



March 21, 2006

Sworn Declaration

I, Ernest A. Gallo, do swear under penalty of perjury that the following statement is true, complete, and based upon my personal knowledge.

I was a member of the Navy Reserves assigned to the USS Liberty, AGTR-5. My rate was a Second Class Communications Technician Maintenance Branch (CTM2), Petty Officer. My normal responsibilities included repair and maintenance of KW-7 and KWR-37 Cryptographic devices, Ampex 1400 Tape Recorders and any other equipment within Radio Research 2. However, I could be called on to maintain other equipments assigned to my division.

Sometime during the afternoon of June 7, 1967, I personally witnessed an Israeli propeller air craft flying very low and close to the ship. The airplane was so close, I could see the pilot. Since Israel was our ally, I waved to the pilot and he waved back in a friendly manner. On June 8, 1967, I was at my General Quarters Station during the Israeli attack on our ship. Following many explosions, the USS Liberty sustained a torpedo hit in our starboard side just forward of amid ships. With our Security Group spaces flooded and our equipment rendered useless, it was decided that the remaining Security Group personnel should leave the area and relocate to an area above the water line. The ship was listing 10 degrees to starboard. We wanted to be closer to top side should it continue to roll over and we had to abandon ship as we were unaware of the extent of the total torpedo damage.

We settled into the passageway in the 01 level, port side. Soon, the Captain passed the word to *prepare* to abandon ship. As we waited for help from the Six Fleet and for word to be passed to abandon ship, Israeli motor torpedo boats **continued** to fire on us with machine gun and cannon. While I cannot state exactly how long this attack continued, at least, 10 to 15 minutes must have passed before the motor torpedo boats stopped shooting at us. After the shelling stopped and the arrival of Israeli helicopters, the Captain passed the word to *prepare* to repel boarders. After a period, things then quieted down. Feeling the situation was now safe, I went topside and I personally viewed an Israeli helicopter with armed troops inside circling the ship. After a moment or two, the helicopter flew away. The attack was now completely over.

Those of us, who were not wounded, now went around the ship looking to move the wounded to our mess decks. I witness unbelievable carnage. Pools of blood seemed to be in every passageway. We were warned not to go the forecastle area as there were dead and body parts thrown helter-skelter. Sometime later, word was then passed that the officer-of-the-bridge needed look-outs as our radar was not functioning. So, I volunteered to take the starboard flying bridge watch and passed the word that I did not want to be relieved until I was told it was safe. I remained at my post and witnessed the arrival of the USS Davis at day break. At about 1000 hours, I reported to the bridge my sighting of the USS America in all her glory. I observed helicopters hovering to pick up our wounded taking them to the America. I began to feel the might and the resourcefulness of the US Navy. We were finally rescued.

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We then sailed to Malta and we were put in dry dock. I believe at this time, Admiral Kidd and Captain Ward Boston convened a Navy Court of Inquiry. Then, after the water was drained, CTs were told that we had to go into our spaces and clear out all classified publications and materials. However, over 20 crewmen were still entombed within these spaces. While other personnel went forward removing bodies, I and other CTs followed picking up anything laying about and placed them in large canvas bags. The torpedo had ruptured a fuel tank and everything was covered in a black slime. I know I retrieved body parts as I followed orders. The dead included two of my friends. Emotionally, this event was one of the most difficult things I have ever had to do in my life. I could not believe that the Navy would ask us to do this; however, as a CT, the job had to be done to protect classified material from the upcoming Maltese repairmen who would patch up the ship. Then suddenly, all the CTs were ordered home and within a few days, I found myself in a Norfolk barracks.

I swear the above is true and accurate as I commit these facts to paper on March 21, 2006.

Sincerely,

Ernest A. Gallo

Ernest A. Gallo, Vice-president, USS Liberty Veterans Association, and Chairman of the Liberty Foundation

Notary Public: S. Warden
State of Florida
County of Flagler
MARCH 21, 2006.



Svetlana V Hartman
My Commission DD278871
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