

Sworn Declaration of Gary W Brummett

I, Gary W Brummett, do swear under penalty of perjury that the following statement is true and complete. Starting June 7th, 1967 at roughly 6 am J.P Newell and I (repair petty officers in B-Div) spent roughly 23 hours constant doing repair on our auxiliary feed pump (coffin pump). At roughly 4 am on the morning of the 8th June 1967 after being burned (I) left the fireroom for minor medical attention after helping me to sick bay, J.P. put the pump back together. WE had been up roughly 30 hours non-stop working on equipment and at midnight June 7th we had taken (B-Div. watch section) the port boiler off line. At roughly 4 am June 8th J.P. and I finally knocked off and went to bed. We stayed in the bed until roughly 10am the morning of the 8th. Chief Brooks was raising hell about us still being in the rack. (Hell we had only been up 30 hours straight). Between 10:00-11:00 hours was the first time I heard the ships PA (1-MC) request the duty photographer to the bridge, his job was to photograph the plans re-conning us. This happened 5 or 6 more times prior to the attack. J.P. and I got an early meal pass that day and we really did little that morning. We checked the port boiler because we were about to fix a steam leak on a main feed valve. This was a job neither of us had ever done and it puzzled me why we would take this boiler off line plus totally disable it in a war zone. To this day I still wonder what was the captain and engineering officer thinking. One boiler at best would only make 9-10 knots. Had we had the time to tear this valve apart what happened to us would have probably been far worse. There were other plans for this boiler but since it is not in the official record I could not prove the other planned work. One of the BT's took and still has the original steaming log for B-Div., for all of June 8th 1967. After the planned GQ at roughly 13:00 hours, J.P. and I went to the port side of the ship behind the super structure and saw the black columns of smoke and the top of a minaret at El Arish. The captain had just mentioned on the 1-MC about hostilities on the beach. After about five minutes top side, J.P and I returned to the fireroom put on our coveralls and collected an assortment of tools. We had previously taken the asbestos cover off the main line and were trying to figure out how to break the bolts loose to replace the faulty steam gasket. So everyone will know this was a small leak on the inside of the valve and in my opinion posed no one a chance for injury. There was a repair project that could have been put off till a future date. Before we were able to break the first bolt we came under attack. I went to my G Q station, R.C. Kidd and I closed port holes and hatches on the 0-1 level port (Chief's Quarters). We then proceeded back to the mess decks where a triage was being set up and the wounded coming in. Shortly after this most of the engineers (BT's & MM's) reported back to the fireroom-engine room. The port boiler had been lit with our largest plate (42) and then three more 42 plates were placed in the boiler. This boiler was brought online in 12-15 minutes from light off. We had different pieces of equipment give us trouble but were able to keep our part of the plant running with only slight handicap. Our spaces at one point were so filled with smoke you couldn't see or breathe. After the air attack ended things settled down for a short time and then the MTB arrived on scene. Word was passed about torpedoes attack, standby torpedoes starboard but the first one missed and standby torpedoed starboard the second one hit us. My station was probably 12-15 feet below the water level so a feeling of doom had set in. After the torpedo hit word was passed to standby-by to abandon ship. Shortly after we were dead in the water and I

couldn't figure out what the noise was we could hear, it was the MTB's firing on the ship. (Then the IDF Helicopters arrived loaded with armed men. Not a rescue mission either). Repel border was called. There are too many things to write about from that point until the arrival of 6th fleet on June 9th. We reached Malta five days later. After reaching Malta I was in a group of about 15 crewmen that were briefed on what we could say and write home about. We were instructed to be quite because of National Security and we would be told when we could speak, hell I am still waiting. I stayed with the ship and with a small crew helping bring her home to Little Creek, Virginia. I was discharged from the Navy on December 15, 1967 and returned to Louisiana. I have only scratched the surface about that day in this brief.

Gary W Brummett