



Liberty News

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE USS LIBERTY

Volume 64 | April, 2018

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Letter from the Editor

Spring is here finally! Or at least the calendar say it is but the weather doesn't. But as most things in life it will get better I am sure.

For all of you that are daily promoting the memory of the attack on the Liberty, as unsung as most of your are, the Survivors applaud your diligence and dedication, those of us that are not survivors but served aboard the Liberty appreciate what you are doing. Please keep up the good work since memories fade and things are forgotten as life moves on and things slowly become meaningless. The memory of what happened must not be forgotten or become meaningless.

And for those on the staff of the Liberty Veterans Association, the Board, our President, Moe and the many others that work so diligently behind the scenes "well done." You also are not forgotten and your work is most meaningful! And important.

We may argue and disagree among ourselves and since we are "family" this is to be expected but remember this ship-mates: we are a family with one common goal and that is to "Remember the Liberty."

Easter is here and it is a time of celebration and joy for most of us. So God bless, keep up the good fight.

Wayne Kelley, Sr.
Editor

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Letter from the President

The first quarter of 2018 has been an active one on many levels. I am very pleased with your board of directors as they are fired up and dedicated to getting the truth out to the American public that the Israeli attack on the USS Liberty was deliberate and vicious. In fact, your Vice President, Larry Bowen, created an opportunity to visit Congressmen and the Washington American Legion Office. Hopefully, Larry will provide us his report in time for this newsletter. I want you to know we are working hard to get something happening.

Also included in this newsletter is a copy of the USS Liberty Bylaws that have been changed to guide us into the future. If you have a copy of the bylaws, please update it.

I have received two pieces of important information regarding the attack. Firstly, I was discussing the attack with a fellow retired CIA official who was close to Richard Helms, the CIA Director at the time of the attack. He indicated to me that Director Helms said to him that he knew exactly why Israel attacked which was that Israel was killing Egyptian prisoner of war and they were concerned that we were intercepting this intelligence. James Bamford in this book, "Body of Secrets, chapter 13" indicated the same years after the aforementioned Helms conversation. Since it has been proven Israel committed this war crime as their bodies have been recovered, I also believe President Johnson and Secretary of Defense McNamara knew that the attack was forthcoming. In my mind, it is the only way all the puzzle pieces fit.

In addition, we have received detailed information regarding the submarine USS Amberjack from their Sonarman. He indicated that the sub did not fire a torpedo at the Liberty and they were not in the vicinity of the attack. I am convinced he is telling the truth from the information he has provided, however, that is not to say there wasn't another US submarine at the attack. I guess we will never know until there is an honest Navy or Congressional investigation. In any case, based on the recorded interview with one of the Israeli torpedo boat captains, it was his boat that launched the torpedo that struck our ship killing 25 of the 34.

Attention: June 8, 2018 USS Liberty Memorial Service. The Memorial Service this year is at the Navy Memorial, 7th & Pennsylvania, Ave., Washington, DC, at 1 PM. If you intend on coming, please let Terry McFarland know at tlmjumbo92@yahoo.com or call him at 410-551-4166. In addition, if you have Arlington Cemetery pass to drive you car onto the cemetery, please let Terry know.

God bless,
Ernie

Statement of Purpose

IN JUNE 1967 jet aircraft and motor torpedo boats of the Defense Forces of the State of Israel brutally assaulted the American naval intelligence-gathering ship, *USS Liberty*, while in international waters off the coast of the Sinai Peninsula in the Mediterranean Sea. The attack was preceded by more than six hours of intense low-level surveillance by Israeli photo reconnaissance aircraft, which buzzed the ship as low as 200 feet directly overhead. The carefully orchestrated assault that followed was initiated by high performance jet aircraft. This was followed by slower and more maneuverable jets carrying napalm, and was finally turned over to lethal torpedo boats, which blasted a forty-foot hole in the ship's side. The attack lasted more than two hours, deliberately killing 34 Americans and wounding at least 171 others. Over 821 rocket, cannon and machine gun holes were inflicted. When the *Liberty* stubbornly remained afloat despite her damage, Israeli forces machine-gunned her life rafts, firefighters, stretcher bearers, and sent helicopters carrying troops to finish the job, no survivors were to be taken.



At this point, with Sixth Fleet rescue aircraft supposedly en route, the government of Israel apologized and the identity of the assailants became known.

Details of the attack were hushed up in both countries. Israel claimed that her forces mistook the *Liberty* for an Egyptian ship, and our government quietly accepted that excuse despite evidence to the contrary. No ship in our history has ever received such damage and casualties by accident. Then our government downplayed the intensity of the surveillance and the severity of the attack, and imposed a news blackout on the crew to keep the story under control. The official version is that the *Liberty* was reconnoitered only three times and only from a great distance. The American people were told that the air attack lasted only five minutes and that it was followed by a single torpedo and an immediate apology and offer of assistance. Nothing could be further from the truth. In June 1982, fifteen years after the assault, crewmembers reunited for the first time in Washington, D.C. It was a tearful, joyful reunion in which the men not only released their pent up emotions and decided that the **USS Liberty Veterans Association** would be formed with the firm goals of finding all crew members, holding reunions, proper recognition of Captain and crew (in particular those who lost their lives), obtaining a Congressional investigation into the attack, and...

TO BRING THE TRUE STORY OF THE ATTACK ON THE U.S.S. LIBERTY AND HER HEROIC CREW TO THE AWARENESS OF THE AMERICAN PEOPLE.

Hall of Fame Induction for James "Terry" Halbardier

On January 11th, 2018, Electronic Technician Third Class Terry Halbardier was inducted into the Surface Navy Associations Hall of Fame in Crystal City, Virginia with all the Pomp and Circumstance due a true Navy Hero. Terry's daughter Kim and family were unable to attend the ceremony, so Larry Bowen, Moe Shafer, and Terry McFarland attended on their behalf and to represent the Liberty Veterans Association. There were six honorees that evening but when they showed the video of Terry and read the inscription from the brochure it made the hair on my arms stand up on end. Terry was responsible for running coaxial cable from the radio shack to one of the damaged antennae's and then had to splice two cables together, so the radioman could transmit our distress call to the 6th fleet. Terry was wounded while completing his heroic actions and initially only received the Purple Heart award. Some 42 years later Congressman Devin Nunes from California helped ensure that Terry's exemplary performance and courageous actions were duly recognized when Terry was awarded the Silver Star Medal. I had written a brief statement that I wanted to read to the assembled group that evening which basically told them that Terry was our shipmate on the USS Liberty on June 8, 1967 when we were attacked. I'll attach that letter to this article if there is room to put it in the newsletter fine and if not, at least I know that it went to Kim along with the tape that showed some Terry photographs prior to the attack and a few post attack photos. It was an honor for the three of us to be a part of that ceremony and to be there for one of our shipmates.



Larry Bowen's Washington Recap to Jim Casey

AMERICAN LEGION WASHINGTON CONFERENCE FEBRUARY 25TH – 28TH

ATTENTION: MR. James Casey:

Jim,

I can't begin to thank you enough for the hospitality and outstanding support you and your legionnaires provided me these past few days. I came here not knowing what to expect, and I'm leaving here hoping that with yours, Frank's, and the rest of our legionnaire brethren supporters that my fallen shipmates may eventually get the recognition they deserve. Your team has been nothing short of fantastic when it comes to providing ideas that I can run up the flagpole and hopefully get someone to salute besides a few of us fellow sailors.

On Monday, I was able to meet and talk with people in various Senators offices: John Kennedy (LA); Patrick Toomey (PA); Mitch McConnell (KY); Michael Enzi (WY); and Marco Rubio (FL) Photo Taken. The primary topic was American Legion Resolution # 40; the USS Liberty and having Congress investigate the attack on the USS Liberty. The general response was getting a Remembrance Day or having a Permanent Memorial erected both of which would stand a much better chance of passage.

On Tuesday, I was able to meet and talk with people in various Congressmen's offices: Congressman Robert Wittmann (VA); Congressman Steve Cohen (TN); Congressman Devin Nunes (CA) Congressman Dutch Ruppersberger (MD) Photo Taken. Again, the same topic as above and generally the responses were very similar. I was pleased that even though it has been fifty years (50) since the attack on the Liberty 50% of the offices that I visited left me with the impression that they would at least read the material I had gone over with them and provide me feedback. Congressman Nunes office has already emailed me to set-up a return visit to meet with the Congressman personally for a discussion and a photo opportunity. That won't happen probably for a couple of weeks or so.

I am looking forward to working with Frank LaMarsh on whatever resolution(s) he may want me to help with and of course anything you may need me to help you with. I live here in Maryland, but I belong to American Legion Post 435 in Waterloo, New York and have for the past 50 years.

Jim, it was a pleasure meeting you and your team. You made me feel welcome from the minute I met you. I was inspired by yours and Franks ideas and I am already thinking of now to put them out to the crew in our next Newsletter which goes out in April. Thank you doesn't convey what I feel in my heart because it doesn't say enough! Thank you so much for everything!!!

Larry L. Bowen, USS LIBERTY VETERANS ASSOCIATION Vice-President
USS LIBERTY AGTR-5 (Survivor)

A Seattle Veteran Seeks Justice for the USS Liberty..

Seattle resident Michelle Kinnucan was just out of Coast Guard boot camp when she became interested in the USS Liberty. She was on her way to her first duty station, a cutter home ported in Guam, in 1983, and heard legendary investigative journalist James Bamford speaking to Larry King about his new book, a history of the National Security Agency. She bought the book at the Stars and Stripes bookstore in Guam upon arrival, and in it learned about the ship that was attacked by Israeli forces during the Six-Day War in 1967 while collecting communication for the NSA.

The attack left 34 Americans dead and 171 crew members wounded.

A few years later, she was sent to a navy damage control school in Pearl Harbor, and encountered the vessel again. "I remember walking down the hall and noticing black-and-white photos of a damaged ship, and it turned out it was the USS Liberty. There wasn't much explanation. I figured it was a Navy chief trying to make a point," she remembers now.

The point, she says, is one that's been floated around naval circles and veterans' groups ever since the attack: Despite the official line, of both the U.S. and Israeli governments, that the attack on the USS Liberty was because the Israeli military mistook it for an Egyptian vessel, a proper investigation has never been conducted into what led to the deadly confrontation, which included both air and torpedo strikes from Israeli forces in international waters. Many U.S. government officials secretly rejected the idea that the attack was a mistake, including President Lyndon B. Johnson, according to investigative journalist James Scott.

As Pat O'Malley, a Pierce County judge and USS Liberty survivor, told *The Seattle Times* in 2009, "If you listen to all the explanations of what happened, any rational person is going to say that can't be—there is something missing here. We need the truth. Until governments tell the truth, how do you get trust?"

After an honorable discharge from the Coast Guard, Kinnucan moved to Seattle, where she'd spent time as a child. Here she learned that the ship had been commissioned as the USS Liberty at the navy base in Bremerton. For

years, on Memorial Day and on the anniversary of the attack (June 8), Kinnucan, along with members of Veterans for Peace, would stand on the pier that moors the USS Turner Joy in Bremerton and hand out fliers about the attack. Then, earlier this year, Kinnucan decided to try to make a bigger impact by submitting a resolution with her American Legion Post, Post 40 in Ballard, to direct the national organization of 2.4 million veterans to lobby Congress for an investigation into what happened that day in the Mediterranean Sea.



A Seattle Veteran Seeks Justice for the USS Liberty.. (contd.)

This effort was more controversial than it may seem. The general outline of the USS Liberty attack has made it a ripe target for anti-Semitic groups to co-opt for their anti-Jewish messaging. The Anti-Defamation League has argued that some efforts to raise awareness about the USS Liberty are meant to “demonstrate the supposed treachery and power of the Jewish State and its American supporters. The story, told from this perspective, has become a propaganda tool to undermine the legitimacy of Israel.”

Veterans’ groups advocating for survivors of the Liberty attack take pains to distance themselves from far-right groups that claim common cause with them.

Still, it’s a stigma that Liberty advocates have to compete against. “When I first raised the resolution at my Legion post, the accusation of anti-Semitism came up right away,” says Kinnucan. “There’s really nothing to say about it except that there’s nothing anti-Semitic about wanting this incident investigated when it hasn’t been investigated yet. It’s a red herring.”

The Ballard post ultimately approved the resolution, which began its journey up the flagpole of the American Legion. It was approved at the state convention, which qualified it for the docket at the national convention in Reno.

When he found out that a resolution about the USS Liberty had made the national docket, Bryce Lockwood booked a last-minute flight to Reno to lobby for the Seattle post’s resolution. At the time of the attack, he was serving on the Liberty as a voice intercept section supervisor. His section included three sailors, two Marines, and a civilian. “All of them were killed, but one, by the torpedo explosion,” Lockwood says by phone from his home in Strafford, Missouri.

There had been resolutions to make it to the national convention in the past, Lockwood says, but they usually got squashed by leadership. This was the first time, he says, that the Legion actually allowed a hearing on the matter. Again, the resolution faced strong opposition for fear of anti-Semitism. “When the resolution came before the subcommittee, the leadership recommended rejection, saying the fringe groups would use the resolution to shape Mid-east policy,” Lockwood says. “We’re not an anti-Semitic group; we’re not a fringe group. We were a group of servicemen that were wronged on the high seas.” Despite the continued opposition from some members of leadership, the resolution made it through to a vote and was approved. “This is a huge weight lifted off our shoulders,” says Lockwood.

This year marks the 50th anniversary of the attack; four years ago, the Veterans of Foreign Wars passed their own resolution calling for an investigation. Lockwood says he hopes the Legion’s support creates a critical mass of support. “Here’s two major veterans’ organizations that have passed this, to tell Congress to investigate the attack on the USS Liberty.”

Kinnucan says that while she believes the preponderance of evidence points to a deliberate attack by Israel, if Congress determines that the Israeli attack was truly a mistake, she says she’s OK with that. “Time is running out for the survivors,” she says. “These guys are in their 70s or older now, feeling that their country sort of betrayed them. They saw their shipmates die, and most of them were wounded. More than half the ship’s company was killed or wounded. They feel like the American Legion, their brother and sister veterans, are standing on their side again.”

Written by Daniel Person

Article available online at:

<http://www.seattleweekly.com/news/a-seattleite-is-fighting-for-justice-for-the-uss-liberty-but-not-without-some-controversy/>

RIP 'Ron' Frank Grantski

Ronald 'Ron' Frank Grantski
December 16, 1946 - April 8, 2018

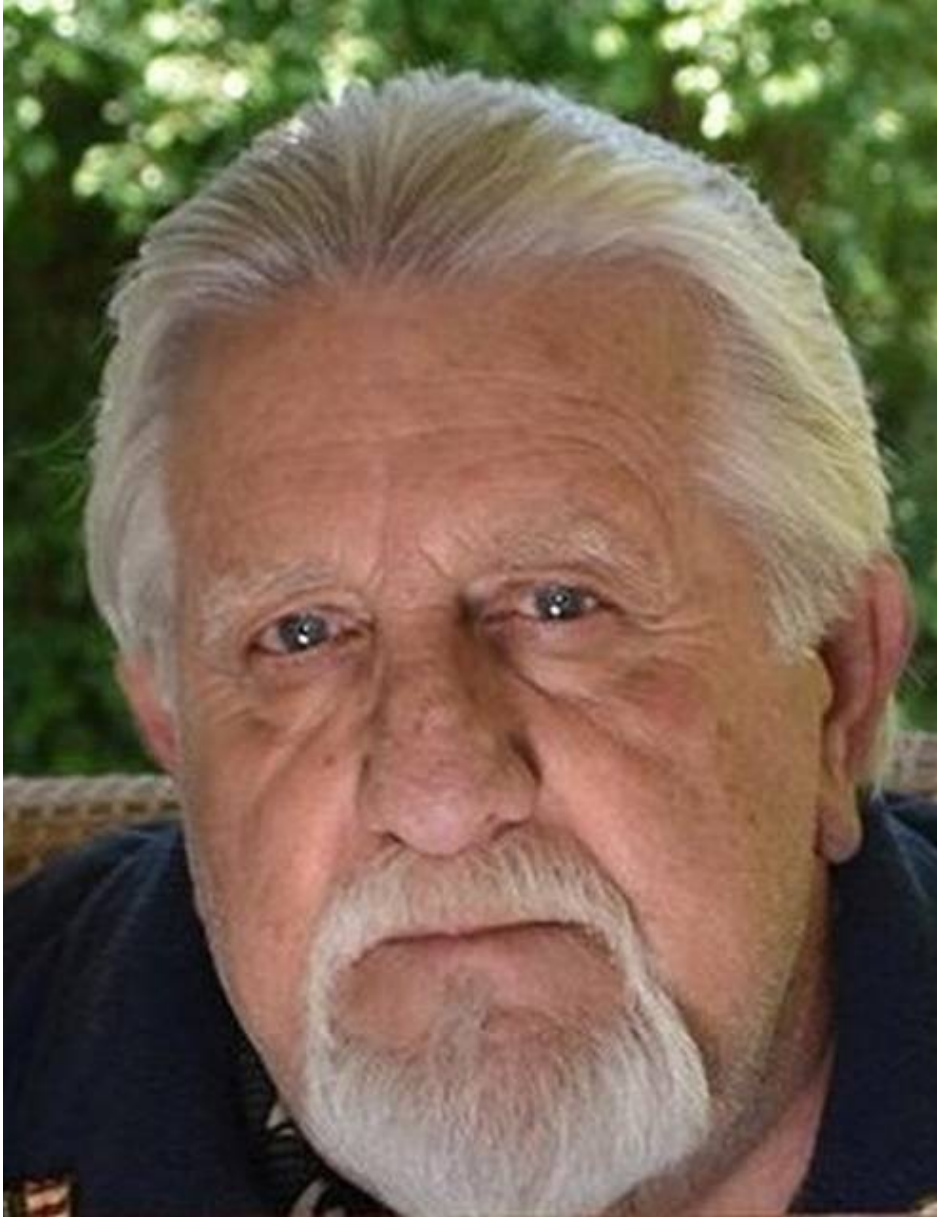
Ronald 'Ron' Frank Grantski, age 71, of Modesto, CA passed away April 8, 2018 at home. He was preceded in death by his parents Sarah and Don Grantski, son, Darrin Grantski and step daughter Laci Peterson.

Ron served in the Navy and received a Purple Heart for his tour of duty on the USS Liberty. He was an avid fisherman and loved going to the horse races.

Ron is survived by his long time companion Sharon Rocha, sisters Donna (Ron) Barnhart and Carol (Phil) Frazier, stepson Brent (Rose) Rocha, grandchildren Antonio, Massi, Giorgio and Sofia Rocha, and nephews Zachary Zwald and Sam Barnhart.

Graveside service will be held at Burwood Cemetery in Escalon, Tuesday, April 17th at 1:00 PM.

Remembrance donations may be made to any charity of choice.
www.cvobituaries.com



USS Liberty Father, Son and the State of American...

In his first State of the Union Address Mr. Trump spoke about American dreams and said: "This Congress could put America first, set politics aside and come together to get the job done."

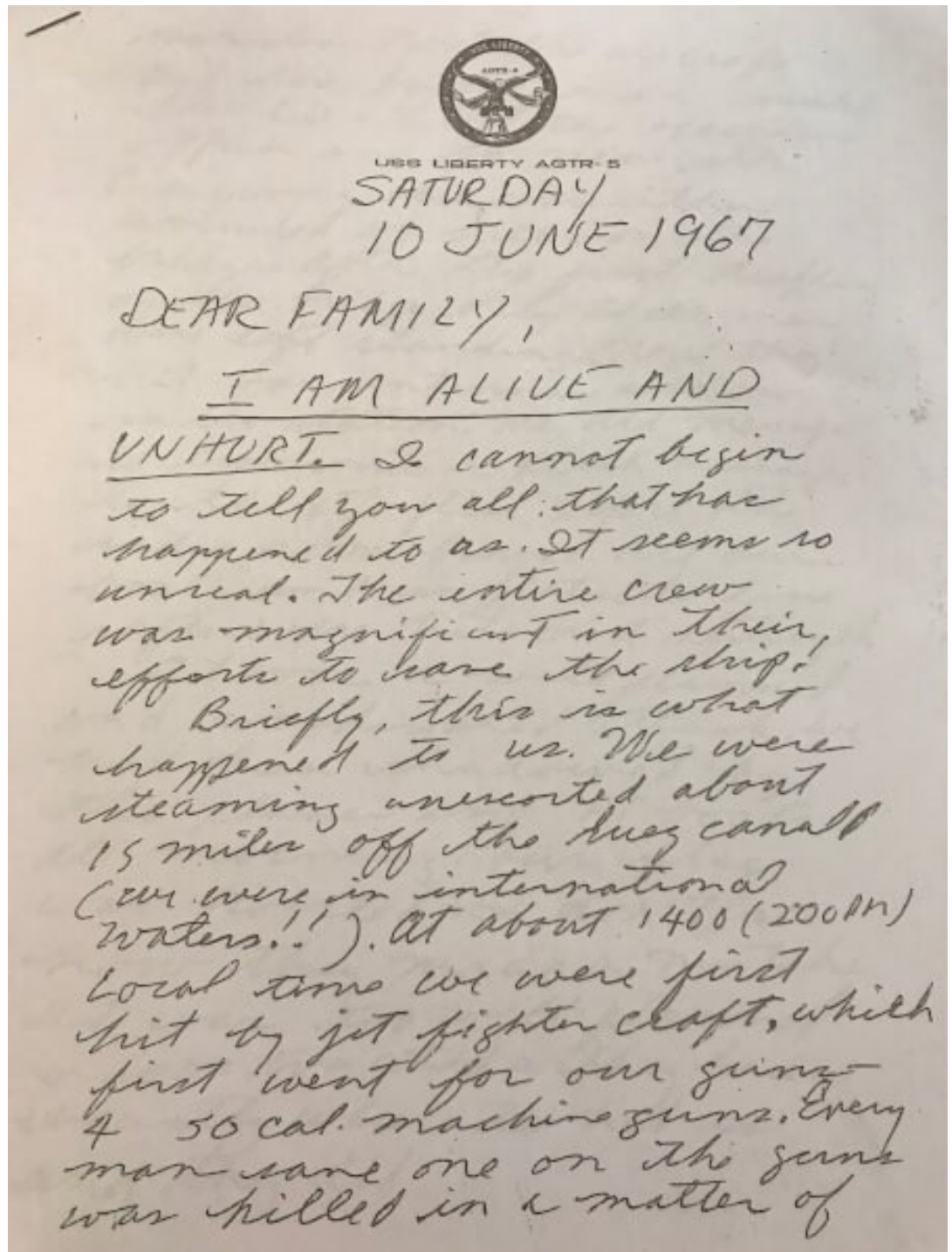
American Legion's Resolution 40 is a job that requires "American grit, accountability and respect" for our Veterans who 'dream' of justice from their Government.

Last summer the American Legion passed Resolution 40, which called "upon the 115th United States Congress to publicly, impartially, and thoroughly investigate the attack on the USS Liberty and its aftermath and to commence its investigation before the end of 2017, the 50th anniversary year of the attack."

The 115th Congress missed the American Legion's deadline to begin to "publicly, impartially, and thoroughly investigate the attack on the USS Liberty and its aftermath" but LIBERTY CENTRAL II has been hosting documentation of the aftermath of Israel's June 8 1967 attack on the USS LIBERTY

(View at <http://thearabdailynews.com/?s=USS+LIBERTY>).

USS Liberty Silver Star recipient Ensign John Deaderick Scott, USNR wrote the following letter home two days after President Lyndon Baines Johnson ordered the cover-up of Israel's attack on America's then premier spy ship:



USS Liberty Father, Son and the State of American... (contd.)

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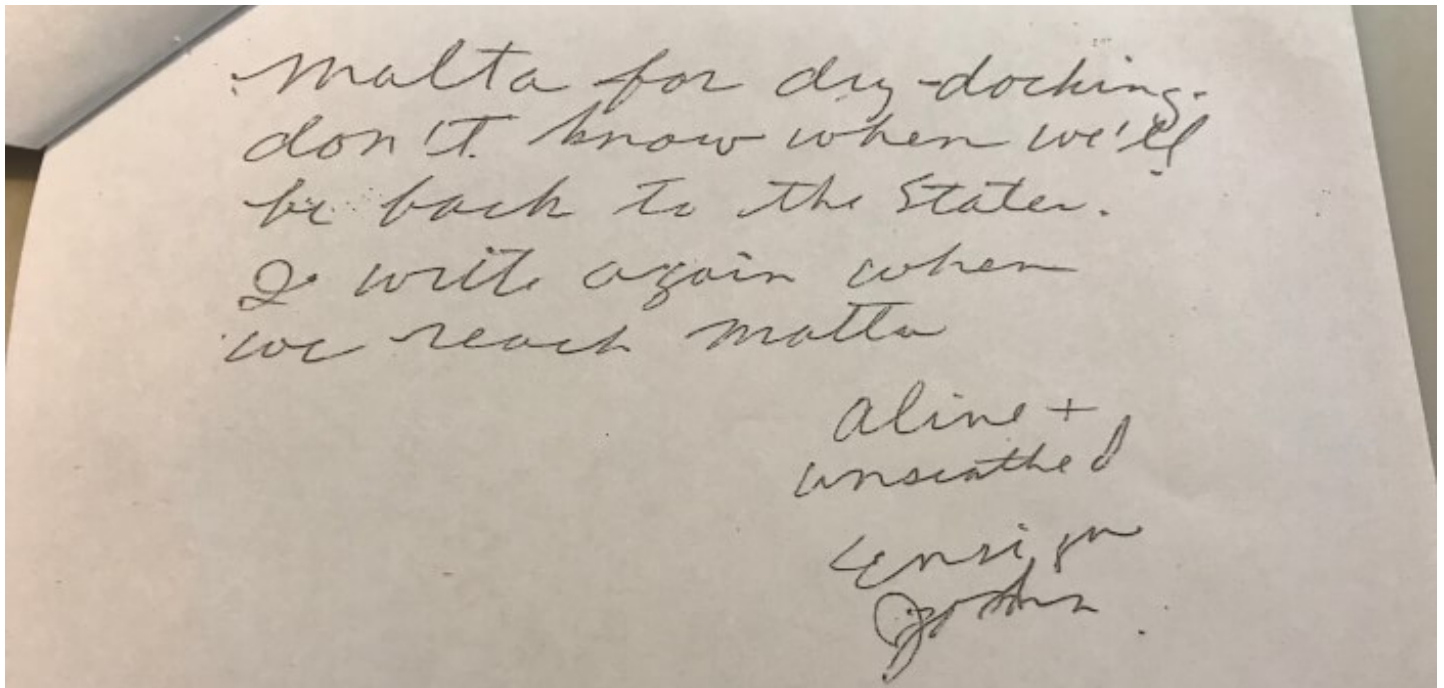
minutes. Next the aircraft hit the bridge area, wounded the C.O. - killed the executive officer and the navigator. Everybody else was either wounded or killed on the bridge. After the first strafing of the bridge, only those men were left standing. Next they hit our antennas and our radio station. We did manage to transmit a flash message to the 6th fleet before the radio room burned. All our boats and inflatable line rafts were hit - most destroyed. It was a well planned and coordinated attack. We had been shadowed by the planes and PT boats all morning - our flag was hoisted - I don't see how they made a mistake. It was too well planned & coordinated - they knew exactly where to hit us and they did.

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next we were attacked by 3 patrol crafts - one torpedo missed astern the next one hit us forward, starboard side on the 3rd deck. It hit 20 ft from Damage Control Central - my Battle station - it dislodged our safe filing cabinet - threw both emergency and knocked me (I phone talker and my self) flat on the deck. A water tight bulkhead separated us - all flooding was contained between W.T. bulkheads - an entire section is still flooded solid - 60 ft x 55 ft through 3 decks. We patched up the all holes in hull except torpedo hole (12' by 15') and righted the ship. One more torpedo hit and we would have gone down. Machinery space couldn't hit so badly - so we got the hell out of the area - The entire ship

looks like hell - burned and full of rocket and shell holes (shells were fragmentation, anti personnel types) - majority of wounded were hit by fragments. I could hear the rocket and shell hits tearing thru the ship in D.C. Central - they were hitting all around D.C.C. but no direct hits - the captain at first thought D.C.C. was hit by the torpedo and had already ordered Repair 3 locker to take over as D.C.C. - we were back on the phone in about 70 seconds. About a third of the crew is wounded and approx 35 dead. 25 men were caught in the flooded spaces (main research space) - never had a chance to escape. We are heading for

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USS Liberty Father, Son and the State of American... (contd.)

Years after the attack, Lieutenant Colonel Shmuel Kislev, the chief air controller at general headquarters in Tel Aviv, confessed that he knew the U.S.S. LIBERTY was an American ship as soon as an Israeli pilot radioed in its hull numbers.

Two months before the sailor's mass burial at Arlington Cemetery, Navy analysis also uncovered that the Israeli torpedo boat gunners had targeted the spy ship with 40-mm tracer rounds made in the United States.

In 1967, the Republican representative from Iowa, H.R. Gross rose up in The House and asked:

"Is this Government now, directly or indirectly, subsidizing Israel in the payment of full compensation for the lives that were destroyed, the suffering of the wounded, and the damage from this wanton attack? It can well be asked whether these Americans were the victims of bombs, machine gun bullets and torpedoes manufactured in the United States and dished out as military assistance under foreign aid."

By November 1967, lawmakers were willing to spend six million USA tax dollars to build schools in Israel but during the debate, Representative Gross introduced an amendment that "not one dollar of U.S. credit or aid of any kind [should] go to Israel until there is a firm settlement with regard to the attack and full reparations have been made [and Israel] provides full and complete reparations for the killing and wounding of more than 100 United States citizens in the wanton, unprovoked attack. I wonder how you would feel if you were the father of one of the boys who was killed in that connection-or perhaps you do not have any feelings with respect to these young men who were killed, wounded and maimed, or their families."

Gross's amendment failed and justice for the USS Liberty survivors of The Six Day War remains delayed due to bad religion in bed with militant politics.

USS LIBERTY survivors of The Six Day War, their families, friends and supporters have not just "dreamed of justice" they persist to pursue it armed only with the TRUTH.

YOU can honor the troops and hold this government accountable by simply signing and sharing this Petition to Speaker of the US House of Representatives and US Senate Majority Leader to Investigate the Attack on the USS Liberty at:
<https://actionnetwork.org/petitions/investigate-the-attack-on-the-uss-liberty?source=facebook>

Article by Eileen Fleming

LVA Member Submission

Small Village in America's Heartland Remembers the USS Liberty

A small village in America's heartland, Hopedale, Illinois, on Memorial Day 2017 dedicated a new veterans memorial on the grounds of the village's medical complex.

Thanks to a young 78-year-old livestock farmer, Dave Snider, from a neighboring village, the village of Hopedale, whose population consists of 850 souls according to a street sign, besides honoring local veterans, will also be honoring and remembering the veterans of the USS Liberty.

From his own pocket, Mr. Snider purchased two bricks to be installed in the memorial's walkway with the inscription "Remember the USS Liberty."

Snider cites hearing the original reports on Israel's attack on the USS Liberty on June 8th, 1967, which he called "a whitewash," and his recent reading of the book "Ship Without a Country" as motivating factors in his desire to honor the veterans of the USS Liberty.

Because of the patriotism of Mr. Snider, "Remember the USS Liberty" will be forever screaming from a veterans memorial walkway, from a village in America's heartland.

Written and submitted by RickB, USS Liberty Veterans Association member

REMINDER: Challenger Coin Available!

We are excited to now be carrying the Challenger Coin in the Liberty Store - available for \$10 plus a \$5 shipping charge.

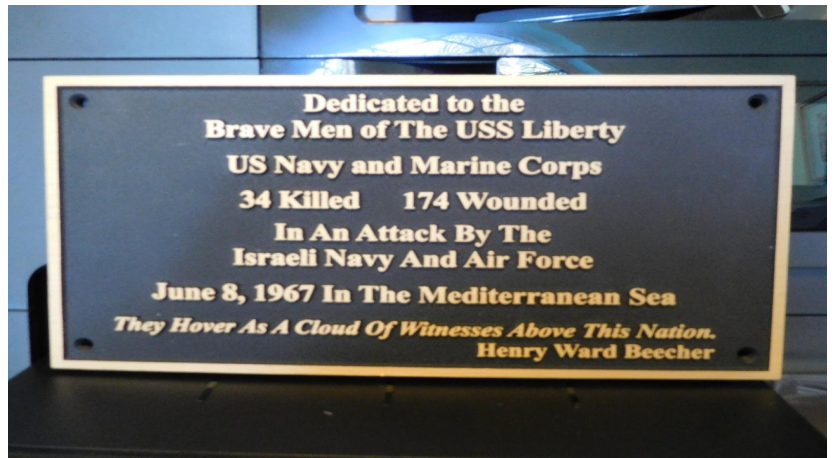
This commemorative coin features the names of each of the 34 fallen shipmates lost during the attack on the Liberty!



USS Liberty Palm Coast, FL, Bigotry

I have been holding off from sharing this story because I was hoping for a positive outcome. However, I believe especially at this time, I need to do so. This is a story of bigotry at its best and I submitted these details to the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) which initially indicated that I had a good case against the town of Palm Coast, FL and then did nothing. This affront, to the most decorated Navy ship for a single engagement, is why I wrote my book, "Liberty Injustices – A Survivors Account of American Bigotry". Here is what happened.

Sometime in early 2016 and out of the blue, Ms. Nora Whisnant sent me the above six by eleven inch bronze plaque. I deeply appreciated this wonderful gesture of support which was only the beginning as she held a Liberty memorial service at her home later on in Delaware, attended by Terry McFarland. I decided to have the plaque placed in our Palm Coast Heroes Memorial Park and submitted the proper application. I wanted the plaque placed near our town's "Liberty Tree" at which I have two engraved bricks dedicated to the Liberty crew and Captain McGonagle. After a delay waiting for the key person to move my application forward, it was finally approved by the Beautification Board at a meeting that I attended. There was a little push back from one individual, however, the others talked him into his approval which made it unanimous on Thursday, March 23, 2017. The following Monday, I was informed that our city's Manager, Jim Landon, put a stop on it which made me very angry because this is the very town that passed a City Proclamation on October 6, 2015, declaring June 8th USS Liberty Day and now refuses to put up this wonderful plaque. Incidentally, the proclamation was done privately without any news coverage. The proclamation was sent directly and quietly to me.



I therefore decided that I would take my request to the next Palm Coast city council meeting. Knowing I submitted my request for the upcoming council's review, Landon called before the meeting and asked to talk to my wife and I. He explained that if I took out "In an attack by the Israeli Navy and Air Force", he would have no objection. I emphatically told him that the plaque statement is a fact of life and it was absolutely true. With that, the fight for approval was on but at the same time, he told me that I would have the opportunity to speak at the August 8, 2017 city council meeting to completely explain why this plaque should be placed in our Heroes Park as is. I was cautiously elated, however, he had other plans. He also indicated that he wanted to check with "federal officials" to determine if I was telling the truth about the attack. So, during the interim, Mr. Landon wrote to Representative DeSantos' office requesting confirmation of my details and also possible ammunition from them to disprove the project. They complied. While they confirmed everything that I said, they found a Navy document indicating the attack was accidental.

On August 8, 2017, the Palm Coast City council meeting was a "kanagoo court". Before allowing me to speak, they passed an ordinance killing the plaque project. As the ordinance was being discussed by the city council members, I tried to speak but I was told by the mayor to be quiet. When I finally was given a chance to speak which could not change the proceedings, I reminded them of the importance of the USS Liberty story and I told them that the meeting was unfair and bigoted. The mayor did not appreciate my candor.

Why do you think that this 6 X 11 inch plaque would be so damaging in our Heroes Park? Obviously there are certain people who would be OFFENDED by the words on the plaque. Yes, no one should be subjected to the thought that Israel would do such a thing to fellow American sailors and marines. One might be tempted to look up the attack to determine the details especially since the plaque does NOT say the attack was deliberate, vicious, and inhumane to a ship that was NOT a man-of-war. No, fellow American politicians must do everything they can to keep folks from knowing of the Liberty bravery and heroism on June 8, 1967, otherwise they may have a dim view of treacherous 1967 Israel. Or, just maybe, there was collusion between LBJ and Moshe Dayan to attempt to sink the ship with all hands lost. Yes, there are groups out there doing their best to keep the Liberty story from the American public right here in bigoted Palm Coast, FL.

So, this wonderful plaque remains sitting next to my desk. I will continue to work with local veterans groups to prevail. Stay tuned! Could this event be the next chapter in another book?

Ernie Gallo

More on the LIBERTY Incident, by James M. Scott

NAVAL HISTORY, Dec. 2017 ISSUE

MORE ON THE LIBERTY INCIDENT

James M. Scott

Jay Cristol claims in his letter ("In Contact," October, p. 5) that my article ("The Spy Ship Left Out in the Cold," June, pp. 28-35) "was saturated with misleading claims." Yet, it is Cristol, who, for two decades, has pedaled untruths in the quest to defend Israel for its attack on the USS *Liberty* (AGTR-5), which killed 34 Americans and wounded more than 170 others.

Cristol writes, for example, that there have been multiple congressional investigations into the attack. That is false. A true congressional investigation, such as the ones that followed the 9/11 terrorist attacks or the assault on our compounds in Benghazi, never was tasked to examine the central question of Israeli culpability. In an effort to muddy the water, Cristol instead points to investigations into other issues, like Navy communications.

I would challenge Cristol to produce the appointing resolution of any congressional body directed to investigate Israel's actions in the attack. The simple fact is he can't. But don't take my word for it. Mary Baumann, staff researcher with the U. S. Senate

Historical Office, scoured congressional records as well. "I did not," she wrote to me on 2 November 2006, "Find any references to an investigation relating to the 1967 attack on the USS *LIBERTY*."

Cristol likewise champions the Navy's flawed court of inquiry, whose members were barred from traveling to Israel, obtaining Israeli war logs, or interviewing the attackers.

Furthermore, the court's lawyer, Captain Ward Boston, later admitted that President Lyndon Johnson and Defense Secretary Robert McNamara ordered the panel to endorse Israel's claim that the attack was a mistake, even though Boston did not believe it. Boston said at the time, "It is Cristol's insidious attempt to whitewash the facts that has pushed me to speak out."

The truth is that hundreds of declassified documents and interviews in the United States and Israel reveal what a sordid affair in the *Liberty* truly was - and that Israel did, in fact, identify the ship in time to prevent the torpedo strike that killed 25 men. Furthermore, those records illustrate the ugly tug of war between the two nations, which included efforts to censor the

media and even silence. President Johnson with threats of anti-Semitism.

Those are the facts. Lost in Cristol's defense of the attackers is the effect this tragedy had on the survivors and the families of those killed. Understanding the truth is the best way we have to honor those brave Americans.

Liberty News is the official journal of the **USS LIBERTY Veterans Association** - a California nonprofit, tax-exempt corporation representing the **USS LIBERTY** Survivors and former Crew Members, their families, and other patriotic Americans.

The yearly subscription rate is **\$20.00 for an associate member (former and non-crew member)**. Due to our small size, however, we cannot survive solely on subscriptions. We are grateful to, and rely heavily upon our many members who voluntarily donate more generously with each passing year.

Make your tax-deductible check payable to:
LVA, C/O Moe Shafer, PO Box 680275, Marietta, GA 30068

Send articles and items of interest to:
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