that it was Gamal Nasser and not Israel who waged the "war of attrition" between 1967 and 1970. There is no mention of continuous PLO terrorist attacks on civilians, including the infamous Lod [illegible] Apparently, a PLO gremlin infiltrated [illegible] word processors and typesetting [illegible] on June 7.

Mil[illegible] Cooperman, Regional Director
Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith
East Meadow

James M. Ennes Jr. Research Papers

Statement made on radio station KUOW in Seattle by David Stahl, Seattle Regional Director, Anti-Defamation League, B'nai B'rith:

It is most unfortunate that various individuals have seen fit to ascribe dark intentions to the government of Israel for the tragic attack on the U S ship Liberty in 1967 during that year's Mideast war. The episode which cost the lives of 34 of our American naval officers and personnel for which Israel has nearly paid 13 million dollars reparations was indeed a tragic mistake.

The claims made against Israel's true intentions must be responded to. To sustain the thesis that Israel deliberately attacked the Liberty saying that Israel had to know the identification of the ship because it had a large flag and since the day was a clear day and since there were seven hours of overflights by Israeli reconnaissance planes and since the flights were within a few hundred feet of the Liberty are not the true facts.

In fact Israel did not recognize the ship as an American ship until after the attack began and at that time when recognition was made immediately the operation was halted.

What took place was the following: On the third day of the war, half way through the Six-Day War, Israel's military headquarters received a report from ground troops that various Israeli positions in that area had been shelled from the sea. Two Mirage jets were diverted from ground support--these were ground support aircraft and not bombers or reconnaissance planes--were sent from the Sinai over the water to check the situation out. The aircraft spotted this ship off the coast. From what they could see, what the pilots reported (and the U.S. Navy Court of Inquiry and the Israeli Court of Inquiry went along with) the pilot said they could not tell from the ship's color the antennae, the guns and so forth what country it had emanated from and it was apparent to them at the time that it was an Egyptian ship and they began their attack. Some time later after many sorties it was found out that it was a nonbelligerent ship, an American ship, and then the attack was stopped.

At that time the Israelis, as told, sent a helicopter with a representative from the U.S. Mission in Israel to see what aid could be given. Military aid was offered at that time from such Israeli ships as were in the area and the U.S. ship said, "No, we will go to one of our ports."

Had the attack been premeditated as Mr. Innes has said, the Israelis would have sent bombers in to wipe out the ship immediately and would not have sent strafing aircraft which would take some time to destroy it. The fact that the Liberty was strafed indicates that this was a "spot of the moment" kind of attack based on observations of the two pilots involved.

The charge that there were seven hours of reconnaissance flights over the ship does not make any military sense. Military people have reported to me that if there had been reconnaissance flights there would have been one or two other things indicated. The Israelis would have sent over sophisticated surveillance planes to in fact determine whose ship it was.

James M. Innes Jr. Research Papers

And then about the report from the Liberty seeing Israeli planes prior to the attack, in fact the ship lay on a route between Israel and the Sinai. Transport planes had in fact flown over, but the transport pilots were not observing what was going on below them. Their job was simply to move Israeli troops around, and not to observe the sea for friendly or belligerent ships.

Finally, as to the motive it has been suggested that the Israelis attacked the intelligence ship to hide an upcoming attack on the Golan Heights. Actually there are many records of Israeli cabinet discussions of the moves inside Sinai. Several members of the cabinet were indeed hesitant about moving to the Golan, but they were concerned about what the Soviet leadership might do and at no time were cabinet members fearful about negative American reactions, in fact the U.S. was supportive. Israel was counting on the U.S. to support them and to prevent any Soviet intervention.

(As an aside, I read recently a statement by Yitzhak Rabin, who was former Prime Minister of Israel, and at the time of the Six Day War was the head of the Israel Defense Forces. The reports came in to him first that it was an Egyptian ship. Mistakenly when the Israeli pilots flew over it again they had assessed it as maybe being a Soviet ship. The Israeli leaders had to assess at that point if it was a Soviet ship and they had attacked it what they would be faced with, and there was some feeling of terror and discomfort about that. So at no time until the final assessment was it in fact considered by the Israeli administration of the military forces to be a U.S. ship.)

It is mind boggling in our agency's mind to assume that Israel would jeopardize the relationship with its only substantial ally by attacking one of its own ships.

Again, the attack was a tragic mistake. As soon as the strafing jets got close enough to the vessel and realized it was a U.S. ship they stopped the attack immediately and offered their assistance to the crippled vessel.

Since the tragedy both Israeli and American naval courts of inquiry have found no evidence to suggest other than what this was: a military accident. The tragedy was a result of blunders on both sides. Washington at the outset of the war had instructed the Sixth Fleet to move its vessels away from the Israeli coast, but due to a bureaucratic mistake the order failed to reach the ship Liberty, and Israel, in the midst of a major war went searching for a ship supposedly shelling its troops, saw this vessel, thought it to be that ship, and started firing. These are the facts as we see them. There is no need for false accusations.

Our feeling as a human rights agency is that we want to see the facts as we get them from both the U.S. government and the Israeli government, and the courts of inquiry which in fact said what I have just reiterated, that there was no nefarious reason on the part of those involved. In fact, at the time the Israelis mentioned that they lost more than that number of men fired upon by their own people.... Sometimes friendly forces get killed. It was a tragedy, but there is in fact no justification for those charges.

James M. Ennes, Jr. Research Papers

[The following Israeli rubuttal to Assault on the Liberty by James Ennes is distributed by the Israeli Foreign Office in Jerusalem to interested newsmen and Israeli spokesmen in the United States. The arguments in this paper are routinely sent by area Anti-Defamation League leaders in letters to editors and radio or television station managers when Ennes is interviewed or his book is mentioned publicly.]

James M. Ennes Jr.'s book ASSAULT ON THE LIBERTY attempts to prove that the Israeli attack on the American intelligence-gathering ship, the USS Liberty on June 8, 1967, during the Six-Day War was a deliberate, premeditated attack on an American ship by Israel. Furthermore, he charges Israel and the United States with a cover-up conspiracy to keep the facts hidden.

In reality, Ennes's conclusions fly in the face of logic and the military facts. The attack on the USS Liberty occurred because it was mistakenly believed to be an Egyptian warship located in the war zone during the height of hostilities. The following should make this clear.

Why should Israel deliberately attack an American ship and risk a dispute with the United States whose friendship is the cornerstone of Israel's foreign policy? Several hypotheses have previously been suggested by proponents of the deliberate attack theory

An article published in the US Naval Institute Proceedings by Richard Smith presented the thesis that the attack took place because Israel was trying to delay knowledge of its victories from reaching the superpowers.

This concept was shown to be absurd, since Israel's victories were already general knowledge by June 8. Several articles had appeared in the American press and on June 7, Chief of Staff Yitzhak Rabin had announced that "the Egyptians are defeated...The whole area is in our hands."

Realizing the weakness of Smith's argument, Ennes has simply changed venue and blames the Liberty attack on the Israeli desire to keep secret the forthcoming attack on the Golan Heights lest United States pressure prevent it.

Since the Liberty was patrolling off the Sinai coast near El Arish, the Smith thesis at least had the credibility of relating to the same theater of war, the Egyptian front. Ennes's conclusion defies logic; why should Israel attack an American spy ship located in Sinai waters because of a future event which was to occur far away in Syria? While Israel was certainly concerned with information the Russians and Egyptians were picking up, it is unbelievable that Israel would risk the friendship of the United States at a critical time for what would have been a pointless attack. The Liberty was simply not in a position to obtain vital information about the Golan while sailing off El Arish.

Even more telling, however, are the military facts themselves. If the attack on the Liberty was premeditated and planned, as Ennes claims, then Israeli planes would have been loaded with heavy bombs used to sink ships. The Israeli planes were not, however, armed with heavy bombs but were equipped with weapons used to assist ground troops, the action in which they were engaged at the time prior to the Liberty attack.

The Liberty was also attacked by torpedo boats. In a premeditated, planned attack, Israel would not have wasted torpedo boats on an attack which could easily have been handled from the air.

What actually occurred on June 8 was a tragic mistake. The author gives the impression that the Liberty was easy to recognize and could not have been mistaken for any other ship. If more than 12 years ago, the Israelis had the same 20/20 hindsight as Ennes and the time to leisurely contemplate matters, the attack could not have taken place. However, as those who have

James M. Ennes, Jr. Research Papers

been in battle know, under the stress of battle conditions, snap decisions must be made with the best available data. The history of war, let alone naval war, is full of incredible incidents involving mistaken identity that under normal peaceful conditions would never have occurred. In Vietnam the USA attacked an Australian destroyer and in 1974 we have the spectacle of a Turkish war plane sinking a Turkish destroyer during the invasion of Cyprus.

Events that led up to the attack on the Liberty have been described in a report issued by the Israeli Court of Inquiry set up to investigate the attack and determine what took place.

On the morning of the attack, Israeli troops stationed at El Arish reported to Army HQ in Israel that they were being fired upon from the sea. It later turned out that the explosions which caused the report were due to other causes, but in response to this report the Israeli Navy and Air Force were instructed to seek out a ship that might be responsible for the shelling.

The Liberty was travelling in a war zone 12 miles off the coast near El Arish, an area where tank battles larger than those of World War 2 were taking place. On June 6 Egypt had declared the area to be dangerous for shipping and had in fact stated that it considered the war zone to extend 40-60 miles off the coast and that this area should be avoided by shipping. Since this was an area that merchant shipping had avoided and Israel had not been told the Liberty was operating there, it is not too surprising that when the Israelis spotted an obvious naval ship in warship gray, apparently headed for Port Said, they concluded that it was an Egyptian ship and attacked.

To bolster his case, Ennes places great emphasis on the fact that the American flag was flying from the Liberty. While a ship is undoubtedly clearly visible to the men on deck of a ship, it is not necessarily visible from the air, and certainly not easily identifiable.

Ennes writes about [illegible]t that Israeli jets had radioed the sighting of an American ship. He [illegible]s no source for the report or any details. In fact, no such radio [illegible]e was sent or received.

Ennes claims that Israel sent many low level reconnaissance flights including one which came within 200 feet of the ship. Thus he concludes Israel must have been aware of the identity of the ship. His claim is disputed by the Commander of the Liberty, William McGonagle, in his testimony to the Court of Inquiry.

In an attempt to make the Israeli attack seem more bloodthirsty, Ennes describes the appearance of 2 Israeli troop laden helicopters apparently sent to finish off the survivors. While there is no mystery regarding the arrival of the two Israeli helicopters, what is a mystery is how the author knows they were carrying armed troops and were not there for rescue. The truth of the matter is that as soon as Israel Defence Forces headquarters realizes that a mistake had been made the torpedo boats offered their assistance, two helicopters were sent with medical aid and a tugboat was ordered out of ashdod to help the Liberty. It should also be mentioned that the Prime Minister of Israel sent a personal message of sympathy to President Johnson after the incident.

It is understandable that a person who was wounded as Ennes was in this unfortunate incident should tend to impute the worst motivation to the attacker, but Ennes allows his very evident rancor and subjectivity to override objective analysis.

The reason he attributes to Israel for staging a premeditated attack on an American ship is illogical and unrealistic, while the military facts clearly show that the attack could not have been premeditated. The attack on the Liberty was a case of mistaken identity, and when the mistake was noticed all practical steps were taken to assist the ship and compensate the sounded.

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U.S.S. LIBERTY: THE FACTS

1. On June 8, 1967, the third day of the war, Israeli planes and vessels mistook the Liberty, which was 14 miles off the Sinai coast, for an Egyptian vessel. They attacked, killing 34 of the Liberty's crew.

2. Also after the first assault, the Liberty's commander refused an Israeli request that the ship identify itself. And according to testimony of its own crew, the Liberty bore at least a surface resemblance to the El Quseir, an Egyptian ship.

3. The attack on the Liberty was a tragic mistake. But it must be recalled that the incident occurred in the midst of a full-scale war.

4. None of Israel's accusers has been able adequately to explain why Israel would have needed or wanted to attack an American ship.

5. Shlomo Erell told the Associated Press (June 5, 1977), "Even the United States didn't know where its ship was. We were advised by the proper authorities that there was no American ship within 100 miles."

6. Senator Kennedy, New York Times (June 10, 1967), "(The Liberty incident) was a miscalculation that could have happened to anyone."

7. Senator Javitz, New York Times (June 10, 1967), "With Israel, we know that (the Liberty incident) was a mistake."

8. Former U.S. Ambassador Walworth Barbour, who served in Tel Aviv during the Six-Day War, stated in an interview that the attack was "just a mix-up".

9. Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara told Congress on July 26, 1967, "It was the conclusion of the investigatory body, headed by an admiral of the navy in whom we have great confidence, that the attack was not intentional." Israel apologized for the attack and paid nearly $13 million in reparations to the United States and to the families of the victims. The last payment was received in December, 1980, when the U.S. officially closed the books on the matter.

ENDS TALKED ABOUT THE LIBERTY AT A [illegible] AT ANN ARBOR, MICHIGAN, ON SEPT 16, 1982. THE LOCAL "JEWISH STUDENT UNION" DISTRIBUTED THIS SHEET AT THE DOOR.

Distributed [illegible] talk on Ann Arbor [illegible] Sept 16, 1982

James M. Eames, Jr. Research Papers

Tom Braden

Israel's Lobby



Ed Hoeft Looks for The Washington Post

It is often said that the struggle: lobby in this town belongs to the state of Israel, and an interesting test of that view was afforded recently by Sen. Charles Percy (R-Ill.).

Last Jan. 26, returning to the United States after a trip to the Middle East, Percy was interviewed by a reporter from the Chicago Sun-Times. He said the Israeli and its leadership, but while I have a high regard, almost equal to the United States in the short run to using a blank check . . . the $2.5 billion additional request after we fulfilled every single requirement to replace the equipment lost in the last war is going to have some of the toughest going in the Congress. I CHOSE, of any request that could be made, because every penny of that money will have to be borrowed and we will have to pay probably 8 per cent to 9 per cent interest on it for an indefinable number of years."

In that same interview, Percy also said he thought Israel had missed some opportunities to negotiate, and he called Yasser Arafat "more reasonable, relatively speaking, than other spokesmen."

These statements represented a direct turnabout for Percy, who until that moment had never deviated from 100 per cent support for anything Israel wanted.

So what happened? Here is a memorandum from one of Percy's staff members dated a week later: "[illegible] —we have received [illegible] telegrams and 4,000 letters in response to your [illegible] statements . . . [they] run 95 per cent against. . . . Every night, incoming mail comes from various parts of the country, but especially Chicago. . . . Readers [illegible] their support for any future [illegible]."

Two weeks later the staff produced a tally, reporting a slight fall-off. It added "in the past three weeks we have received an organized write-in from the Jewish community of New York and New Jersey—all against."

Some weeks later—when Percy refused to sign a letter endorsing Israeli policy sent to President Ford by 76 other senators, the mail took another sharp upturn.

The second thing that happened to Percy was that men who had been his close friends for 20 years—during one of which he had been hailed as "Israeli businessman of the year"—turned their backs on him or reacted coldly to his greeting. Percy was hurt.

The third thing that happened was that Percy took to the road. Over and over again, from every platform he would find in his home state, he called upon the Arab states to recognize Israel's right to exist and the necessity of its boundaries. All he was saying, he explained, was that Israel's position seemed to him a little rigid and not conducive to the step-by-step approach he thought might lead to peace.

The fourth thing that happened was the realization that his countermessage was not enough. The first senator in the history of his state to win all of its counties now recognizes that if he had to run for re-election next year, he could be in serious trouble. His hopes for regaining the support of Illinois' Jewish population—fourth largest in the country—now rest upon a ski trip in the Middle Eastern stalemate. He still believes that this change can only come from concessions by both sides.

Interestingly, in the course of holding Percy's feet to the fire, some of the Jewish organizations were kindly. "You have made a terrible mistake," the leader of one group told him on the telephone. "How," he continued, "what can I do to help you?" Others, however, were vitriolic.

Percy's experience does not suggest that American Jews don't have a right to a lobby and don't have a right to express their views through their lobby. It does suggest that we ought to stop telling schoolchildren that politics stops at the voter's edge.

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James M. Lindsay Jr. Research Papers

To Lubbers

AMERICAN ISRAEL PUBLIC AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

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June 2, 1980

In June 1967, during the war between three Arab states and Israel, Israeli gunboats and aircraft accidently attacked an American ship, the U.S.S. Liberty, which was sailing closely off the shore of the Sinai Peninsula. U.S. Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara told Congress on July 26, 1967: "It was the conclusion of the investigatory body, headed by an Admiral of the Navy in whom we have great confidence, that the attack was not intentional."

It is curious that thirteen years later, James Ennes, Jr., a lieutenant on the Liberty during the attack, has written a book accusing the Israelis of a deliberate and malicious attack. Perhaps even more curious are the two uncritical reviews of the book in last week's Post. Ennes' basic premise is that the Liberty, an intelligence-gathering ship, was monitoring war events and part of Israel's plans to invade Syria. President Johnson, Ennes charged, had informed the Israeli government that the U.S. would not support them in any action in which they were the aggressor and Israel felt compelled to destroy the American ship before it reported back to Washington.

Questions come to mind: Israel had already been forced to launch a preemptive attack against Egypt three days earlier (because President Nasser had been threatening war, closed the Straits of Tiran and mobilized Egyptian forces). Would Israel then, suddenly in the heat of war, be worried about U.S. repercussions of an attack on Syria, a country which had been launching attacks against Israeli settlements and towns in northern Israel for months prior, and which had repeatedly been threatening the destruction of Israel? Premier Atassi mobilized his forces? It seems highly unlikely. If the Liberty was monitoring communications concerning Israel's planned attack on Syria, why was the ship sailing off the remote coast of Sinai instead of along Israel's more northern coastline?

It may be easy to overlook and/or underestimate a few basic points when trying to build a case against Israel which Ennes obviously did. Here are some reminders: All reports and transcripts of inquiry proceedings note that the day of the attack was calm with no wind. The American flag which was flying for identification can, therefore, be assumed to have been flying limp. Also, the flag was knocked down during the initial attack. In addition, there were numerous reports that the U.S. had failed to respond to an Israeli request early in the war asking whether any American ships were operating in the area. The Sixth Fleet was known to be hundreds of miles away. Shortly before the attack Israeli soldiers who had captured the Sinai post at El Arish reported taking naval gunfire, (Americans aboard the Liberty had reported seeing smoke rising from El Arish) and then an Israeli operator misread the speed of the Liberty which caused him to believe it was a warship. The ship was falsely identified as the Egyptian El Quesir which, except for size, bears a striking resemblance in silhouette to the Liberty. As the CIA memorandum states, "Although the Liberty is some 200 feet longer than the Egyptian transport El Quesir, it could easily be mistaken for the latter vessel by an overzealous pilot. Both ships have similar hulls and arrangements of masts and stack." Lastly, after the initial attack from aircraft, Israeli torpedo boats approached the Liberty (head on, therefore unable to see identifying markings on the ship's sides), sending messages asking for identification. The Liberty failed to respond and only then did the Israelis torpedo the ship. U.S. Ambassador to Israel during the war, Kalworth Barbour, confirmed that the attack was a mix-up in identification: "I am convinced it [the attack] was just an accident."

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Since all who accuse the Israelis of malicious intent are still wanting for a legitimate motive it is worthwhile to bear this in mind. The U.S. Department of Defense had dispatched orders to the Liberty days before the attack which would have ordered the ship out of Mediterranean waters. A foul up in communications found the messages later somewhere in the Phillipines. The Liberty never received them. If the Defense Department is capable in peacetime of making such an error, why is it not possible - even a thousand times more plausible - that a small nation fighting for its life could not make a mistake in identification during the height of a war?

Minette Perler
Research Associate

James M. Ennes, Jr. Research Papers

Rough Translation
from Ma'ariv

Ma'ariv
June 8, 1979

The Liberty Incident

Today (6/8/79)twelve years ago, on the fourth day of the Six Day War Israeli airplanes and an Israeli naval ship attacked an American Intelligence Naval vessel, the U.S. Liberty, stationed across from El-Arish, thirty four U.S. sailors lost their lives.

Even though this attack was an accident, enemies of Israel in the United States are using this episode to point to Israel's belligerent nature. A few books and articles are blaming Israel as having attacked the Liberty on purpose.

A recent book by Anthony Pearson, The Conspiracy of Silence, blames the U.S. government in obscuring the truth in the Liberty incident. In Israel several publications have placed additional blame, some involve anti-American activities carried out by the "Mossad" and its activites in June 1967, touching on the attack of the intelligence vehicle. These activites are said to have precipitated the attack on an American intelligence vessel. Most of the material was published before Pearson's book in the form of an article in "Penthouse," because other publications refused the article.

At about the same time Pearson's book appeared an article by Robert K. Smith publised the incident in the Naval Proceedings. Because the articles came from an offical government source and documents and because of the length and detail of the Proceedings, these articles have been considered the definitive documents in the Liberty incident. The Smith article carries alot of weight and influence.

The book and article viewed together place the blame squarely on Israel, she attached the Liberty on purpose. The main complaints are from the officers of the ship or "informal sources" who claim that the

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Liberty neared the shore because it was felt there would be a need to evacuate U. S. citizens and to maintain communication with the U.S. embassy in the area. Did the Liberty notify Israeli authorities on its mission, if not why not? And if this was the case why did the Liberty try to hide from the surveillance vessels of the Israeli navy.

Pearson in his book, brings a different explanation: the intelligence ship was sent to "keep tabs" on Israel so that she would not deviate from the pre-arranged battle plan with the United States (sic) and Israel wanted to hide the take over of Judea and Samaria and especially the liberation of Jerusalem and therefore attacked the Liberty. Pearson also claims that the Liberty had exposed the fact that Israel had "cooked" the messages that Egypt and Jordan were sending each other, thus seducing Jordan to enter the war offensively. Therefore the ship had to be attacked.

Pearson omits the fact that the day before the attack on the ship the entire world knew about Israel's take over of the West Bank and that all communication networks reported that the Israeli flag flew atop the Western Wall and at Sharm-Al-Sheik. It was also known of the famous conversation between Nassar and Hussien in which they claimed that they were being bombed by U.S. and G.B. planes.

The recent publications by Smith and Pearson do not answer a few questions e.g. why did the Liberty Command refuse to identify itself after it was discovered and was until after it was attacked? Why didn't the vessel call for help when it was clear what the ship was? Why did the ship try to hide? This is how authors hide the facts: 1. an Egyptian submarine had fired on El-Arish that same morning and quickly returned to the direction of Port Said. The author distorts the basic reasons for the war breaking out and even charges Israel with a major part. Israel had refused to allow the UN force to move into the area across from El-Arish. Thus many would consider the charges against Israel as the truth and even in Israel this is so. Maybe too much time has passed and many of the facts have been forgotten.

What happened 12 years ago today? On the fifth of June the Israeli Air Force wiped out the entire Arab air force. In the next three days most of the Egyptian

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and Jordan land forces had been defeated. On the morning of the 8th an Egyptian submarine neared the coast and fired on El-Arish. A naval ship from the navy was sent to intercept. The submarine quickly backed off toward Port Said.

At 11:24 a shot was reported on El-Arish. Responding to this report at 12:05 three torpedo boats took off for the area. Close to 13:00 it was reported that the unknown boat was slipping away from them in the direction of Port Said.

All further reports recorded from the time the target was detected til the mistake was discovered leave no room for doubt. The Liberty was attacked due to a case of mistaken identity. But before we return and describe this incident we will discus the conversations the authors had with the American officers on board.

The crew of the Liberty resembled a crew on a vacation cruiser rather than a military vessel. The sailors and officers were on deck tanning, the ocean was as smouth as a mirror. The Commander of the ship pointed to a column of black smoke, the only indication of a war across the way by El-Arish and discussed with the officers his own personal feelings about the war. Meanwhile the torpedo boats sighted the ship. At 13:46 they radioed," the target is travelling quickly at the speed of 30 knots, we can't catch it." That sort of speed is only used with military vessels and therefore the Naval Command requested that the data be varified immediately, "check a second time!" At 13:50 the torpedo boats returned and reported.,"the distance is 17 miles and their speed is now 28 knots. We request an Air Force surveillance."

At naval command there was a very clear picture : unidentified military vessel had fired on El-Arish and now it was attempting to escape our torpedo boats. The Air Force responded and immediately dispatched a pair of planes. The planes flew above the ship looking for a flag or other identifiable markings. The planes were available as they had already taken care of Egyptian and Jordanian targets. Had the planes been requested a day previously the air command would not have been able to send out the plane because the war effort was concentrating on defeating the Egyptian and Jordanian land forces.

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The planes radioed back to their command, "its a grey ship (the color of military vessels) armed, without an identifiable markings or a flag." The comand was given to attack. The four planes made several bombing runs. Hary smoke poured out of the foreign ship. According to Smith during this period four sailors died. Meanwhile the torpedo boats moved in closer and at 14:23 they were 4 miles from the foreign ship. They radioed back that the ship looked like a destroyer (H or S class). The airplanes recieved a command to move away. The torpedo boats flashed a command at the strange ship. The torpedo boat demanded that the strange ship flash its identity. The grey ship answered back, "A.A." This code said, we refuse to identify ourselves, you identify yourselves first. This answer was met with firing toward the torpedo boats.

At 14:38 after the ship did refuse to identify itself the report from the torpedo ship was the following: The ship is an Egyptian supply ship. She looks like the "El-Quseir." We saw her emit fire three minutes ago." The command was loud and sharp, "Attack!"

Smith blames Israel with "throwing sand in his eyes." The Liberty was bigger he claims; it was also heavier than the "El-Quseir which was hid from the Israelis before, there was no doubt as to the ship's identity. The length of the Liberty is 150 meters as compared to 90 meters of the "el-Quseir" but there is a great similarity in the silouettes of the two ships and a distance of three to four miles it is possible to confuse the two.

At 14:40 the torpedo boats opened cannon fire, at the "Egyptian" ship. Three minutes later five torpedoes were fired, only one hit the hull of the ship. Smith claims six sailors died during this period. Torpedo boats discerned a large U.S. flag which appeared on the hull of the attacked ship. The fire stopped immediately. When the navy realized it was confronting an American ship that had been hit by accident, the commanding officer immediately asked if he could be of any assistance. The commander of the

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ship, William McGonagle, refused. He urged the men of the Israeli navy to hurry and disengage if they did not want to involve themselves with the American fleet.

Indeed helicopters of the fleet, its jets and boats were hurrying to the scene. Before they reached the Liberty a helicopter was already hovering close to the Liberty- an Israeli helicopter. In the helicopter was Commander Ernest C. Kessteal, the American attache from the Embassy. He requested permission f. from McGonagle to land on his ship. "Who are you?" Kessteal was asked. He was told that it was "impossible" and forbidden him to land.

The torpedo that hit the Liberty had put a hole in her hull and water rushed inside, McGonagle had to make a decision: to accept help on the spot or to seal up the hole and sail. The commander of the ship decided to patch up. The Liberty, despite a listing of 10% and degrees sailed. Only after it had arrived did they get a clear picture of the number of causulties. From the belly of the ship - the sealed section- they removed 24 sailors who had been trapped and unable to escape, all were now dead. The others climbed to 34.

Five possibilities have been posited as to the causes for the accidental bombing of the Liberty, by Israel. Some members of the American ship find them decisive. First of all, the objective conditions must be clarified. On the one hand - war; an enemy searching for revenge. (An enemy sub had fire on El-Arish that morning.) On the other hand - unknown sailing vessel, that according to the offical report had been fired by the shore and had requested permission to sail to Port Said.

Number two, Israeli naval officials point out that the behavior of McGonagle reminded them alot of Officer Avigra el Amal, who attacked Haifa in 1956. Both refused to identify themselves and had asked the Israeli ship to identify herself. The Liberty has also opened fire on the torpedo boats. In the interview given Smith the officers stated

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ship that had been in the area, they opened fire.

Number three, an interference in the communication between the United States and Israel: the Americans claim that the command to stay 100 miles away from the coast line was "delayed." But because of routine broadcasts from the command of the Sixth Fleet, the Liberty in this instance reached by mistake the Philipines. But this does not explain why the ship did not notify its position when it was discovered next to the battle area. General Aaron Yariv, head of Military intelligence, told me already in mid May," Israeli intelligence knew it all." Therefore if Israel did not know about the grey ship on June 8th it is correct to assume that McGonagle misled Israel on his intentions.

This contention is strengthened by the Liberty's refusal to identify itself, missing its flag and the answer of "A.A." - until the torpedo boats attacked.

Number four, in looking at the several reports together the chain of events work against the U.S. Report one: "they are firing on El-Arish." Report two: "an Unidentified ship is moving at 28-30 knots toward Port Said." Report three: "an Egyptian supply ship unclearly identified as the "el Quseir." Report four: "there is no identifiable markings on the bow of the ship." (there were however markings on the other side of the ship.) Added to these reports the Liberty fired some shots. And the fact that the naval command knew all foreign ships it is logical to suspect foreign ships in the area especially at such a close distance to the shore.

In this line of events there is one more inquiry. Why did the Liberty refuse all contact with its ship, even from Commander Kenstal, the American attache? What were they trying to hide? Moreover the decision to sail to Malta for repairs cost human lives. The sailors trapped below might have been saved had the ship accepted assistance.

A fifth factor is to point out clearly the mistakes of the Israeli

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naval forces in their communications. For example, in their last sortie, the pilots noticed that they had identified the letters CTR-5 on the hull of the ship. These letters had been hidden from the torpedo boats. The report did not reach the naval authorities from the air force.

The story ends one year after the incident- after 34 American sailors are dead and buried . And after Israel has paid their families more than 3 million dollars. The U.S. Liberty was removed from service. Commander McGonagle won a medal for his bravery and for having risked his life, he had continued to command his ship after he was wounded. Who is to say who is right, the ship has not been sunk - its been sold for scrap. And thus even though the ship is no longer sailing the seas it continues to be an entity as it tells on American citizens not to trust Israel, as she can always stick a knife in your back. (sic)

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MAY 1982

WHO'S WHO IN ARAB PROPAGANDA

"The road to the liberation of Palestine is through Washington"

– Mohamed Mehdi

There has developed a dramatic growth of Arab-American organizations in the United States in the last decade. The Arab-American community has organized itself both ideologically and financially and has built a strong constituency. The following is a brief background on the largest and most active of those organizations.

James M. Ennes, Jr. Research Papers

PHRC's budget and source of funding are confidential. Although it engages in lobbying activities, it is not registered as a domestic lobby, and despite its [illegible] to the PLO, it has never registered as a foreign agent. PHRC has been investigated by both the FBI and the Justice Department.

Palestine Solidarity Committee (PSC)

The PSC has offices in Washington and New York and is headed by Sheila Ryan, George Cavalletto and Paul Smith. The organization publishes Palestine! magazine and is responsible for several demonstrations in New York City. Recent demonstrations against U.S. support for Israel were held at the 1980 Democratic National Convention and at New York City's Salute to Israel Parade. PSC has also been active in opposing Ziad Abu Eain's extradition. According to internal PSC files, the organization receives financial support from the PLO, Libya and Egypt. The pro-PLO radical Middle East Research and Information Project (MERIP) also supports PSC financially.

United Palestinian Appeal (UPA)

UPA, founded in 1980 by Paul Aylouny, is a Washington-based, tax-exempt, non-profit organization. Its objectives are to solicit funds from American corporations doing business in the Middle East and then channel the funds to Arab organizations. UPA is "fashioned after the well-known United Jewish Appeal," and it plans to raise $500,000 during 1982. Its chief fundraising event is an annual fundraising banquet with pledges coming from attending guests. The first banquet was held on April 24, 1982 in Washington under the patronage of the Ambassadors of Qatar, Kuwait and the United Arab Emirates.

Events to Watch For

**The fifteen-year reunion of survivors of the U.S.S. Liberty will be held in Washington, D.C. on June 5 and 6. Former Chief of Naval Operations Admiral Thomas H. Moorer, USN, retired will be the keynote speaker. The event is organized by James Ennes, author of Assault on the Liberty and is being touted by Arab organizations and publications.

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Middle East Perspective

A NEWSLETTER ON EASTERN MEDITERRANEAN & NORTH AFRICAN AFFAIRS

VOL. XIV, No. 3 JUNE 1981 NEW YORK, N.Y.

"There is nothing more damaging to a journalist than a closed mind." —Pierre Salinger

DIMENSIONS IN THE NEWS

Dr. Alfred M. Lilienthal

• A most valuable book is *Taking Root*, dealing with Israeli settlements on the West Bank, the Golan and Gaza-Sinai 1976-1980. It is published by John Wiley and Son as part of their Geographical Research Study Series, with excellent photographs, charts, maps, and complete in every detail. **Written by William W. Harris of the University of Otago in New Zealand, this is a most objective and scholarly work in which the author details how and where the Arabs were pushed out, what "legal" means were used, "how and what a tragedy this has been," says the author, "for all parties concerned."**

• Author Herman Wouk found time to write an introduction to the Zionist tome, *The Letters of Jonathan Netanyahu*. These came from the pen of the Israeli Lieutenant Colonel who was killed during Israel's successful 1976 Entebbe airport raid. *To further push the saga of persecution and to assure success of the book, it was given by the Times for review to an Israeli writer who just happens to be an ardent Zionist protagonist. And so the slanting continues ad infinitum.*

• Dr. John S. Booth, as visiting minister at the Community Church in New York City during his May 1971 Wesak Sunday (honoring Buddha's birth) sermon, lamented: "*It is the ultimate in desecration for present-day stewards of the Holy Land, of the Prince of Peace, of the Mongol and of the Cross, to be manufacturing and selling to other nations the instruments for killing.*" Although he had earlier in his sermon named the U.S. as "the number one merchant of death," it was his eighty-second reference to Israel that brought a bombardment of calls and threats of bombings to *New York Times* radio station WQXR, which, as customarily, was carrying the services directly from the pulpit renowned for the preachments of John Haynes

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ASSAULT ON THE LIBERTY: What Price Book Burning?

by James M. Ennes, Jr.

[*Fourteen years ago this month 34 American naval personnel were killed, 75 more wounded in an Israeli attack by air and sea on an American ship. Here is what happened to the authoritative book that dared tell this story.*]

ASSAULT ON THE LIBERTY, The True Story of the Israeli Attack on an American Intelligence Ship, was published by Random House in January, 1980. This, my first book, was the first detailed, fully documented account of the 1967 attack on the USS *Liberty*, and it was almost the first public statement of any kind by a survivor.

From the very beginning I was warned by newsmen and others that the book would be ignored by major reviewers and book dealers because of its subject, but I could not accept that. Scores of major American daily newspapers had complained editorially in 1967 that the attack could not have been an accident. *Newsweek* published a scathing comment at that time. I felt confident that my well-documented account would command immediate news, review, and book store attention. I was wrong.

There was a flurry of excitement when the book was released, but not what one might expect. *The Washington Post* informed the publisher that they would not be reviewing *Assault on the Liberty*; the *New York Times* was silent; all New York City book reviewers and talk shows rejected the story; NBC Evening News, after having invited me to an interview in 1977 (which I had declined because I was still subject to military discipline and was forbidden by the Navy to speak freely), was not interested when I told them that I was now free to speak; *Good Morning America* invited me to an interview set for March 14, 1980, but cancelled after discussing the matter with the Israeli Embassy; *Newsweek* editors wrote a story about the book for their *Periscope* column, and then cancelled without

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ASSAULT ON THE LIBERTY

(continued from page 1)

explanation just before press time; a San Francisco talk show producer called me at home to arrange an interview, then called the publisher in New York to cancel; a Seattle talk show producer called, then begged off due to "a full schedule." And a dinner party at the home of a leading Seattle newspaper editor ended prematurely in a shouting match after the host, having just returned from an all-expense-paid trip to Israel, failed to convince his guests that his executive decision not to allow a review of *Assault on the Liberty* to be printed in his newspaper was fair, unbiased, and in the best interest of a free press.

Time, Newsweek, U.S. News and World Report, The New Yorker, New York Review of Books, and most of the other important national news and book review media pretended that *Assault on the Liberty* had not been written. Jack Anderson, that fearless syndicated exposer of wrongdoing and chicanery who had announced flatly in 1967 that the action was planned in advance, could find no room in 1980 for stories unflattering to Israel.

But many reviews did find their way into print, and almost every one was a rave. Among the first published reviews was the widely-read *Hartford Courant* which called *Assault* "a balance between *The Cruel Sea* and *Mister Roberts*; the most important book you'll read this year." *People* magazine did a two page spread on the book. *U.S. Naval Institute Proceedings* picked *Assault* as a book selection and eventually honored it as a "Notable Naval Book" and "the most important naval book of 1980." *The Washington Post* finally reversed itself, published a review which said *Assault* "reads like a thriller. . . the writing is first class," ran two news stories on the subject, and gave the book its highest rating, "Choice". Even the independent Jewish press published a number of favorable reviews which called the book "in the best traditions of quiet investigative journalism."

Media Receptive

For the next few months interest remained high. I did scores of radio interviews and talk shows, including two hours with Larry King on his large national network and about seven hours on Washington, D.C., stations alone—none of which was paid for by the publisher because, Random House told me, they could see no profit resulting from the publicity.

I did a television spot in the nation's capital opposite an Israeli journalist. I gave an interview for UPI Audio which was broadcast over 2,200 radio stations in four segments, and an interview which, along with remarks by Senator Adlai Stevenson, went out on the UPI news wire. (Senator Stevenson said in the interview that the *Liberty* matter was not given more attention in the Congress "because Congressmen feel intimidated by a powerful Israeli lobby which takes its orders from an extremist group within Israel." Unfortunately, those remarks seemed to guarantee their limited publication. The story got almost no play, and many newspapers that did run it, pulled it from their pages in mid press run.) And the book won favorable endorsements from former chiefs of naval operations Admirals Arleigh Burke and Thomas Moorer, from Senators Barry Goldwater and Adlai Stevenson, from former Senators J.W. Fulbright and James Abourezk, and from Pulitzer Prize-winning author Seymour Hersh among many others, while receiving highly laudatory reviews in all the official and semi-official military journals such as *Shipmate, Seapower, Military Review, Proceedings, The Retired Officer*, and *Naval War College Review*.

One would expect that such favorable comment along with extensive national publicity would sell books. Instead, my editor advised gloomily in late summer that sales were "scary". Each week more books were being returned from bookstores than were being ordered!

Campaign to Discredit

By then a pattern was becoming clear and I was beginning to see some evidence that at least some of the "lack of interest" in this book was apparently the result of an organized campaign. Paperback publishers were not only indifferent, but two notes that reached me from leading paperback editors were downright hostile. And a friend wrote to tell me privately that "a fairly serious undercover campaign in New York and Washington, D.C., is underway to discredit the book."

Soon I noticed that the arguments against the book appearing time and time again, particularly where there were connections with the Israeli Embassy. For instance, on the Panorama show in Washington, D.C., after I had described Israeli reconnaissance aircraft that I had personally seen flying at masthead level directly over our ship, Israeli journalist Ron Ben-Yishai baldly insisted that there were no reconnaissance aircraft at all. An Anti-Defamation League chairman who was allowed to review *Assault* for the *Dallas Morning News* informed his readers that I was "too close to the event to be objective." ADL spokesmen in San Diego, San Francisco, Seattle and elsewhere complained to and through the media that "Ennes's conclusions fly in the face of logic and military facts."

What is remarkable about the campaign against the book is that it is usually conducted behind the scenes, usually directed to editors, station managers, and talk show hosts rather than to the public, and usually contains the same arguments, particularly when funneled through ADL spokesmen. All arguments simply deny the facts in the book and ignore the evidence and documentation, insisting instead that the attack was a case of mistaken identity and that there was no reconnaissance and no identification, even though I have in my possession Israeli documents which admit privately to the United States that there was reconnaissance, that the ship was tracked in the Israeli war room, and that she was correctly identified as to type, name, nationality and mission.

Retail Orders Sabotaged

And the campaign was effective. Most of my mail in 1980 consisted of complaints that the book was not available or that individual shopkeepers often refused to accept orders for it or falsely claimed that it was out of print. Reports from New York and Los Angeles were particularly consistent and

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ASSAULT ON THE LIBERTY

(continued from page 2)

candid: booksellers in those cities routinely told potential buyers that "we will not accept orders for *that* book."

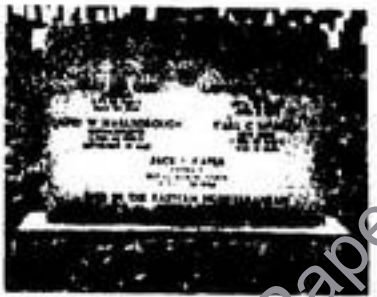
A man in Ohio phoned (he found the author with no difficulty) to say he had spent three days and $70 in long distance calls before finding a store that would accept a special order. A man in Dallas took time to visit 32 bookstores: only two stores displayed *Assault*, while thirty stores admitted that they had received copies from Random House but intended to return them, unsold and undisplayed, because they did not like the topic.

Letter writers from New York, Baltimore and San Francisco wrote to tell me that when, as a last resort, they phoned Random House to place orders they were told by clerks both in New York and at the warehouse in Maryland (on what must have been private sabotage, rather than reflections of corporate policy) that Random House had never published such a book, or had suspended publication.

In Seattle when I asked local booksellers about *Assault on the Liberty* I was told, "We get orders for it constantly, but it must be out of print - our wholesaler can't get it from Random House." Tracing that problem at my request, Random House discovered that a major national wholesale dealer (no doubt due to another private act of sabotage) had failed to forward orders to Random House. Ostensibly, all orders for *Assault on the Liberty* had been "lost." That stoppage was eventually unblocked, but not before orders from hundreds of stores were sidetracked for perhaps eight months. And the problem was not confined to the West Coast: even in Washington, D.C., a major bookseller told me that he could not get the book through his regular supplier for at least four months while demand was high following several important reviews and talkshow appearances, though Random House had an abundance of books on hand at that time.

Even *The Washington Post* may have yielded to pressure. After two book reviews and two news stories about *Assault on the Liberty* within about four weeks, the East Coast book-burning faction inundated the *Post* in a well-organized campaign with hundreds of letters and telephone calls complaining about the attention being paid to this book. According to a *Post* staff member, "it seems that every phone in the building had someone calling to complain about our mention of the book." And a few days later when a Seattle bookseller asked the *Post* to place an ad offering to sell *Assault on the Liberty* by mail, the ad clerk warned: "I don't know if we can accept an ad for that book. There have been a lot of complaints that we should not have reviewed such a controversial book."

Several weeks later, after repeated apologies for unexplained delays and missed publication dates, the *Post* returned the bookseller's check. The ad did not run. This, too, was probably an act of private sabotage rather than a corporate decision by *The Washington Post*, but the result is the same. And although the *Post* mentioned the attack six months later in a typically excellent Christmas Day editorial, they have not mentioned the book since the day their phones rang off the wall.



Grave # 1815, Section M, of Arlington National Cemetery. The final resting place of the five sailors and one marine killed in the Israeli attack on the USS LIBERTY, June 8, 1967. Note the ironic tombstone reference, "Died in the Eastern Mediterranean."

Despite the resistance, however, the book has slowly gained circulation and good reviews, while the pressure has continued. In January, 1981, Dick Estell, the Radio Reader from Michigan State University, read *Assault on the Liberty* in its entirety over the 48 station coast-to-coast radio network - a reading which consumed nine hours of air time on each station over almost a month. Many stations broadcast the readings twice. And Dick Estell soon received a call from an Anti-Defamation League spokesman in New York, not asking about his "book selection policy," while individual station managers received obviously ADL-inspired letters and petitions complaining about the decision to read this book.

Pressure Continues

In Seattle, when two producers on a widely heard talk radio station scheduled me for four talk shows over a period of a few weeks, the local ADL spokesman complained. All four shows were strangely truncated, and the last show, which had been scheduled for three hours, was abruptly cut to about 40 minutes by management at the last moment despite solid listener reaction. (I learned of the change only while enroute to the studio.)

Within the week both hosts were shifted to minor time slots, both producers were discharged, and authority to schedule guests was shifted from individual producers to a single executive producer - who would not accept or return my calls. Coincidental? Perhaps, but it is consistent with the pattern.

When I was invited to a widely heard San Francisco radio talk show, the station received *five hundred* complaining letters even before the show was aired, and during the show the host's life was threatened twice by off-the-air callers claiming to represent the Jewish Defense League and promising to ambush and kill the host as he drove home. He was escorted home by five San Francisco policemen with riot guns, and he promptly abandoned plans for a followup interview.

I had little hope of clearly identifying the source of the campaign against the book until, in December, I received a telephone call from an American newsman in Jerusalem.

(continued on page 6)

James M. Haines, Jr. Research Papers

DIMENSIONS IN THE NEWS

(continued from page 3)

Holmes. Church pastor Donald S. Harrington an extremely vocal Zionist flew home from leave and banned any further reference to the Middle East conflict in the Unitarian minister's scheduled sermons. Anti-Defamation League pundit Arnold Foster was given time on WQXR to answer Booth's charge of "napalm from Nazareth and bombs from Bethlehem."

Today, ten years later, Israel's arms sales top the $1-billion mark. The items include sophisticated war planes (the Kfir is powered by General Electric J-79 jet engines), ground-to-air missiles, missile boats, machine guns and ammunition. Much of this, as has been pointed out by our New Hampshire correspondent, goes to repressive regimes, according to the prestigious Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI). Thirty-five percent of Israeli exports went to South Africa, 29 percent to Argentina, and 6 percent to El Salvador. Israeli arms have constituted 81 percent of that totalitarian regime's arms supply.

- The Vatican has again made it clear it does not believe it to be sufficient to protect "*the right to visit the holy places while leaving Jerusalem a united Jewish city under Jewish rule.*" The Holy See has continuously opposed any unilateral initiative to modify the political "status" of Jerusalem. This had been emphasized in the communique issued following the meeting between Pope John Paul and Saudi Arabian Foreign Minister Prince Saud al-Faisal. The Papal statement also stressed the necessity for maintaining the "independence, territorial integrity and unity of Lebanon." Since that time, things have gone from bad to worse in that beleaguered country. As far as Jerusalem is concerned, we have been told that problem has been placed on a back burner.

- **Millionaire property speculator Knesset member Shumuel Flatto-Sharon, who ran for and was elected to his seat to escape extradition to France where he had been sentenced to five years in prison, has now been sentenced to nine months in prison for election fraud.** He is the first member of the Knesset sentenced on such charges (Israel has had no Abscam). After the First it wanted him for fraud, Flatto-Sharon had been praised by portions of the Israeli press as "a true prophet. Most of our politicians smuggle abroad the money they steal from here. He, at least, took to Israel money taken abroad."

- Expanded agricultural and cattle-breeding cooperation between Egypt and Israel became a reality during the Sinai May meeting between President Sadat and Israel's Ariel Sharon. **We wonder how the Egyptian leader must have felt asking the help of the Israeli hero of the '73 War.** *Sharon had been responsible for the October 1953 massacre of 66 Palestinians in the attacks by Israel's Palestinian Unit 101 on the border village of Kibya and had commanded the 1975 eviction of Bedouin tribes from the Rafah Approaches to make way for Jewish settlements in the Sinai.* While Gush Emunim's Geula Cohen mostly vociferates about it, Sharon has made expansionism a reality. And Sadat incessantly claims to have the best interests of the Palestinians at heart!

ASSAULT ON THE LIBERTY

(concluded from page 3)

The newsman had asked the Israeli government to comment on *Assault on the Liberty*, and the Israeli Foreign Office in Jerusalem had given him a four page "draft" press kit designed to discredit the book. He sent it to me for comment. Voila! Here were the same arguments I had first heard from Israeli journalist Ben-Yishai (after he had been briefed by the Israeli Embassy), and that had been emanating from the Anti-Defamation League ever since: "The attack was a tragic mistake; Liberty was thought to be Egyptian, Israel would not have wasted torpedo boats on an attack that could easily have been handled from the air; Egypt's conclusions fly in the face of logic and the military facts; the history of war is full of incredible incidents involving mistaken identity; Ennes allows his rancor to override objective analysis."

Clearly the campaign to discredit and to frustrate sales of *Assault on the Liberty* is being conducted directly from Jerusalem through this key ADL document.

Adventure, Drama and Expose

Unfortunately, the Israeli spokesmen miss the point of the book. This book, for all it may say that Israel may not want known, is not an attack on Israel. While I cannot be pleased to have been hospitalized for a year by Israeli bullets or to have seen my shipmates die in an Israeli attack, the main thrust of the book is to tell a readable story of adventure and drama and to expose a coverup which has blinded our leaders to the American military mistakes that led to the disaster.

As a result of the coverup, an enormous failure of military command, control and communications has never been exposed or fully acknowledged, and because it was not acknowledged we made many of the same mistakes again seven months later when the USS *Pueblo* was captured under very similar circumstances. Probably we are still vulnerable to the same failures today. But because Israel is offended by this story, and because Israel is widely, passionately, and expensively supported in our country, and apparently, as Adlai Stevenson said, because many of our elected representatives feel intimidated by the Israeli lobby, our leaders prefer to pretend that the attack did not happen.

By blinding ourselves to history, we condemn ourselves to repeat it.

Fortunately, this is a story that generates a great deal of interest. Despite the clear and very strong resistance, demand for the book is still increasing more than a year after it was published. More retail as well as wholesale dealers stock the book each month. And in the past several weeks Random House has ordered more printings. As this is written a fourth printing is in distribution. The future looks bright.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

James Ennes retired from the Navy in 1978 as a lieutenant commander after twenty-seven years of enlisted and commissioned service. He now lives and writes in the Pacific Northwest. And he continues to battle his way onto television and radio talk shows.

ISRAEL BOMBS IRAQI REACTOR: SPECIAL JULY ISSUE

James M. Ennes, Jr. Research Papers

January 5, 1981

Anthony S. Tsang
President and General Manager
KQED, Inc.
500 Eighth Street
San Francisco, Calif. 94103

Mr. Tsang:

I write to ask who and what determines the selection of books from which Dick Cavett reads during the half hour set aside for Book Time. The appended letter to the Editor of the S.F. Chronicle will convey why I ask.

It is one thing for Mr. Lueland to be seeking publicity on every medium he can. His book, by his own admission, has not been sold[illegible] and...yes indeed...he is blaming the Jews for its failure.

Again for people like Mr. Mendi and associates, there is a need for exposure on radio and other media. The survival of their lifestyle as the permanently-traveling-road-show-propagandists for the Arabs demands a biased presentation of Israel and her people. Almost too significant to escape notice has been their 1980 determination to focus part of their diatribe against Israel by resurrecting - thirteen years after the event - the bombing of the LIBERTY. They carefully tiptoe around the actual date, preferring to let ambiguity convey the impression that bombing U.S. naval vessels is part of present-day Israeli policy.

What is KQED's reason for commercially airing L'affaire LIBERTY?

It is one thing to devote half of a full hour to a book review. It is quite another to dedicate one hour, spanning an entire month, to reading from the recollections of a naval officer who was certainly - and justifiably - traumatized by his experience aboard the LIBERTY, but who could never expect to publish a book describing the true events which led to that trauma, without bringing upon himself the full wrath of naval intelligence.

KQED's Book [illegible] this January will amount to the exhumation of a thirteen-year old [illegible] for a single purpose...repetition of racist canards and thus the fueling of anti-Israel sentiment.

Since there is another and more accurate version of the event - Israel's - it, too, deserves to be heard. Under the fairness doctrine, sufficient air time should now be given by you for presentation of that view. Please see that this takes place.

In expectation,

S.E. Shomer

S.E. Shomer
433 Perkins St. - #207
Oakland, Calif. 94610

cc. - JCRC, SF/Oakland
- Consulate General of Israel/SF
- Israel Representative to the United Nations

James M. Ennes, Jr. Research Papers

WE THE UNDERSIGNED, CONCERNED CITIZENS OF THE EAST BAY, HAVE JUST LEARNED THAT KQED PLANS TO DEVOTE TWENTY HALF-HOUR TIME SLOTS TO THE AIRING OF JAMES M. ENNES, JR.'S BOOK 'ASSAULT ON THE LIBERTY.'

THAT IMPLIES THE READING FROM COVER TO COVER OF A HIGHLY SUBJECTIVE VERSION OF AN EVENT, A VERSION WHICH COULD NOT WITHSTAND THE LIGHT OF INQUIRY. SINCE NO PROVISION IS MADE BY YOUR STATION FOR REBUTTAL OF ANY OF MR. ENNES' CLAIMS, YOU HAVE PLACED YOURSELF IN A POSITION WHERE YOU ARE COMPLICIT IN A LIE, AND A BLATANT LIE AT THAT! IT IS AS IF YOU GIVE TACIT ASSENT TO MR. EVELAND'S COMMENT THAT 'ISRAEL DELIBERATELY MURDERED AMERICAN NAVY PERSONNEL.' UNLESS YOU CHOOSE TO REMAIN IN THAT UNTENABLE POSITION WE URGE THAT YOU ARRANGE FOR EQUAL OPPORTUNITY TO PRESENT ISRAEL'S VERSION OF THE TRUTH!

Joseph Lubovitz
1959 El Dorado
Berkeley

Jimmy Epstein
875 Creston RD
Berkeley

[illegible] Monkovitz
1285 Marking Ave
Berkeley

[illegible]
675 [illegible]

[illegible]
[illegible]
Oakland

[illegible]
Susan Dobrickman
63 Alamo
Berkeley, Ca 94708

Anson Manes
1320 Bay View Place, Berkeley 94707

[illegible]
1733 Channingway
Berkeley

[illegible]
Berkeley, Calif.

[illegible]
[illegible]
Berkeley

Susan Mazzeo
Berkeley Ca.

Ruth Wittman
1315 Josephine St.
Berk. Ca.

[illegible]
[illegible] Arlington
Berkeley

Joel Bernhoff
1364 Francisco
Berk. Ca.

Norm Winer
82 Estates Dr.
Orinda

E. M. Nelly [illegible]
617 Burton D.
Arlington Ca. 94705

[illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible] 94702

James M. Ennes, Jr. Research Papers

MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY

INSTRUCTIONAL AND PUBLIC TELEVISION — EAST LANSING — MICHIGAN | 48824

February 16, 1981

Mr. James M. Ennes, Jr.
[redacted]

Dear Jim:

Every time I received a letter about my reading of your book, I winced over the thought of your troubles getting the book on the bookshelves. I hope it wasn't a complete washout, however, and that listeners were patient enough to await the shipments.

Other than the discouraging letter from the San Francisco [illegible] which I sent to you), I received nothing but platitudes for selecting your book. One comment from Green Valley, Arizona made it all worth while: "Bless you, you've got guts. May your tribe increase." I hope you received some positive comments, too.

Enclosed you will find cassette copies of my reading of ASSAULT. Normally, I would not ask for reimbursement, but the budget situation of this university and this station is so deplorable that I am going to accept your offer to buy these cassettes. The tapes plus duplication were $1.32 each, for a total of $30.51. Please make the check out to Michigan State University and send it to me.

I am sending a copy of this letter to Mr. Freedman as I wish him to know that I have completed the terms of our agreement and have erased the master tapes.

It was nice working with you, Jim. I had hoped to be in Seattle later this Spring but, apparently, their budget situation is not much better than ours and I have been informed that there will be no Seattle trip for me this year. When I am able to make it out there, I certainly want to meet you.

Sincerely,

Dick Estell
Book Review
Public Radio Network

/ks

cc: Mr. Robert A. Freedman

James M. Ennes, Jr. Research Papers

James M. Ennes, Jr. Research Papers

James M. Ennes, Jr. Research Papers

James M. Ennes, Jr. Research Papers

DRAFT

James M. Ennes Jr.'s book ASSAULT ON THE LIBERTY attempts to prove that the Israeli attack on the American intelligence-gathering ship, the USS Liberty on June 8, 1967 during the Six Day War was a deliberate, premeditated attack on an American ship by Israel. Furthermore, he charges Israel and the United States with a cover-up conspiracy to keep the facts hidden.

In reality, Ennes's conclusions fly in the face of logic and the military facts. The attack on the USS Liberty occurred because it was mistakenly believed to be an Egyptian war ship located in the war zone during the height of hostilities. The following should make this clear.

Why should Israel deliberately attack an American ship and risk a dispute with the United States whose friendship is the cornerstone of Israel's foreign policy? Several hypotheses have previously been suggested by proponents of the deliberate attack theory.

An article published in US Naval Institute Proceedings by Richard Smith presented the thesis that the attack took place because Israel was trying to delay knowledge of its victories from reaching the superpowers.

This concept was shown to be absurd since Israel's victories were already general knowledge by June 8. Several articles had appeared in the American press and on June 7, Chief of Staff Yitzhak Rabin had announced that "the Egyptians are defeated...The whole area is in our hands."

Realizing the weakness of Smith's argument, Ennes has simply changed venue and blames the attack on Israeli desire to keep secret the forthcoming attack on the Golan Heights lest United States pressure prevent it.

Since the Liberty was patrolling off the Sinai coast near El Arish, the Smith thesis at least had the credibility of relating to the same theater of war, the Egyptian front. Ennes's conclusion defies logic; why should Israel attack an American spy ship located in Sinai waters because of a future event which was to occur far away

James M. Ennes, Jr. Research Papers

in Syria? While Israel was certainly concerened with information the Russians and Syrians were picking up, it is unbelievable that Israel would risk the friendship of the United States at a critical time for what would have been a pointless attack. The Liberty was simply not in a position to obtain vital information about the Golan while sailing off El Arish.

Even more telling, however, are the military facts themselves. If the attack on the Liberty was premeditated and planned, as Ennes claims, then Israeli planes would have been loaded with heavy bombs used to sink ships. The Israeli planes were not, however, armed with heavy bombs but were equipped with weapons used to assist ground troops, the action in which they were engaged at the time prior to the Liberty attack.

The Liberty was also attacked by torpedo boats. In a premeditated, planned attack, Israel would not have wasted torpedo boats on an attack which could easily have been handled from the air.

What actually occurred on June 8 was a tragic mistake. The author gives the impression that the Liberty was easy to recognize and could not have been mistaken for any other ship. If more than 12 years ago, the Israelis had the same 20/20 hindsight as Ennes and the time to leisurely contemplate matters, the attack could not have taken place. However, as those who have been in battle know, under the stress of battle conditions, snap decisions must be made with the best available data. The history of war, let alone naval war, is full of incredible incidents involving mistaken identity that under normal peaceful conditions would never have occurred. In Vietnam the USA attacked an Australian destroyer and in 1974 we have the spectacle of a Turkish war plane sinking a Turkish destroyer during the invasion of Cyprus.

Events that led up to the attack on the Liberty have been described in a report issued by the Israel Court of Inquiry set up to investigate the attack and determine what took place.

James M. Ennes, Jr. Research Papers

On the morning of the attack, Israeli troops stationed at El Arish reported to Army HQ in Israel that they were being fired upon from the sea. It later turned out that the explosions which caused the report were due to other causes, but in response to this report the Israeli Navy and Air Force were instructed to seek out a ship that might be responsible for, what was thought at the time, the shelling of El Arish.

The Liberty was travelling in a war zone 12 miles off the coast near El Arish, an area where tank battles larger than those of World War 2 were taking place. On June 5 Egypt had declared the area to be dangerous for shipping and had in fact stated that it considered the war zone to extend 40-60 miles off the coast and that this area should be avoided by shipping. Since this was an area that merchant shipping had avoided and Israel had not been told that the Liberty was operating there, it is not too surprising that when the Israelis sighted an obvious naval ship in warship gray, apparently heading for Port Said, they concluded that it was an Egyptian ship and attacked.

To bolster his case, Ennes places great emphasis on the fact that the American flag was flying from the Liberty. While a flag is undoubtedly clearly visible to the men on deck of a ship, it is not necessarily visible from the air, and certainly not easily identifiable.

Ennes writes about a report that Israeli jets had radioed the sighting of an American ship. He gives no source for the report or any details. In fact, no such radio message was sent or received.

[DO WE KNOW ANYTHING ABOUT THIS?]

Ennes claims that Israel sent many low level reconnaissance flights including one which came within 200 feet of the ship. Thus he concludes Israel must have been aware of the identity of the ship. His claim is disputed by the Commander of the Liberty William McGonagle in his testimony to the Court of Inquiry. [WHAT IS OUR ANSWER TO ENNES'S CLAIM?]

James M. Ennes, Jr. Research Papers

In an attempt to make the Israeli attack seem more bloodthirsty, Ennes describes the appearance of 2 Israeli troop laden helicopters apparently sent to finish off the survivors. While there is no mystery regarding the arrival of the two Israeli helicopters, what is a mystery is how the author knows that they were carrying troops and were not there for rescue. The truth of the matter is that as soon as Israel Defense Forces headquarters realized that a mistake had been made the torpedo boats offered their assistance. two helicopters were sent with medical aid and a tugboat was ordered out to Ashdod to help the Liberty. It should also be mentioned that the Prime Minister of Israel sent a personal message of sympathy to President Johnson after the incident.

It is understandable that a person who was wounded, as Ennes was, and has seen some of his shipmates killed, would imagine the worst motivation on the part of the attackers, but Mr. Ennes allows his very evident rancor and subjectivity to override objective analysis.

The reason he attributes to Israel for staging a premeditated attack on an American ship is illogical and unrealistic, while the military facts clearly show that the attack could not have been premeditated. The attack on the Liberty was a case of mistaken identity, and when the mist ake was noticed all practical steps were taken to assist the ship and compensate the wounded.

James M. Ennes, Jr. Research Papers

Israeli and U.S. interests linked in i

By Scott M. Feigelstein

On June 22, 1982, Max Morris' column appeared that the United States interests and Israel's interest in the Middle East are diametrically opposed. A close inspection of the facts reveal the contrary to be true.

It was most unfortunate that Morris saw fit to ascribe dark intentions to the government of Israel for the tragic USS Liberty affair during the 1967 Middle East War. He stated that there is clear evidence that Israel knew that the Liberty was a U.S. Navy ship.

In fact, Israel did not recognize the ship for American until after it began the attack, and upon recognition, immediately halted the operation. What took place was the following. On the third day of the war, Israeli military headquarters received a report from ground troops that Israeli positions were being shelled from the sea. Two Mirage jets were then diverted from their ground support of Israeli troops in the Sinai to check out from where the shelling was coming. The jets, which were neither reconnaissance planes nor heavy bombers, spotted a ship off the coast. By the ship's color, antennae and gave the pilots concluded that it was a U.S. Quite naturally, they assumed the ship

Scott M. Feigelstein is A[illegible] Director of the Florida Regional C[illegible] of the Anti-Defamation League of B[illegible]th.

Egyptian since all neutral shipping had supposedly left the area at the beginning of the war and since there was no reason to expect the presence of any non-belligerent ship in the middle of the war zone.

These Mirage jets, furthermore, were flying high and at fast speeds and therefore, not unusual at all that they did not note the flag the Liberty was flying. Having identified the ship as an enemy, the jets [illegible]. Most significantly, the attack [illegible] by strafing equipment which is exactly what these ground support planes carried. Had the attack been premeditated, as Morris suggests, the Israelis would have sent heavy bombers and wiped out the ship immediately (remember that the Israeli air force had destroyed the entire Egyptian and most of the Syrian and Iraqi air forces in hours). The fact that the Liberty was strafed indicates that the attack, as Israel said, a spontaneous attack carried out in response to a report of an Israeli [illegible] shelling on Israeli positions.

Finally, as to motive, Morris' column suggests that Israel attacked the intelligence ship to hide its upcoming attack on the Golan Heights to preclude the possibility of U.S. diplomatic interference. Actually, there are many records of Israeli Cabinet d[illegible]ns concerning the move against Syria. Several members of the Cabinet were indeed hesitant. But they were concerned about what the Soviet Union would do; at no point were Israeli leaders fearful of a negative American reac[illegible]

A reply

tion. Indeed, Israel was counting on the U.S. to help prevent any Soviet action. Moreover, it is mind-boggling to assume that Israel would jeopardize its relationship with its main ally for such a purpose.

Again, the attack was a tragic mistake. As soon as the strafing jets got close enough to the vessel and realized it was American, they stopped the attack immediately. Israel then offered full assistance to the crippled vessel.

Since the tragedy, [illegible] Israeli and American naval courts of inquiry have found no evidence to suggest that it was other than an accident. The tragedy was the result of blunders on both sides. Washington, at the outset of the war, had instructed the Sixth Fleet to move its vessels away from the Israeli coastline, but due to a bureaucratic mistake, the order failed to reach the Liberty. And Israel, in the midst of the major war, went searching for a ship reportedly shelling its troops, saw the vessel, assumed it was the ship and started fighting.

Israel's actions have consistently served Western and, in particular, U.S. interests and the cause of peace in the Middle East.

By dealing a crippling blow to the PLO at its very nerve center, its military and political

James M. Ennes Jr. Research Papers

nvasion of Lebanon

strongholds in Lebanon, Israel has acted not only for its own security but for that of other democratic peoples who have been harassed by terrorism. The PLO has been the major force in the international terrorist network, acting as the principal arms supplier and providing training grounds for the gangs of thugs and assassins who have threatened many Western nations. Israel's action is a clear signal that terror cannot be conducted with impunity.

The tragedy of any war is that civilians often bear the burden and brunt of casualties. Unfortunately, Lebanon is no exception.

The Israeli army has taken great efforts to keep such casualties to a minimum. The terrorists have used heavily populated areas — such as refugee camps and towns in Lebanon — as bases of operation. Beirut, itself, has has become an international terror center where the PLO and Syrian-backed organizations set up their headquarters in downtown districts. Thus, civilians have been used as human shields that the terrorists believed would afford them immunity from attack.

Since the outbreak of the Lebanese Civil War in 1975, a conflagration precipitated by the PLO presence, massive and wanton attacks have been launched on heavily populated centers by all sides, and especially the Syrians. Over 100,000 people were killed in the fighting. But there has been virtually no outcry from the international community, which is so quick to condemn Israel.

Israel's policy has been to refrain from hitting terrorist targets in populous areas. But the PLO provocations forced Israel to attack the terrorists at their centers, rather than wait for them to penetrate Israel. Still, Israel has tried, whenever possible, to avoid shedding innocent blood — by issuing warnings prior to attack and by firing only on the target areas.

As the Israeli army advanced into Lebanon, it found a trail of destruction and [illegible] in the wake of retreating PLO forces. [illegible] and fields had been destroyed by the terrorists, who had killed the local [illegible] or driven them from their homes.

During the fighting, the Israeli army has adopted a careful and [illegible] policy toward the Lebanese civilian population. Instructions were issued from the high command warning against wanton destruction of civilian life or property. Prior to the Israeli assault on PLO [illegible] in urban centers, Israeli aircraft [illegible] leaflets notifying non-[illegible] to gather so as not to be caught [illegible] fighting.

Following the Israeli blow against the PLO and the setback to Soviet influence in the region, the U.S. has an opportunity to reassert itself in the Middle East. Israel's action could lay the groundwork for the restoration of Western and, particularly, U.S. influence throughout the Middle East and with it, a widening of the peace process.

James M. Ernest Jr. Research Papers

Writer of USS Liberty book replies to critics

For the truth about Israel's attack on the USS Liberty [in 1967] we must look beyond statements by spokesmen for the Anti-Defamation League.

The Anti-Defamation League, after all, serves as a spokesman for the state of Israel. Its mission is to give the best possible face to whatever Israel may choose to do. It is not an objective source of information.

I was officer-of-the-deck of the USS Liberty on the day of the attack. My book on the subject, *Assault on the Liberty* (Random House), is a product of my first-hand experience on the ship's bridge, supported by many years of additional research and thousands of pages of documentation.

The attack on our ship was certainly deliberate, and arguments to the contrary are readily disproven. Even [then Secretary of State] Dean Rusk, who presided unwillingly over much of the cover-up, calls the attack "a genuine outrage." Retired Adm. Thomas Moorer says, "even a rag tag navy could not make that mistake."

Similar language [as used by the ADL] appears again and again because most such statements are drawn from material provided by the Israeli Foreign Office in Jerusalem and disseminated by the American-Israel Public Affairs Committee (the Israeli lobby) in Washington, D.C. The statements are incredible nonsense.

JAMES M. ENNES JR.
Woodinville, Wash.

7-23-82 Times-Union, Rochester, N.Y.

James M. Ennes, Jr. Research Papers

The Private War of James Ennes

Fifteen years after 'friendly' forces attacked his ship and killed 34 men, one officer is still trying to tell the true story

by Bruce Williams



Above: James Ennes on the stoop of his suburban Seattle home where he wrote his book on the *Liberty*.

James M. Ennes, Jr. Research Papers



[illegible] in 1964 and went to patrol along the African coast.

The [illegible] classified the *Liberty* and her sister ships as "research vessels." According to the official description, these converted freighters were deployed to study electromagnetic wave propagation (radio transmission). Of course, the Department of Defense was not really interested in the theory of electromagnetism; it wanted to eave-drop on other countries' military conversations. Ships such as the *Liberty* were ideal for that mission because they could hold the bulky, sophisticated equipment and accommodate the personnel required during extended deployments to remote areas.

The *Liberty*'s 16 officers, 275 enlisted men, and three civilian technicians from the supersecret National Defense Agency were busy "[illegible] electromagnetic wave propagation" along Africa's Ivory Coast when the already simmering Middle East threatened to boil over in the summer of 1967. Egypt and Jordan had massed troops against Israel and the outnumbered Jewish state was making occasional forays into Syria with its jets. Pentagon officials grew anxious about the threat of war, and despite objections from some experts who worried that the *Liberty* would be extremely vulnerable should shooting start, they ordered Captain McGonagle to make his best speed for Rota, Spain, to take on supplies, then continue to an operating area in the eastern Mediterranean Sea. Finally, on June 8, 1967, the *Liberty* arrived on

Above: *After the attack, the crew of Liberty, limped into Malta with 821 twelve holes, ladders cooked and twisted by napalm, and a 40 foot hole where a torpedo struck her starboard side.*

James M. Ennes, Jr. Research Papers

station a dozen miles off the coast of the Gaza Strip. She was alone and, except for four .50-caliber machine guns, defenseless.

The crew was uneasy. What would later be called the Six-Day War had begun on June 5. Only three days into the conflict Israel had already methodically destroyed most of the Arab air forces on the ground. Israeli intelligence was so good that Israeli Defense Force fighters strafed only real airplanes and ignored dummy aircraft scattered on Egypt's airfields to confuse them. Egypt kept her fleet of patrol boats safely in port lest they be destroyed by the equally effective Israeli navy. But the fighting was far from over and Captain McGonagle took no chances. He ordered men to stay at the gun tubs with ammunition at the ready; he scheduled extra drills to ensure that the crew could respond quickly to an attack and repair damage.

When armed jets and a photo reconnaissance plane appeared on the morning of June 8, McGonagle seemed reassured. Although he could not be certain at first which country the aircraft came from, their close and frequent flights around the *Liberty* seemed to indicate that at least some of the belligerents knew she was an American ship operating in international waters. The presence of off-duty sailors sunbathing on deck, McGonagle reasoned, affirmed her peaceful character. Only once, when a propeller-driven reconnaissance plane made an extremely low pass over the *Liberty*, did McGonagle seem alarmed. But it passed harmlessly overhead, revealing its Israeli markings. Intercepts monitoring the *Liberty*'s many radios overheard the plane's pilot informing Israeli headquarters that the ship was American, according to Ennes. McGonagle relaxed and told Ennes, who was then a Navy lieutenant on duty as officer of the deck, that during the afternoon the *Liberty* could expect a visit from patrol boats which would probably want to take a closer look at her.

The patrol did appear as McGonagle had predicted. But it did not come merely to look at the *Liberty*. Preceded by jets armed with rockets, cannons, napalm and machine guns, three motor torpedo boats approached the ship in attack formation. Ennes remembers the beginning of the assault.

Searing heat and terrible noise came suddenly from everywhere. The air filled with hot metal as a geometric pattern of orange flashes opened holes in the heavy deck plating. An explosion tossed our gunners high into the air – spinning, broken, like rag dolls. A solid blast of force threw me against a railing. My arm held me up while the attacker passed overhead, followed by a loud swoosh, then silence. On one leg, I hopped down the ladder, lurched across the open area and fell heavily on the pilothouse deck just as hell's own jackhammers pounded our steel plating for the second time. With incredible noise the aircraft rockets poked eight-inch holes in the ship; like fire-breathing creatures, they groped blindly for the men inside.

I watched Captain McGonagle standing alone on the starboard wing of the bridge as the whole world suddenly caught fire. The deck below him, stanchions around him, even the overhead above him burned. The entire superstructure of the ship burst into a wall of flame from the main deck to the open bridge four levels above. All burned with the peculiar fury of warfare while Old Shep [the captain], seemingly impervious to the man-made flame and looking strangely like Satan himself, stepped calmly through the fire to order: "Fire, fire, starboard side, oh-three level. Sound the fire alarm."

While the attack continued, one of the *Liberty*'s radio operators transmitted an appeal for help. His message reached the aircraft carrier *Saratoga*, code-named "Schematic." The *Liberty* was known as "Rockstar."

"Rockstar, this is Schematic," said the Saratoga operator. "Say again. You are garbled."

After several transmissions Saratoga acknowledged receipt of the message. The Navy uses a system of authentication codes to verify the identity of stations and to protect against sham messages.

"Authenticate Whiskey Sierra," demanded Saratoga.

"Authentication is Oscar Quebec," answered [Liberty's radioman] promptly, after consulting a list at his elbow.

Several minutes later, having heard nothing from Saratoga, the Liberty operator renewed his call for help.

"Schematic, this is Rockstar. We are still under attack by unidentified jet aircraft and require immediate assistance."

"Roger, Rockstar," said Saratoga. "We are forwarding your message." Then Saratoga added, quite unnecessarily and almost as an afterthought, "Authenticate Oscar Delta."

The authentication list now lay on the deck a few feet away. Someone had destroyed it along with the unneeded classified material. Frustrated and angry, the operator held the button open on his microphone and shouted, "Listen to the goddamned rockets, you son of a bitch."

"Roger, Rockstar, we still accept that," came the reply.

Scarcely had the jets broken off their strafing runs when the torpedo boats closed towards the *Liberty* from her starboard quarter and forward bow. Five "fish." One passed behind the *Liberty*; two more passed harmlessly, unseen by *Liberty* crewmen; another whirled beneath her bow. One struck her directly amidships, the explosion lifting the helicopter onboard and the radio signals the *Liberty* transmitted.

Lieutenant Commander [David] Lewis was transfixed by a slow-motion scene that few men have lived to describe. As he watched, the seaward bulkhead bulged toward him; the light green standard Navy interior paint crackled into bright flame, then became black ash along with hundreds of decorative pinups; the now-bare steel beneath turned red with heat, then white. Blackened paint particles flew across the room as the bulkhead dissolved to admit the sea.

With a great crunch, flesh and steel were compressed into a distant corner as the blast hurled men and equipment the width of the ship. Steel walls vanished to make large rooms of smaller ones. Typewriters and staple machines moved with such force that some continued through the ship's outer side and into the sea beyond. In an instant, the torpedo had killed 25 men.

The *Liberty* rolled sleepily as the "re-watch" compartment flooded; then she settled at a nine-degree starboard list. The three Israeli torpedo boats circled their wounded prey and fired their machine guns at her waterline and across her deck. Bullets punctured fire hoses and life rafts and sent men scurrying for cover. And still the *Liberty*'s pleas for help 9 – the aircraft carriers of the U.S. Sixth Fleet produced no results. Captain James Kisiel, a Navy pilot who led a flight of A-4 Skyhawks, remembers only that he was ordered to return after flying about halfway to the *Liberty*. The reason for the recall remains unclear.

More than 16 hours after the air attack, *Liberty* rendezvoused with two Sixth Fleet destroyers; a fleet tug arrived later to escort the crippled ship to Malta. Her hull was punctured with 821 rocket and shell holes; napalm had scorched her paint and cooked steel ladders, leaving them twisted and bowed like hardened taffy; the torpedo had

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blasted a 40-foot gap in her starboard side. The Israeli jet pilots who initiated the assault insisted they were among the world's best, close-support fliers, shooting away nearly all the *Liberty*'s numerous antennae.

While the *Liberty* lay dead in the water, Israeli torpedo boats moved in and Israeli ground troops set about explaining the attack. Within hours, they were seeking the truth but they handled their devilish task in such a way as to withstand tough handling from the press or opposite to the harsh climate of public opinion. The report of the Navy's official court of inquiry was classified top secret. The Pentagon forbade *Liberty* survivors to speak openly about the incident, even to their families.

The public was told that Israel had admitted making a tragic mistake. The Israeli forces had confused the *Liberty* with the *El Quseir*, a decrepit Egyptian freighter designed to carry cargo and between 12 passengers. The *El Quseir* was 250 miles away in port in Alexandria at the time of the attack. According to this official version, the air attack lasted only five or six minutes, ended in the public chronology the whole episode transpired in a little more than 30 minutes. Israel's ground attack lasted one and a half hours. Neither the United States nor Israel mentioned napalm or the repeated machine gun assaults from the torpedo boats. The Navy ignored the official ship's logs and affidavits from *Liberty* crewmen including Lucas, which affirmed that the *Liberty* had been flying her flag on a breeze strong enough to keep it extended; instead the Navy reported publicly that the flag could not be seen by the Israelis because it was being kept at the mast on a modified Jackstaff. But Lucas and other crewmembers knew better. As soon as the attack began they considered the official version of the incident to be as full of holes as the *Liberty*'s riddled hull.

Ennes, who remained behind the incident for years while preparing this book, does not think the Israeli attack was a case of mistaken identity. He says that he believes the *Liberty* was attacked because Israel wanted to silence a "spy ship" that had spied while secret negotiations were underway [illegible] and even a ship belonging to the [illegible] Ennes offered this scenario to support his theory.

When the *Liberty* arrived on June 8, [illegible] Israeli [illegible] moved troops near Lake Tiberias in preparation for an invasion of Syria.

continued on page 50

After Fifteen Years, Together Again

On a Saturday morning last June, more than 100 men gathered around a grave at Arlington National Cemetery near Washington, D.C. While a Navy chaplain read a eulogy over the grave of the dead sailor, a rain began to fall, lightly at first and then heavily. But not a man moved. A few wept openly, their tears hidden by raindrops. When the eulogy was over, every man gathered there moved on to another grave — and another, until 34 sailors had been remembered with flowers and a tribute.

The men who came to Arlington that morning were survivors of an attack on the USS *Liberty*, a United States intelligence-gathering ship, by Israeli forces in the Mediterranean in 1967. The men they had come to remember were some of the 34 *Liberty* crewmen who were killed in the attack. But the *Liberty* survivors were not in Washington just to honor their fallen comrades. They came, on the 15-year anniversary of the incident, to attract attention to it, to try to get answers to why it happened, to penetrate what they see as a cover-up by both American and Israeli governments. They talked to the press, they talked to one another, they talked to former high-level military men agreed with them that the assault on the *Liberty* had been no accident.

On that rainy morning in Arlington, the survivors gathered to mourn a grave containing the remains of one of their comrades, and they discussed the most recent cover-up that they believe was in the engraving on the headstone. Lost in the Eastern Mediterranean, the crew read, as though the men had been torn by sharks. "That worthy is the kind of thing we're talking about," said Don Blalock, a spokesman for the group. "It's part of the cover-up, part of the effort to give the *Liberty* affair the lowest possible profile." But the survivors' presence made a difference. The Veterans Administration has promised to replace the stone with one reading "Killed — USS *Liberty* — 8 June 1967."

For many of the *Liberty* survivors, the reunion last summer in Washington was an emotional one. They were together again for the first time in 15 years: they wept, they joked and laughed, and felt better and stronger because of it. "I feel like I've carried a heavy weight for all these years," said one crewmember, "and now it's gone."

Liberty survivor Carl Lamb's first heard of the reunion on an Orlando, Florida, radio station. "I wouldn't miss this for anything," he said, arriving sleepless after an all-night drive. Ron Grunski drove from Modesto, California. Tom Smith flew from Vancouver, Washington. Others came from Alaska, Saudi Arabia, Virginia. "Remember the *Liberty*" buttons on their lapels, they greeted one another in the hotel lobby, talked to newspaper reporters and gave television interviews. They told stories they had previously been forbidden to tell. "Yes, it was deliberate," they told the press. "Israel's excuse doesn't make sense." "I waved to the pilots and they waved back. They can't tell me now that they didn't see our flag."

The group was addressed one evening by retired chairman of the joint chiefs of staff Admiral Thomas H. Moorer. Moorer opened his talk by remarking, "I am no longer trying to get promoted, appointed or elected. Once again I inherit the rights guaranteed under the First Amendment." He brought the group to its feet when he said that he did not consider the *Liberty* attack to be a mistake, and that the truth about the matter had been withheld from the American people by their own government. He berated the government for its treatment of the story, while he praised the *Liberty* crew. "You didn't have a chance," he said, "but you survived because you have a heart. I am humble in your presence."

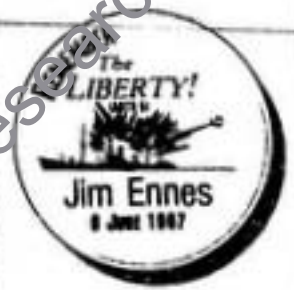
Philip Geyelin, a Pulitzer Prize-winning columnist, told the group that he seldom agrees with Moorer on anything, but that he does agree completely with Moorer on the *Liberty* issue. He went on to ask, "Why does the U.S. not admit that Israel's explanation is simply not believable? Our government effectively signed on to the Israeli line. The American cover-up is in many ways more effective than the Israeli cover-up."

One crewman asked Moorer why *Liberty* Captain William L. McGonagle's Medal of Honor was presented in a quiet ceremony without fanfare. Moorer replied that Captain McGonagle's Medal of Honor is the only one in at least 20 years to have been presented outside of the White House, and that he believes the low-key presentation was another deliberate attempt by our government to play down the *Liberty* story.

The reunion concluded with a meeting of the *Liberty* crew. The men vowed to try to bring the *Liberty* story into the public consciousness. Only by lifting the veil of secrecy from this story, the group agreed, can the nation avoid seeing history repeat itself — as it did in 1968 when the USS *Pueblo* was captured by North Korea under similar circumstances.

James Ennes

(Ennes is the author of *Assault on the Liberty* [Random House], and was an officer on the bridge of the *Liberty* when the ship was attacked.)



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(Continued from page 32)

Syria and the capture of the Golan Heights. Meanwhile, the Soviet Union was threatening to enter the war and the United States was pressuring Israel to de-escalate the conflict before it grew out of control. Israel was claiming publicly that peace would come when Arab forces stopped firing. But instead of cease fire, Israel was planning in secret for a major escalation into Syria.

Liberty's sudden appearance near the battlefront only hours before the scheduled invasion must have been unwelcome to the Israeli commanders, and Ennes suspects that it was the presence of the *Liberty* that caused the Israeli forces to postpone the invasion for 24 hours. Instead of attacking Syria on June 8, as originally planned, Israel attacked the *Liberty*, which eliminated the last known American "spy" in that area. On June 9, Israel surprised the world with its sudden capture of the Golan.

Israeli spokesmen hotly dispute that theory, insisting as they have since 1967 that *Liberty* was mistaken for a decrepit Egyptian transport named *El Quseir*.

Ennes' explanation is not the only one to have received attention, however. Ernest Castle, a retired Navy captain who was the U.S. Naval Attache at the American Embassy in Tel Aviv at the time of the attack, thinks it unreasonable to assume that Israel would have thought the *Liberty* Americans only source of intelligence about the impending invasion of Syria. In his secret messages from the embassy to Washington, Castle offered his own theory: that in-flight members of Israel's defense forces were after the *Liberty* because they were missing the glory that other units were earning in the fight against the Arab forces.

But Castle's messages also hint at another possibility. Shortly after the attacks, Castle met with Israeli Lieutenant Colonel Bloch to discuss the incident. During their talks, Castle reminded Bloch "that some months earlier when U.S. Navy aircraft had accidently penetrated the Israeli air-control zones, the Israeli Air Force chief of intelligence had arrogantly although facetiously suggested that the next time he might have to attack the planes or ships."

Given the continued secrecy of much of the information about the events surrounding the *Liberty* incident, it remains impossible to test these theories. But the inadequacy of the official explanations seems obvious. As Castle wrote to his superiors in connection with the incident, "The burden of diplomacy runs heavily on me."

Ennes began collecting information on the attack even before he was still in the hospital recovering from a serious wound he had suffered in the attack. He asked survivors for accounts and discreetly searched government records for information about the "accident."

By 1976 he had finished writing *Assault on the Liberty*. "I sent the manuscript to Random House on a Thursday," Ennes recalled, "and on Saturday my wife got a phone call saying they wanted to publish." But Ennes, now very close to his goal of getting the story in print, was not about to be rushed. "Navy regulations required official clearance if I published while on active duty, and I had to wait two years until I retired," he said.

When *Assault on the Liberty* appeared in January 1980, it met with immediate praise. Two former chiefs of naval operations supported it; several military journals reviewed it favorably; the authoritative U.S. Naval Institute [illegible] as a book selection, sold it at a discount from the Naval Academy at Annapolis, and specially honored it as a "Notable Naval Book." *The Washington Post* picked the book as an "editor's choice," and the *Hartford Courant* called it the most important book of the year. More important for Ennes, the book received high praise from his own comrades. "I agree 100 percent with the book," said Petty Officer Chuck Rowley. Donald Blalock, one of the defense department civilians who worked in *Liberty*'s secret compartments, agreed: "Ennes' book is an extremely accurate, factual report." Ship's doctor Richard Kiepfer jokingly suggested he wanted to sue Ennes for reporting some of his unofficial escapades. "But it's all true," he said.

Indeed there is only one dissenter from the *Liberty*: Captain McGonagle, and he prefers to disagree in silence. The findings of the Court of Inquiry as well as the U.S. government's acceptance of the Israeli explanation of mistaken identity and accidental attack rest ultimately on McGonagle's report of the incident and his testimony at the Board of Inquiry. McGonagle's to the effect of [illegible] attack, a torpedo explosion and a timely offer of assistance from the suddenly cooperative torpedo boat commander. He made no mention of napalm, he did not recall close surveillance from the propeller airplane, and he gave an account of repeated machine-gun attacks from the patrol boats. Today McGonagle refuses to discuss the affair. "I have no opinions I would want to express on it. I don't want to get involved in it," said the captain, now [illegible] at his home on Guidewing. McGonagle is known to be displeased with Ennes' story, however. "I visited McGonagle in 1981," says *Liberty* officer George Golden, "and we discussed the book at length. He was quite unhappy with it [illegible] it."

Despite an initial rush of publicity — including several [illegible] *Washington Post*, a front page article in *The New York Times* [illegible] interviews with Ennes on radio and television programs, [illegible] on *the Liberty* failed to get serious attention. According to Ennes, [illegible] scheduled by Newsweek was canceled prior to publication, and an invitation to "Good Morning America" was [illegible] without explanation.

Ennes also encountered criticism from [illegible] authorities, some of whom disputed evidence he uses [illegible] to the *Liberty* shows that the Israeli explanation for the attack is difficult to accept. During a three-hour interview with Ray Taliaferro, a talk show host at KGO in San Francisco, two callers made death threats against the host. He received a police escort home. Taliaferro, who has been a broadcaster for 15 years, said, "The [illegible] time I have had an escort home was during the heyday of the Vietnam crisis in Berkeley."

A less dramatic [illegible] swamped the offices of *The Washington Post* following the release of Ennes' book by Lloyd Bucher, skipper of the captured U.S. spy ship the USS *Pueblo*. George Wilson, a *Post* reporter for military affairs remembered: "Yes, indeed, we got a reaction — a lot of reaction." According to Wilson, phones at the newspaper rang with complaints about the paper's printing an anti-Israel article. Taliaferro and Wilson both insist they have not been deterred from reporting the story. "I stand ready to print anything newsy about it," asserted Wilson. Taliaferro said, "There has been no pressure to suppress the story. I have total freedom." But when Paul Bucher, editor of the *Journal of Electronic Defense*, asked Ennes to write a guest editorial for the magazine, he found himself in a battle with the magazine's publishers. Citing the "sensitivity of the situation in the Middle East," they suppressed Ennes' essay. Bucher quit the magazine in protest.

Even selling *Assault on the Liberty* became difficult. Karen Smith of Smitty's Bookstore in Bothell, Washington, found it impossible to place an advertisement in *The Washington Post*'s book section when she wanted to sell the book by mail. "I have never known a newspaper not to run your ad," she complained. The paper repeatedly missed scheduled publication dates for the classified ad, then tried to return Smith's check. When she insisted that she wanted the ad, not her money back, the *Post* replied it would try again. But instead of an ad, Smith eventually got her uncashed check.

According to Ennes, his own orders from his publisher went unfilled. When he tried to buy his book through a Seattle wholesaler, Pacific Pipeline in Kent, he was told, "Congratulations, we have stopped stocking *Assault on the Liberty* because Random House tells us it will come out soon in paperback." But no paperback version is scheduled. That false report and others like it, apparently spread, according to Ennes, by clerks within Random House who object to the book, caused wholesalers all over the country to strike the hardcover version from their lists and to advise retail booksellers to await a phantom lower-priced paperback version.

Problems connected with obtaining the book are not universal, however. *Pacific Northwest* had no trouble getting a copy from Waldenbooks, and the book is in its fourth printing. But Ennes believes that sales are only a fraction of what they might be. He still receives pleas for help in locating the book, and with his characteristic tenacity, he tracks down suppliers and sees that they get to customers.

Robert Loomis, Ennes' editor at Random House, said that he has

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heard that some bookstores have told customers that *Assault on the Liberty* does not exist. "There are people who don't want anything to do with this book," he said. "But there is no evidence of a conspiracy — it's just individuals."

The book did receive plenty of attention from the Israeli government and its American supporters. "Ennes allows his very evident rancor and subjectivity to overtake objective analysis," said the Israeli Foreign Office in Jerusalem in an official reaction to the book. "Ennes' conclusions fly in the face of logic and the military facts," said the Israeli government. An editor of *Jewish Week* said, "Ennes' book about the sinking [sic] of the *Liberty* works with hatred that is blind to the facts."

David Stahl, regional director of the Anti-Defamation League, delivered a rebuttal on Seattle's KUOW radio following that station's presentation of a syndicated program in which Ennes' entire book was read in installments. Stahl points out that it is difficult to accept any theory that suggests Israel would deliberately attack a ship of her most important ally. He is content with the official resolution of the *Liberty* affair because, "Two friendly governments have satisfied their curiosities." Said Stahl, "It was a terrible error, a terrible happening, but I am more interested in what's happening today than back then." Although Stahl finds no hints of anti-Semitism in Ennes' book, he did say, "I just wonder what the motives are of people who get pleasure out of making Israel look naughty."

"Two friendly governments" may have satisfied their curiosities as Stahl said, yet some former American high officials wound as if they have swallowed a bitter pill. Dean Rusk, who was Secretary of State at the time of the *Liberty* incident, confessed, "I am very unhappy with the way the thing came out. It was easier to accept from Israel the explanation that it was an accident than it would have been from Egypt or Russia." But like Stahl, Rusk, who is now a professor at the University of Georgia, wonders what good it can do to reinvestigate the matter. "What are we going to do?" asks Rusk, who describes the affair as "a genuine outrage."

Admiral Moorer, former chief of naval operations and chairman of the joint chiefs of staff, is less diplomatic in his criticism. "It is impossible for me to believe it was a case of mistaken identity. There is no way, in my opinion, that even a ragtag have could make that kind of mistake."

Further down in the ranks is Lloyd Bucher, skipper of the *Pueblo*, the U.S. Navy ship seized by the North Koreans only a few months after the *Liberty* was attacked. "The lack of investigation of the *Liberty* incident is criminal," asserted Bucher, who believes that had a complete inquiry been made following the attack on the *Liberty*, he and his crew might have benefited. "No lessons were applied," he said. Bucher is particularly upset that the numerous communications before that occurred during both the *Liberty* and *Pueblo* incidents have yet to be corrected. *Liberty* never received critical orders that would have moved her away from the Gaza Strip to safer waters, and he [illegible] for help went unanswered until it was too late for help to [illegible]. Bucher said, "The same thing happened to the *Pueblo*," and he [illegible] that 15 years later, things haven't improved substantially. "I don't believe it's the least bit different; it may be worse."

Despite their unhappiness with the result of the *Liberty* investigations, none of the critics believes there will be a new look at the attack any time soon. Even Ennes, who helped [illegible] a reunion of *Liberty* survivors in Washington, D.C., [illegible] anniversary of the attack this past June, doubts that [illegible] much official reaction, although he hopes the stories of [illegible] group of *Liberty* sailors will help set the record [illegible] Ennes says he at least wants the historical record regarding the *Liberty* corrected so the lessons can be applied. To that end he [illegible] making occasional forays to talk about *Assault on the Liberty* [illegible] to not telling his story and selling his book, he [illegible] in Woodsville. His novel in progress is at least a [illegible] from publication, and although Ennes hopes his fiction will prove successful, one doubts that it can be more dramatic or controversial than *Assault on the Liberty*.

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Sad accident

Shameful

Attack no error



Crew wants details

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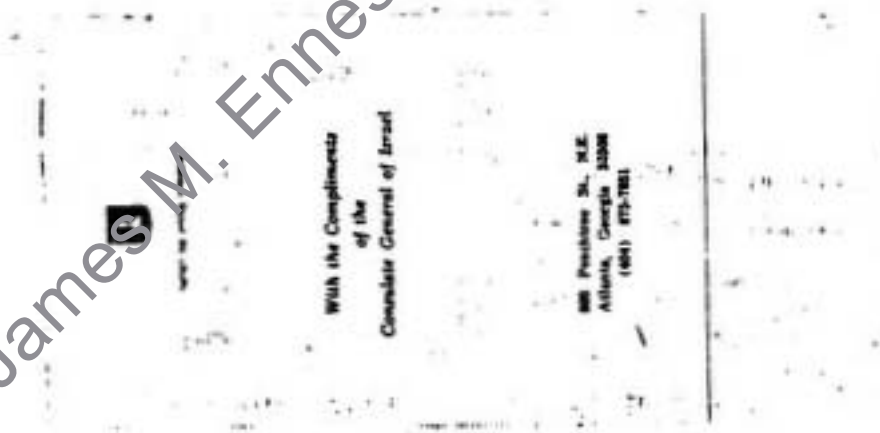
On June 8,1967, during the course of the Six Day War, a naval vessel was detected off the coast of Sinai. On that day, the coastal town of El Arish had been subjected to shelling from the sea, and it was thought that the vessel in question might be the source of the shelling. Air reconnaissance detected no signs of identification on the vessel, and all the evidence, therefore, pointed to its being an enemy warship.

Consequently the order was given to attack. Only after the attack which was conducted from both air and sea, had been going on for some time, did it become evident that in fact the vessel was not an enemy warship but the U.S. naval vessel Liberty. Immediately after this was ascertained, the attack was called off. Unfortunately, this was too late to prevent loss of life and injury to members of the crew as well as damage to the ship.

An inquiry was immediately instigated by the Israel Defence Forces. The conclusion reached after a thourough investigation was that the erroneous identification of the Liberty with an enemy warship could not be put down to negligence and was largely due to the absence of any clear marks of identification on the ship itself. The tragic incident was therefore the outcome of an honest mistake committed in the heat of battle.

In 1968, Israel paid full coupensation amounting to 3,323,000 dollars to the families of those killed in the incident and in 1969 an additional 3,566,457 dollars was paid to cover the compensation and medical expenses of the wounded.



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by Arab forces . . . bears out Ben Gurion's fear that Israel could yet find herself in the vise of a nutcracker."

Nasser tightened the noose around Israel on June 4, when he persuaded Iraq to join the alliance.
On May 31, President Aref of Iraq declared:

"The existence of Israel is an error which must be rectified. This is our opportunity to wipe out the ignominy which has been with us since 1948. Our goal is clear—to wipe Israel off the map."

Israel faced a dual threat: She was surrounded by armies which would be able to use Soviet weapons on all frontiers (and U.S. and British weapons on one of them). Her window to the Orient, to the Indian Ocean and to the east coast of Africa was closed. The blockade was the first act of war.

MYTH

"Israel deliberately attacked an American ship, the U.S.S. Liberty, in the Mediterranean."

FACT

The attack on the *Liberty* was a tragic mistake. But it must be recalled that the incident occurred in the midst of a full-scale war.

None of Israel's accusers has been able adequately to explain why Israel would have needed or wanted to attack an American ship. A foul-up in a long line of communications in a tense atmosphere is a more probable and logical explanation. As a former high-ranking Israeli naval officer, Shlomo Erell, told the *Associated Press* (June 5, 1967): "No one would ever have dreamt that an American ship would be there. Even the United States didn't know where its ship was. We were advised by the [illegible] authorities that there was no American ship within 100 miles." Former Israeli air force chief, Mordechai Hod, told the *Associated Press* that no Israeli aircraft had been sent on reconnaissance of the ship before the attack and that the Americans must have seen low-flying Israeli aircraft on bombing missions to Egypt. He added that Israeli planes were diverted from other missions after the Israeli navy, which identified the ship as an enemy vessel, called them in to attack. Israeli torpedo boat commander Limor, explained that "[illegible] high masts and many weird antennas showed that she was a warship. . . . I suspected it was a Russian intelligence ship. . . ."

Former U.S. Ambassador Walworth Barbour, who served in Tel Aviv during the Six-Day War, said in an interview that the attack was "just a mistake."

A notorious proponent of the theory that Israel deliberately attacked the *Liberty* is Anthony Pearson, a British writer, whose propaganda was published in a book, *Conspiracy of Silence*, and in an article in *Penthouse* magazine in 1976. Pearson erroneously claims that American pilots flew in the Israeli air force [illegible] that even the Soviets had dropped by 1976) and that Israel had tampered with Egyptian-Jordanian communications during the war, leading the Egyptians to believe that the Jordanian army was making a successful attack on Jerusalem, a city that was in Jordanian hands at the time. Much of Pearson's "findings" are a rewrite of charges published by former Rep. James Rarick of Louisiana, described by the *Almanac of American Politics* as "the most rabidly right-wing member of Congress [who] regularly inserts [into the Congressional Record] the most virulent kind of far-right, sometimes anti-Semitic propaganda."

The facts are as follows. On June 8, 1967, the third day of the war, Israeli planes and vessels mistook the *Liberty*, which was 14 miles off the Sinai coast, for an Egyptian vessel. They attacked, killing 34 of the *Liberty*'s crew.

The misidentification of the *Liberty* as an Egyptian vessel was understandable. The ship was far from the Sixth Fleet, to which it belonged. That morning, an Egyptian vessel had fired on Israeli positions in El Arish. The *Liberty* was first reported to be cruising at 12 knots, a rate usually maintained only by warships (the speed estimate turned out to be wrong). The *Liberty*'s flag, according to testimony of crew members, may not have been discernible because there was little wind and the flag was knocked down after the first assault. Also after the first assault, the *Liberty*'s commander refused an Israeli request that the ship identify itself. And according to testimony of its own crew, the *Liberty* bore at least a surface resemblance to the *El Quseir*, an Egyptian ship.

In 1980, one of the ship's officers, former Lieutenant James M. Ennes, Jr. charged in his book, *Assault on the*

Myths & Facts 1982 (I think)

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Liberty, that Israel deliberately attacked the ship to prevent it from monitoring the intended Israeli attack on Syria. He does not, however, explain why, if the *Liberty* was monitoring the Israel-Syrian border, the boat was not situated in a northern location, or at least a more central location, rather than off the Egyptian-Israeli border, as it was. Also, it is inconceivable that the Israelis, who were defending themselves against massive Arab armies on two fronts already, would feel any need to hide their self-defense in the face of Syrian aggression.

Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara told Congress on July 26, 1967, "It was the conclusion of the investigatory body, headed by an admiral of the navy in whom we have great confidence, that the attack was not intentional." Israel apologized for the attack and paid nearly $13 million in reparations to the United States and to the families of the victims. The last payment was received in December 1980, when the U.S. officially closed the books on the matter.

From:
Myths & Facts 1982
Near East Report
Edited by
Leonard J. Davis
Moshe Weiter

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Between The Wars 1967-1969

MYTH

"After the 1967 war, Israel refused to negotiate a settlement with the Arabs."

FACT

After its victory in the Six-Day War, Israel hoped that the Arab states would finally recognize the reality of its existence and enter into peace negotiations. Israel signalled to the Arab states its willingness to relinquish virtually all of the occupied territories in exchange for a genuine peace.

But these hopes were dashed in August 1967 when Arab leaders meeting in Khartoum adopted a formula of three "Nos":

"Kings and presidents have agreed to unified efforts at international and diplomatic levels to eliminate the consequences of aggression and to assure the withdrawal of the aggressor forces of Israel from Arab lands, but within the limits to which Arab states are committed: no peace with Israel, no negotiations with Israel, no recognition of Israel and maintenance of the rights of Palestinian people in their nation."

MYTH

"Israel refused to implement Security Council Resolution 242, adopted in November 1967."

FACT

On Nov. 22, 1967, the UN Security Council adopted a resolution establishing the principles which were to guide the negotiations for a settlement. Both Arabs and Israelis contend that they have accepted this resolution. But there has always been sharp disagreement over its real meaning.

The Arabs point to the statement of principles calling for Israeli withdrawal but are quick to ignore the other

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WASH. POST - TOOK WORLD 19 JULY 1982

BOOK REPORT

by Michele Slung

GIVE ME "LIBERTY"—IT'S NOT IN STOCK

THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN AUTHORS and paranoids is this: not all paranoids write books. And once a book is published, it's possible for the sensitive writer to perceive a vast conspiracy—which includes his very own publishing house, the review media, bookstores and even the U.S. mail—aimed at thwarting its reception by the public. Everyone who knows a published author has doubtless heard these horror stories, which range from the commonplace "There I was in Sheboygan to do interviews and not a single store had my book in stock" to the razor, and perhaps apocryphal, tale of the first novel that was mistakenly pulped before it ever left the warehouse. The worst thing about such tales is that they're often true.

Thus, it's hard to know whether or not retired naval officer James M. Ennes Jr. is justified in his belief that his 1978 title, *Assault on the Liberty* (Random House) has suffered because of hostile forces working against it. The book is a first-person account of the bombing, in June 1967, by Israeli forces, of the U.S.S. *Liberty*, an American ship in international waters off the Sinai Peninsula. It was at the height of the Six-Day War and the Israeli government, which issued a formal apology and later paid $6 million in damages, has insisted that the *Liberty*—which was flying an American flag—was mistaken for an Egyptian vessel. Thirty-four of his fellow crew members were killed and Ennes himself was wounded. Just about all of the U.S. personnel involved, many of whom recently held a reunion, are convinced that heavy pressure from Israel has caused there to be a coverage of the truth behind the tragedy. And, in addition, Ennes believes his book has lost out on sales and attention because it involves a controversial episode that Israel would rather have the world forget.

However, as everyone knows, a little controversy usually boosts sales and attempts to suppress a book often make interest run higher. Ennes' case for the conspiracy against his book would be a lot stronger if *Assault on the Liberty* weren't in its fourth printing (17,500) copies off the presses to date), with articles about the book appearing and orders for it trickling in, almost three years after its publication date. (That's enough to [illegible] author [illegible]



EDIE MEDIOVICE © by Donald Hassenby

THE TROUBLE WITH "EDIE"

WHEN LISTENING to publishing folk chat these days, one often hears uncharitable remarks about *Edie*, the Jean Stein and George Plimpton-edited chorus of '60s voices all hymning lurid paeans to the titular anti-heroine. *Edie*'s received reviews just about everywhere except *Popular Mechanics*, and one of the things you hear people saying is that if it hadn't had the publisher Alfred A. Knopf's prestige behind it, it would have seen a lot less ink. It will certainly be interesting to see if all the critical attention can translate itself into actual sales; what was once Pop now seems awfully parochial, and most of the natural readers for *Edie* probably received review copies.

Actually, it's possible to tell who's been reading *Edie*: their eyes look glassy from trying to gulp all 400-plus pages at one sitting, and they blink a lot as if coming out into the air from a strobe-lit disco. It's mesmerizing, albeit in an awful way. And one of the most repulsively fascinating com-

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...ubs, as he regularly has ... of hearing from strangers all across the country who want to buy his book but find it difficult. Sometimes they've told the book is out of stock. "It's been out of stock for a couple of weeks. Else any book," says his editor, Bob Loomis) or they've discouraged from buying the hardcover and told to wait for the paperback which is coming out momentarily (It's not—there's seem no sale to paper). Occasionally, a potential buyer hears that the book's been recalled because it's libelous (untrue). One man, Ennes says, told him "he spent three days and $70 in long-distance calls trying to obtain details on the Liberty." Unfortunately, as much as the accumulation of these stories bothers Ennes, there's nothing particularly sinister about such happenings. Ask any author.

Often, you see, bookstores resist special ordering, on which the profit margin is slim, and very few of "last year's" books remain on the shelves, a fact which most authors have to struggle to accept. What's more, bookstore clerks can be as imaginative as some of the fiction around them in devising reasons why they don't (and can't) have a book on hand. Ennes, though, has a couple of enemies in his sights aside from the Israeli Foreign Office and the Anti-Defamation League (whom he believes to have engaged in a writing-and-pressure campaign against his book), there is a greenhorn in the Random warehouse in Westminster, Maryland, whom he thinks is "helping the orders disappear. But obviously not all the time or we wouldn't be in a fourth printing." ...ers often, as an example, a large West Coast wholesaler ... that he says "simply vanished" between Calif... and Maryland.

As Bob Loomis says, "We've had our ... turned upside down to try and prove this." ... he goes on, Ennes has simply "run into the ineffici... of the industry." Ennes, he thinks, has a "real reason" ... some of his suspicions, but it only serves to ... the exasperations authors routinely experience. A... all, according to Ennes himself, who appears ... and inspire his complaints, the Random House ... can be imperial in its sights. "They once ... an order for Sophie's Choice, saying no such book ... [sic]

...presents in the memoirs of ... Sedgwick, who apparently ... in emotional Grand Guignol with his children and ... himself as a stallion with the ladies. So, it was intriguing when one of the publishing types, in talking about Edie, said she'd heard a rumor that Jean Stein's old friend Norman Mailer had had a hand in the sections depicting Eddie's dreadful daddy. Could Mailer's ... be detected in some of the more priapic passages?

At first, when queried, Stein said she had shown the book to friends at different stages. (After all, it was ... a decade-long project for her, with thousands of ... of transcribed interviews—about 500 hours worth, she estimates.) But though it's true "that the book was ... not words were put in anyone's mouth that they didn't say." Later, however, Stein clarified her earlier statement by describing the process by which the material—transitions in the book were made. "We'd call ... and explain what we needed" to see if they could ... with something that would help out. Occasionally, it appears, Stein would create a bridging section ... herself, checking it with the the interviewees. ... according to her, nothing on paper from Mailer.

And what about the poetic touches, the literary metaphors and turns-of-phrase which so many of her subjects so surprisingly exhibit? "Some of these people had just ... ways of expressing themselves. I told Sasie Sedgwick [Edie's older sister] she should be an essayist. One writer I talked to, who'd been blocked for years, afterwards told me he'd brought a tape recorder when he realized how easily it came that way."

FOR ONE DOLLAR MORE

BOTH NEW AMERICAN LIBRARY and the Viking Press have written to correct a "Book Report" item on Stephen King's latest advance (June 17). King's upcoming novel, *Christine* was not licensed to Viking by NAL "for a considerable bit more" than the $1 NAL paid King in this precedent-setting deal. Rather, NAL got a second look from Viking at the right to bring the book out in hardcover, and King got a set-up similar to the one he has at NAL, where he will be receiving "more frequent royalty payments." ❑

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DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY
NAVAL SECURITY GROUP COMMAND HEADQUARTERS
3801 NEBRASKA AVENUE, N.W.
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20390

4 SEP 1981

Mr. James M. Ennes, Jr.
[redacted]

Dear Mr. Ennes:

Receipt by this Headquarters on August 25, 1981, of your request for information under the FOIA (Freedom of Information Act) dated August 20, 1981, is acknowledged. It will be necessary to conduct a search of certain historical records of the Naval Security Group in order to determine how much of the information you are seeking can be identified. Any information thus located will then undergo further review to determine its releasibility under provisions of the FOIA. As suggested in your letter, it is very possible that it may be necessary to retrieve some records presently stored in locations other than at this Headquarters. For these reasons, the amount of time required to provide you with a detailed response to your request cannot now be accurately estimated.

The question of the imposition of any permissible charges for costs incurred in search, copying, postage, etc., versus the waiver of such charges will be held in abeyance at this time since these, too, cannot be estimated with any accuracy.

Every reasonable effort will be made to provide you with a further response as soon as possible. In the interim, if you have any questions, Mr. Dean B. Clatterbuck of this Headquarters has been designated as the point of contact for matters relating to your request. Mr. Clatterbuck's telephone number is 202-282-0235.

G. G. [illegible]
By direction

James M. Ennes, Jr. Research Papers

[illegible]

The Honorable Daniel Patrick Moynihan
Washington, D.C. 20510

23 December 1981

Dear Senator Moynihan:

Thank you for your note of December 10 forwarding Major General Secord's response for the Secretary of Defense to my letter about the Israeli attack on the USS Liberty.

To refresh your memory, I was officer of the deck of the Liberty on the day of the attack, spent a year in a hospital recovering from my injuries, and eventually wrote a book, ASSAULT ON THE LIBERTY, which was published last year by Random House.

Major General Secord has conveniently dismissed my request without addressing any of the specifics in my letter. This is because decisions about the Liberty are still being based purely upon narrow political considerations rather than upon the facts in the case. Decisions would be quite different if they were based upon the verifiable facts, but that is not being done because that would be too embarrassing.

Contrary to statements made by David M. Hanson and by Major General Secord on behalf of the Secretary of Defense, even the most cursory investigation of the Liberty matter would quite readily reveal that the truth has been and continues to be withheld from the public, and that the original Navy inquiry into the matter was a sham whose major conclusions cannot be supported by evidence because the conclusions are erroneous and in fact contrary to the evidence. Moreover, the Navy inquiry may not be legally valid because one of the members failed to sign the report.

My letter asks only that someone read the Navy Court of Inquiry file before citing it as evidence, but even that request is apparently too dangerous to receive acknowledgement or consideration.

Lest you suspect that I am a crank, you should know that most of the Liberty crew supports my position, as do such leading citizens as Admiral Arleigh Burke, Admiral Thomas Moorer, and former senators Adlai Stevenson, J.W. Fulbright, and James Abourezk, among others. There is an abundance of evidence in support of the position that the attack did not happen the way it has been described by our government, that it occurred under circumstances that reasonable men must conclude to have been deliberate, and that the circumstances have been covered up. In fact, several American newspapers including the Washington Post have chided the government editorially (December 25, 1980) for its ostrich-like attitude in the matter. Sadly for Americans, however, any public acknowledgement of the facts in this case must await some future administration.

Meanwhile, Liberty survivors plan a reunion next June in Washington, D.C., on the 15th anniversary of the attack on our ship. Several of us would like very much to call on you at that time to discuss the circumstances of the attack and perhaps to convince you that this was in fact a deliberate and planned attack upon a know American naval vessel, and that the facts have been covered up by our government. Will you agree to meet with us at that time?

PS No answer

Sincerely, James M. Ennes, Jr.

[illegible]

James M. Ennes, Jr. Research Papers

CONSULATE GENERAL OF ISRAEL
[redacted]

קונסוליה כללית של ישראל
שיקאגו

October 22, 1982

Mr. James Miller
[redacted]

Dear Mr. Miller,

In response to your letter of September 28, 1982, enclosed please find several documents in regard to the U.S.S. Liberty.

Although the recent report submitted to Admiral Hayward by Rear Admiral Almog is not confidential, it is for the U.S. Naval Operations to release it. Consequently, I suggest that you request it from them.

Sincerely,

Gabby Levy

Gabby Levy
Consul for Press and Information

GL/ck
Enc.

James M. Ennes, Jr. Research Papers