

DECLASSIFIED

- Q. What was his job?
A. To stand by for electrical difficulties.
- Q. What was your job in after steering?
A. If there should be a steering casualty on board I took control in the after steering room.
- Q. Do you recall a collision which occurred at about 3:15 or so on the morning of 3 June?
A. Yes, sir.
- Q. Had you had any notice of that collision in after steering prior to its occurrence?
A. No, sir.
- Q. What was the first notice that you had that something unusual had occurred?
A. I was thrown to starboard and I heard the steering casualty alarm.
- Q. Had you heard a steering casualty alarm prior to that impact?
A. Yes, sir.
- Q. Would you state when you had heard the steering casualty alarm in relation to the time of being thrown to starboard?
A. About 1:00 o'clock in the morning. Practice, a drill, at around 0100.
- Q. And referring to the time immediately surrounding the collision had you heard the steering casualty alarm ring prior to the time of the collision?
A. No, sir.
- Q. And what did you do then after you were thrown to one side?
A. As soon as possible I got up and engaged the necessary gear, turned off the cables, and I had control as far as having it engaged, but there was no power.
- Q. Do you recall what the rudder position was when you attempted to gain control?
A. Not exactly, but I know that there was right rudder on. The needle was swinging quite a bit. It never was steady, so I couldn't tell you exactly.
- Q. What was your next action when you found out you had no power?
A. Robertson, MM3, came in....
- Q. Where had he been?
A. Just outside the door, the hatch, and I called the bridge on the LJV and tried to tell them I had no power and there was nobody on the line. So Robertson went topside through the scuttle and came back down. He had gone to the Ram Room to check. He seen the carrier beside us and thought that we might have possibly been scraped, and so he went back to check the Ram Rooms and there was nothing wrong. I kept trying to call the bridge and could get no one.
- Q. Did you subsequently take any action to position the rudder in any different position?
A. Yes, sir. Just after Robertson had gone back up the second time, he called down to me that there was a man overboard. So by the rudder indicator I put the rudder amidships.
- Q. How did you move the rudder amidships?
A. By the wheel.
- Q. Was it a manual operation?
A. Yes, sir.
- Q. What did you do after that?
A. I just kept trying to call the bridge and try to find somebody to find out what I should do next, but like I said, I couldn't get anyone.
- Q. Did you ever receive an order to leave your station from anyone?
A. Yes, sir, I did, Pruden, SM1. He was down in the after berthing compartment and he came down and told me to secure the phones and get topside.
- Q. What did you do then?
A. I did exactly that, secured the phones and went topside.
- Q. What did you find when you arrived topside?
A. There was about twenty to twenty-five men on the fantail and there was a couple of injured men. They had one man lying down.
- Q. Who seemed to be in charge?
A. Lieutenant Danna.
- Q. Were things in seemingly good order on the fantail?
A. Yes, sir.
- Q. And would you describe how you left EVANS?
A. There was a line of men from our fantail to the helo deck, the O3 level, and from there I climbed a cargo net to the flight deck of the aircraft carrier.

DECLASSIFIED

DECLASSIFIED

Q. Did you observe anything on the fantail that you think the board should know about in regard to the operations in progress there?

A. No, sir.

Q. Vejr, is it the practice on board EVANS to notify after steering as to the course being steered?

A. Yes, sir. If they are having a drill the casualty line will ring and the LJV talker will give me a course or steer by indicator with the helmsman on the bridge doing the manual work.

Q. Was it the practice, however, to keep after steering informed by telephone as to the course the ship was on when there was ^{an} steering casualty?

A. No, sir.

Q. So then you do not know the course the ship was on at the time the collision occurred?

A. No, sir.

Q. Do you have a gyro-repeater in after steering?

A. Yes, sir.

Q. Did you have a chance to look at it at that time?

A. No, sir.

Counsel for the board: Counsel has no further questions, sir.

EXAMINATION BY THE BOARD

Questions by the senior member:

Q. Vejr, what was the rudder angle at the time you commenced movement to midships by manual effort?

A. I would say it was about 10 degrees right rudder. Like I said, the indicator was slowly moving back and forth. It never did steady up. At that time a man topside told me there was a man overboard so then I had turned by indicator. I put rudder amidships and it just kept waving, I had no power, it did nothing.

Q. What indicator did you use to determine when it was midships after you started moving it?

A. The rudder angle indicator.

Q. Is that a mechanical device?

A. Yes, sir. There is two needles on it, one that when you move it manually it will tell you from 0 or whichever it varies. There is a rudder indicator that will come and check it if your rudder moves.

Q. Is there a mechanical device that is directly geared to the rudder available to you in after steering to show you the actual position of the rudder?

A. I'm sorry, I don't know what you mean.

Q. Well, some rudder angle indicators would be electrical and driven by electrical impulses and some might be mechanically driven off the rudder itself. The rudder was very close to where your position was in after steering.

A. I wasn't aware that there is.

Q. Where was Robertson when you were pushed to starboard?

A. He wasn't actually in the after steering compartment. He was right outside the hatch in 3rd Division compartment.

Q. Well, then he was just forward of the after steering compartment?

A. Yes, sir.

Q. Have you ever previously moved the rudder manually?

A. Yes, sir.

Q. Have you steered by that method?

A. Yes, sir.

Q. How many turns of the crank does it take to move the rudder 10 degrees, roughly?

A. I take it back. I haven't taken over by the crank. I haven't manually. When we have the after steering alarm back aft the only thing I use is the, when there is power, power driven by the wheel. I have never taken it over manually when there is no power at all.

Q. Was that the case when you were moving the rudder from 10 degrees right rudder to midships?

A. No, sir.

Q. So there was power?

A. There was no power, but I didn't have the crank. I had the wheel itself which is driven by power.

Q. So you had a power assist when you were putting the rudder amidships, is that correct?

A. Yes, sir.

DECLASSIFIED

Q. Were there lights on at that time?

A. At first there was no lights, for about ten minutes there was no lights, except for battle lanterns. After about ten minutes the lights come on just for about 3 to 5 more minutes, and they were on until Pruden told me to secure.

Q. I want to make sure that the board clearly understands that the only movements to the rudder that you accomplished after the collision were done with a power assisted device, that it wasn't your own muscular efforts that was moving the rudder, is that correct?

A. Yes, sir.

Q. Now you mentioned an indicator indicating rudder angle which was oscillating and was it about ten degrees right, was that an electrical indicator?

A. Yes, sir.

Q. It had a glass covered dial, did it?

A. Yes, sir.

Senior member: The board has no further questions for Seaman Apprentice Vejr.

Counsel for the board: At this time you are informed that you are privileged to make any further statement covering anything related to the subject matter of the investigation that you think should be a matter of record which has not fully been brought out by the questions we have asked you. Do you have anything to add?

SA Vejr: No, sir.

The witness was duly warned concerning his testimony and withdrew from the board room.

MM3 Michael W. Robertson, U. S. Navy, was called as a witness by counsel for the board, was sworn, and was examined as follows:

Counsel for the board: You have been called as a witness for this board of investigation which is inquiring into the circumstances surrounding the collision of HMAS MELBOURNE and USS FRANK E. EVANS, because it is understood that you have evidence which may assist the board in its investigation. You are advised that under United States law, no witness may be compelled to answer any question, the answer to which may tend to incriminate him, and you may refuse to answer any such questions. Do you understand?

MM3 Robertson: Yes, sir.

EXAMINATION BY COUNSEL FOR THE BOARD

Questions by counsel for the board:

Q. Would you state your full name, grade and the organization to which you are assigned?

A. Robertson, Michael W., B82 73 91, MM3, USS FRANK E. EVANS.

Q. How long have you been in the U. S. Navy?

A. Two years and five months.

Q. How long have you been assigned to FRANK E. EVANS?

A. A year and nine months.

Q. To what division were you assigned?

A. "R" Division.

Q. What were your duties in that division?

A. I belong to "A" Gang. Work with air conditioners, refrigeration, mostly all auxiliary equipment.

Q. What types of watches did you stand on board EVANS?

A. Last year I stood watches in the holes, everything from throttles, evaporator lower level, messenger. This year we stood after steering watches.

Q. Were you assigned to a watch on the early morning of 3 June?

A. Yes, sir.

Q. What watch?

A. After steering.

Q. What were your duties in after steering?

A. Duties were in case something broke down, there for maintenance.

Q. Did you have the job of steering in the case of an emergency?

A. No, sir.

Q. Who had that job?

A. Vejr, Seaman.

DECLASSIFIED

- Q. What was the hour at which you assumed the watch?
A. 11:45, sir. That would be 2345.
- Q. On the 2nd of June?
A. Yes, sir.
- Q. And inviting your attention to about 0300 or shortly thereafter, did you, do you recall the collision which occurred?
A. Yes, sir.
- Q. What was your first notice that there had been a collision?
A. The first thing that I heard was that the rams made a noise like they usually do on a sharp turn.
- Q. The rams?
A. Vibrated.
- Q. The steering gear rams - is that what you are talking about?
A. Yes, sir.
- Q. Did you hear that prior to the time of the collision?
A. Yes, sir. Then the next thing I knew I was on my back. I thought the ship was going over.
- Q. You say the rams made a noise like they do in a sharp turn?
A. Yes, sir, at high speeds.
- Q. What has your experience been as to the amount of rudder or speed which creates that type of noise?
A. Well, I have been back there quite a few times when it has made a sharp turn at high speeds, so I know how it sounds.
- Q. And what is the rudder angle when you observed it under those circumstances?
A. About 20, 25 degrees somewhere in there, where it is getting close to 30.
- Q. And following being thrown on your back, what did you do next?
A. The next thing I did, I went through the after steering hatch and went straight up to the main deck to see what was happening.
- Q. Did you go into after steering?
A. Yes, sir.
- Q. What did you see there?
A. I noticed that both motors were dead and looked at the switchboard and had no power to the switchboard. All three lights, the emergency power was gone.
- Q. Did you then go back into the Ram Room to check?
A. Yes, sir, I checked the Ram Room for flooding.
- Q. What did you find back there?
A. It wasn't flooded, just a little bit of oil on deck which probably come from the drip pans.
- Q. Could you observe the position the rudder was in?
A. No, sir.
- Q. Is it possible to do so from the position of the rams?
A. Yes, sir, but it was dark back there, I couldn't see anything.
- Q. You didn't have a lantern or anything?
A. No, sir, not until the second time I went back.
- Q. When was that?
A. Maybe five-ten minutes later.

EXAMINATION BY THE BOARD

Questions by the senior member:

- Q. Then how did you determine there was oil on deck?
A. There were battle lanterns right next to where you go through the hatch, and it was shining towards there. To determine where the rams were turned you would have to look in the far corners and there was no light over that way.

DECLASSIFIED

EXAMINATION BY COUNSEL FOR THE BOARD

Questions by counsel for the board:

Q. Well, returning to the first time you went into the after steering room, what action did you take?

A. First, I started knocking on the doors to see if I could get a sounding. Then I opened up one side of the hatch and no water came out so I went ahead and opened up the other side. I looked inside to see if I could see any flooding or busted VDS lines for oil, and I couldn't see as it was pretty dark. But I noticed a little bit on the deck where the one battle lantern was on. Then I just went ahead and dogged it and I came back.

Q. Is that when you went topside?

A. I went topside again.

Q. How long did you stay topside?

A. Maybe about five minutes.

Q. Where was Vejr during this time?

A. He was still there on the phones in after steering.

Q. What action did you take after going topside?

A. Well, when I went topside I still stayed inside the scuttle that was up there. Somebody had put out the word "man overboard," so I called down to Vejr and I asked him to call the bridge and have the word passed "man overboard". He said he couldn't get any contact with the bridge. So then I said to this third class FT, "Go up to the bridge and have them pass the word 'man overboard'". He come back and he said there was no bridge.

Q. What did you do then?

A. I didn't know what to say, so I went back down the scuttle and got a, I believe it was a battle lantern, opened up the hatch going down to after steering. I took his sealed beam lantern, went back to the ram room and checked for any busted lines for the VDS. There was none, so I set Zebra on. Then gave him his lantern back, went up the hatch and went out after steering.

Q. Did you take any further actions with respect to the steering gear after that time?

A. Negative.

Q. At the time of the collision were you wearing phones?

A. No, sir.

Q. Do you recall whether or not....I withdraw that. Following going to the main deck again, were you placed on any sort of detail?

A. Well, when we have man overboard, or collision I usually have a securing detail to just go out and secure scuttles, hatches, anything.

Q. And did you do that on this occasion?

A. Yes, sir.

Q. What part of the ship did you work on?

A. Well, I went and secured the shaft alleys, seeing there was no forward part, section of the ship.

Q. Do you recall at any time whether any power came back on in the after part of the ship?

A. I believe when I was standing up in the scuttle itself, when I called down to him to call the bridge and tell them man overboard, I believe the overhead lights did come on and were on for a little while.

Q. Do you know if any action was taken with respect to the steering gear during this period?

A. No action was taken as to it.

Q. To your knowledge was any action taken with respect to the steering gear, to move the rudder at any time after the collision?

A. All I know is that Vejr had kicked off the cables and put it on off the way he does when they lose control in the bridge and he engaged the trick wheel. But he couldn't turn it or anything.

Q. Is it possible to turn it by that means if there is no power?

A. It is possible to turn it by hand crank, but that wasn't set up. It takes about two or three people to do that. He couldn't steer it or nothing.

Q. Do you recall that being done at any time before you left the ship?

A. It wasn't done as far as I know, sir.

Q. How did you eventually leave the ship?

A. I went up to the ECM deck, climbed up a rope ladder onto the carrier.

Q. Approximately how long after the collision was that?

A. Maybe about thirty minutes.

Q. Did you have a chance to observe the performance of duty and situation as to following of orders on the fantail while you were there?

A. No, sir. I was just about what I thought I was supposed to be doing.

Counsel for the board: Counsel has no further questions of this witness.

DECLASSIFIED

DECLASSIFIED

Senior member: the board has no further questions.

Counsel for the board: Machinist Mate Robertson, at this time you are advised that you are privileged to make any further statement covering anything related to the subject matter of the investigation that you think should be a matter of record in connection therewith which was not fully drawn out by questions we have asked you. Do you have anything to add?

MM3 Robertson: No, sir.

The witness was duly warned concerning his testimony and withdrew from the board room.

Counsel for the board: We would recommend that the board adjourn until 0830 tomorrow morning.

Counsel for the board (CDR Glass): There is one matter perhaps we can attend to now, sir. In accordance with the board's request, a copy of MELBOURNE's standing ~~night~~ orders have been obtained and we would like to tender that part of it which relates to the circumstances in which the Captain takes over the conn from the Officer of the Watch. May we therefor tender that part of the standing night orders, namely 27c which relate to that question, as Exhibit 66?

Senior member: Yes, it will be received. The board may wish to examine these or other items of relevance to our proceedings.

Senior member: We will adjourn until the usual time tomorrow.

The board adjourned at 1740 hours, 23 June 1969.

DECLASSIFIED

DECLASSIFIED

FOURTEENTH DAY

The board reconvened in executive session at 0830 hours, 24 June 1969.

During this session the board reviewed and approved the prior day's transcript and planned future proceedings of the board. At the conclusion thereof, the board reconvened in open session at 0947 hours, 24 June 1969.

All persons connected with the board, who were present when the board adjourned, were again present.

Senior Member: The hearing is open.

Counsel for the board: This is an open hearing. Anyone who may be called as a witness should withdraw from the room. Sir, before calling the first witness, counsel has two documents which the board has previously asked me to obtain which have been properly authenticated. The first, which is marked Exhibit 67 for identification, is a copy of two messages sent prior to the Exercise Sea Spirit, referred to by LCDR Arundel in his testimony, and it is tendered at this time for admission into evidence as Exhibit 67.

Senior Member: That may be received.

Counsel for the board: The second is an authenticated copy of tactical curves for destroyers DD-692 class from data obtained on USS MOALE (DD-693) specifically applicable to DD-744 through 762. In view of its applicability to USS FRANK E. EVANS (DD-754), this document is tendered as Exhibit 68.

Senior Member: These exhibits 67 and 68 are received into evidence.

Counsel for the board: Thank you, sir.

FN Terry L. Baughman, U. S. Navy, was called as a witness by counsel for the board, was duly sworn, and testified as follows:

EXAMINATION BY COUNSEL FOR THE BOARD

Questions by counsel for the board:

Q. FN Baughman, you have been called as a witness for this board of investigation which is inquiring into the circumstances surrounding the collision of HMAS MELBOURNE and USS FRANK E. EVANS, because it is understood that you have evidence which may assist the board in its investigation. You are advised that under United States law no witness may be compelled to answer any question the answer to which may tend to incriminate him and you may refuse to answer any such question. Do you understand?

A. Yes, sir.

Q. Would you state your full name, your rate, and your present duty assignment?

A. Terry L. Baughman, FN.

Q. To what ship are you assigned?

A. USS FRANK E. EVANS, sir.

Q. And were you so assigned on 3 June 1969?

A. Yes, sir.

Q. And how long have you been in the Navy?

A. Two years and eight months, sir.

Q. And how long have you been assigned to USS FRANK E. EVANS?

A. Since the 17th of June, 67.

Q. And to what division are you assigned?

A. "M" division, sir.

Q. And what are your principal duties in that division?

A. I work down in Main Control, sir.

Q. And on the early morning of 3 June 1969, were you assigned any watch?

A. Yes, sir. I had the evaporator watch up forward in the Forward Engine Room, Main Control.

Q. Inviting your attention to the events immediately prior to the collision, where were you located?

A. Standing in front of the electrical board. It's directly across from the evaporators, sir.

Q. And who were the other personnel in the forward engine room at that time with you?

A. There was Peters, Lockwood, Peacock, Mulitch and Chief Macayan.

Q. What was the first event that you recall that indicated that something unusual was occurring?

A. Ever since I have been up there...It just stands to reason. It's not every day that you go on full bell and get a full back.

DECLASSIFIED

DECLASSIFIED

Q. Then, did you receive at any time a backing bell?

A. Yes, sir. When I was standing in front of the electrical board, I realized that something was wrong because we have an alarm system - well, it's a red light. It comes on and there is a bell that starts ringing. It indicates that the revolutions - that your indicator - in other words, that you have your forward throttle open and you have a full...Well, if you have a one-third back or anything that is not it.....

Q. Maybe I could ask you specific questions which would help. Perhaps you can relax. I realize it is hard under these circumstances. Do you recall prior to receipt of a back bell what the number of revolutions and indication of speed was?

A. Well, we were approximately doing...We were at a full bell and full 20 knots - 184 RPM.

Q. And did you receive a back bell?

A. Yes, we did, sir.

Q. And what was the back bell you received?

A. Full back.

Q. Had there been an intervening stop bell in between them?

A. No, sir. It was more or less emergency back full. But for emergency back full, you are supposed to ring it back full and bring it to stop and then bring it back again.

Q. What was done in this case? Could you observe from where you were standing?

A. Yes, sir. It was just a full back. It was just something that you don't believe - because they have done it before, but they haven't done it like this. But they have had some new boots up there and it seems like...I've stood throttles down there and they would tell me, they would say to bear with them. So we would be going like two-thirds, all of a sudden they would ring up a full or flank bell and you would start opening up on the throttle and you are calling them while you are opening the throttle, because sometimes you can have a flank bell on one so the ship will turn real sharp and fast. And so I would call them up and I would ask them and they would say, "Oh, our mistake. We blew it".

Q. In this particular case, had you received any previous notification was to the full back bell?

A. No. I wasn't standing the throttles. I don't know if there was any word passed over the phones or not.

Q. You hadn't heard any yourself?

A. No, I hadn't, sir.

Q. And could you tell what action was taken by the throttle watch in response to the back full bell?

A. Well, Peters, he had the messenger watch at the time and he was standing in front of the board - and Lockwood was standing right by the stern throttle. So Pete, right away, he grabbed it and he started closing down on it.

Q. On what - the forward throttle?

A. Yes, sir. Because you have to close your forward throttle before you can open your stern - you are supposed to. So Lockwood just turned it back to full to answer the bell. You are supposed to do that first and then you are supposed to close your throttle and then you are supposed to write your bell down. That's the procedure that is supposed to be taken.

Q. What I was asking was, what actually occurred in your observation that night?

A. Well, Pete just started to close down on it. I think he just got about maybe two turns on it and then everybody just left loose.

Q. Did you see Lockwood taking any action with respect to the astern throttle?

A. He was getting ready to open the astern throttle just as it happened.

Q. And at that time, you said everything let loose. What do you mean by that?

A. Well, from where I was standing, the Chief, he was standing in front of the air injectors that's right beside the throttle board, and he yells out, he goes, "Oh, my God, no." Then the deck plates started buckling up and the lights seemed like they stayed on for maybe a minute - not even that long. And the ship just took a big roll.

Q. In which direction?

A. It went over towards the starboard side.

Q. And what followed that?

A. Well, it threw me and Peacock up against the throttle board and then the steam lines...

Q. Did they fall?

A. They didn't bust right then. Then I had my foot caught in the deck plates and so I just... By that time the steam lines broke and I just thought we were dead. And then water came in. It seemed like 5 minutes later or so that the water came gushing in and it threw me back away from where I was.

Q. Did it release your foot from the deck plates?

A. Yes, sir. And then Lockwood, he had...Somehow his headset got wrapped around my foot and he still had them on and he said, "Let's get the, oh," he said, "Let's get out of here."

DECLASSIFIED

DECLASSIFIED

Q. You don't need to use his exact words.
A. He said, "Let's get the hell out of here," and he said, "Come on you can show us out of here."

Q. Who was he speaking to?
A. He was talking to me I guess - I don't know. About that time I was - I started making some tracks.

Q. And in which direction did you start going?
A. Well, what I thought was the ladder. I started up it and the steam just seemed like it was pouring right down on top of us. Then I fell back down on the deck and I covered up my face and my head and it felt like a bunch of - a pool of jelly more or less. And then I just started back up towards the top again. I was just crawling over hot lines and everything. I just wanted to get out, that's all.

Q. And how did you get out? Through what hatch?
A. Through the inboard hatch.

Q. In which side of the ship?
A. On the port side, sir.

Q. And did you observe how the other men in the forward engine room got out?
A. Well, Lockwood was right behind me and at first I couldn't find the hatch. I said, "The hatch isn't here," and somebody said, "Yes, it is. It's over to the left," or something. I don't know if that's the exact words or not. And I looked up and there was a battle lantern come on in the passageway, right across from sickbay.

Q. That was on the main deck you saw this?
A. No, it wasn't on the main deck - well, it was up topside. I guess you would call it the main deck. And so then I struck my arm over there and somebody pulled me over. By that time, Lockwood had already got rid of the headset, so I didn't have any problem of getting out. I then went up through the passageway and I run around to the starboard side and there was some guys standing there and I said, "Go help the guys out of the engine room." And they said, "Go back to the fantail." So I walked back around the fantail and I saw the carrier.

Q. Going back in time to the point of collision, can you tell the board where the other members of the forward engine room crew were standing at the time the back full bell was received?
A. Pete was standing in front of the forward throttle - -

Q. By Pete, you mean Peters?
A. Yes, sir. Lockwood was standing in front of the astern throttle. Chief Macayan was standing in front of the - well, right beside the air injectors. Me and Peacock were standing over next to the electrical board. And Mulitsch, I am not positive, but I believe he was on the lower level.

Q. And did all of these people get out of the forward engine room?
A. Yes, sir.

Q. Did you observe the behavior of the personnel in the engine room? How they reacted to the emergency?

A. Well, it's hard to say. I think they were more surprised than anything.

Q. Did they react well in the emergency?
A. Well, they did the best they could under the circumstances.

Q. Was there anybody whose performance was particularly noteworthy in taking the lead or organizing the personnel?
A. Well, like I said, right at collision, all I saw was Lockwood. I didn't see any of the other guys until after I got back to the fantail. I didn't even know Mulitsch made it out of there. I didn't know until I got aboard the KEARSARGE.

Q. And who was the man who helped you out of the hatch when you said you were coming through?
A. I don't know who it was.

Q. What was the extent of your injuries as a result of this?
A. Well, I got

Q. What is the present status of those?
A. What do you mean by that?

Q. How are you doing at the present time?
A. I'm alive, I guess.

Counsel for the board: Counsel has no further questions of this witness, sir.

EXAMINATION BY THE BOARD

Questions by the senior member:

DECLASSIFIED

DECLASSIFIED

Q. Baughman, did you happen to notice the times of any of these events? Did you look at a clock?

A. Well, about 5 minutes, between 5 and 10 minutes before that I had looked up at the clock and it was about 3 o'clock, because I wanted to get off watch.

Q. I don't imagine any records were recovered from the forward engine room, like the bell book?

A. I don't believe so, sir. Well, I know I was just thinking about getting out of there. I don't think anybody grabbed anything.

Q. Would you guess that this backing bell had not yet been recorded in the bell book?

A. I don't believe it was, sir. Almost as soon as we got it, they were too busy trying to back down, more than right away trying to write it down.

Q. As I understood your testimony, you had an, "All engine ahead full," rung up on the annunciators, excuse me, on the Engine Room Telegraph?

A. Yes, sir.

Q. How many RPM's were being made just before the backing bell?

A. About 20 knots. Well, full bell is 184 RPM, 20 knots.

Q. That's what a full, all engines ahead full bell, both engines, is 184?

A. Well, sir, you can go anywhere from I believe it's up to 206. Then you go into your flank, so it could have been anywhere from 206 to 164.

Q. So that you don't remember the exact number of revolutions being made?

A. Well, no, sir. I couldn't just exactly say it was 20 knots, or whatever it was.

Q. Do you know what is the average RMP per knot in this area?

A. Well, it ranges from...I'm not positive.

Q. Well, if 20 knots is 184, that would give us a figure. 20 knots is 184, is that correct?

A. Pardon me, sir?

Q. 20 knots is 184, is that correct?

A. Yes, sir.

Q. Would you describe further the manner in which you had an encounter with the telephone cord? Did you say you became entangled in it?

A. Well, it was just wrapped around my ankle about once. And I didn't know exactly what it was, until I saw Lockwood fall on it. And then I was trying to kick it off and he says, "What are you doing." He was saying other things besides that - like, "Quit kicking me." And I just said, "Come on, let's get out of here." And then one time just before we started to get out of the hatch, I just said, "I'm going back down, because it's too hot," because we couldn't find the hatch. The steam and everything was up at the top and it was getting too hard to breath.

Q. Was there any flooding?

A. Yes, sir, water came in about...like I say, it seemed like a long time down there that... I don't know how you would describe it. It came in pretty fast, because it came gushing in.

Q. Was it sea water?

A. Yes, sir.

Q. You said the lights stayed on it seemed like a minute.

A. Yes, sir.

Q. The regular lighting.

A. Yes, sir.

Q. Then did everything go dark?

A. Yes, sir. It went dark. Well, so dark you couldn't see anything. I couldn't even - Well, I knew I was in front of the throttle board.

Q. Were there any relay activated battle lanterns in place in the forward engine room at that time?

A. Yes, sir. But they just didn't...I don't know what it was, but they didn't seem to come on. I didn't see any of them come on myself.

Q. Did you ever see any come on?

A. The one up in the passageway across from Doc's office.

Q. Were the ones in the forward engine room essentially identical to the one in the passageway?

A. Yes, sir.

Q. What is your regular maintenance station? Is it in the forward engine room?

A. Yes, sir. I stand everything up there in Main Control.

Q. Whose responsibility is it to check the relay activated battle lanterns?

A. It's the electrician's job, sir.

DECLASSIFIED

Q. Do people in the forward engine room keep track of whether they check them or not?
 A. Yes, sir. Well, they all worked just before we - the last time we were on the gun line, because they check all that. They go through and, well, they more or less check all of them. I know the electricians always kept working on the one by the throttle board. Not the throttle board, but the switch box that is right across from the electrical board. There is a battle lantern that faces the throttle board directly. When it comes on it is supposed to show right up on the throttle board. Because once in a while the button would stick on it or something like that.

Q. Your opinion is it didn't come on?

A. I didn't see any battle lanterns coming out of the engine room at all.

Q. Did the lights go off slowly dimming or did they go off suddenly?

A. Well, they went off pretty...Well, just like a switch.

Senior Member: The board has no further questions for Baughman.

Counsel for the board: At this time you are informed that you have the privilege to make any further statement covering anything relating to the subject matter of the investigation that you think should be a matter of record in connection therewith, which has not been fully brought out by the questions which have been asked you. Do you have anything to add?

FN Baughman: No, sir.

The witness was duly warned concerning his testimony, and withdrew from the board room.

MM3 Roy Edmond Peters, U. S. Navy, was called as a witness by counsel for the board, was duly sworn, and testified as follows:

EXAMINATION BY COUNSEL FOR THE BOARD

Questions by counsel for the board:

Q. Machinist's Mate Peters, you have been called as a witness to this board of investigation which is inquiring into the circumstances surrounding the collision of HMAS MELBOURNE and USS FRANK E. EVANS because it is understood that you have evidence which may assist the board in its investigation. Under United States law no witness may be compelled to answer any question, the answer to which may tend to incriminate him and you may refuse to answer any such question. Do you understand what I have said?

A. Yes, sir.

Q. Would you state your full name, please?

A. Roy Edmond Peters.

Q. And what is your rate?

A. Machinist Mate Third Class, sir.

Q. And to what ship were you assigned on the 3rd of June?

A. USS FRANK E. EVANS.

Q. And how long have you been in the Navy?

A. Approximately two years and three months, sir.

Q. And how long have you been assigned to USS FRANK E. EVANS?

A. Pardon me, sir. That was a mistake. I have been in the Navy for three years now, and approximately, three months. I have been aboard the USS FRANK E. EVANS since October of 66.

Q. And to what division are you assigned in FRANK E. EVANS?

A. "M" division, sir.

Q. And what are your normal duties in the "M" division?

A. My normal duties are repair of machinery in Main Control.

Q. By Main Control, is that the forward engine room?

A. Yes, sir.

Q. And on the early morning of the 3rd of June, were you assigned a watch on EVANS?

A. Yes, sir. I had the mid-watch.

Q. In what space?

A. Number 1 engine room, sir.

Q. And what was your job in the number 1 engine room, on that watch?

A. I was standing messenger watch, breaking in the lower level man.

Q. Breaking in the lower level man?

A. Yes, sir.

Q. And who were the other personnel assigned to that same watch?

A. Peacock was the electrician on watch; Baughman was the evaporator man on watch; Lockwood was throttleman on watch; Chief Macayan was Chief of the Watch, Mulitsch was lower levelman; and myself, I was messenger of the watch, sir.

Q. And directing your attention to the events immediately preceding the collision, do you recall the speed which was rung up on the number 1 engine?

A. Immediately preceding the collision?

Q. Yes.

A. We were given a full back bell, sir.

Q. No. Prior to receipt of the full back bell. Do you recall what ahead bell was rung up and the revolutions?

A. We were doing full speed ahead - 206 revolutions.

Q. And to what does that correspond in knots?

A. 22 knots, sir.

Q. And from that, let me go back one step. Where were you standing at about the time the back full bell was received?

A. I was standing off to the right of the main throttle board.

Q. And what were you doing just prior to that time?

A. I was talking to Chief Macayan.

Q. And you indicated that a back full bell was given. Can you state the circumstances? By that, I mean had you received any prior notice of any sort?

A. No, sir.

Q. And what occurred then?

A. We got the direct bell from full forward to full back, and I grabbed the forward throttle to close it. Lockwood grabbed the astern throttle. We didn't have time to answer the bell.

Q. Did you manage to take any turns on the throttle before the collision?

A. I turned it just a little, maybe, but I never got a full revolution on the throttle.

Q. And how about Lockwood on the astern throttle?

A. I don't know, sir.

Q. Now, when you receive a bell direct, from full ahead to full astern without an intervening stop, what does that signify?

A. Emergency back.

Q. And did you happen to note the time that you received this back full bell?

A. Yes, sir.

Q. And what was the time?

A. 0312, sir.

Q. And what clock did you note that time from?

A. The clock that we had in the engine room on the throttle board.

Q. Do you have any knowledge as to when that clock had been checked as to its accuracy?

A. No, sir. I haven't.

Q. What is the normal practice in Main Control as to checking the clocks?

A. The Quartermaster comes around and sets our clocks for us, sir.

Q. How often?

A. Maybe once a week.

Q. Are there any checks with the bridge in the intervening period?

A. Yes, sir. On occasion we would call the bridge and ask for the correct time and we would set it ourself.

Q. And do you recall if that had been done during your watch?

A. It hadn't been done to my knowledge, sir.

Q. Going back to the 206 revolutions, the speed you were making prior to the back full bell, had that been a steady bell for sometime or had there been changes immediately preceding that?

A. I'm not positive of this, sir, but I think we had been getting different bells all during the watch.

Q. You indicated that you did not have time to answer the back full bell. What occurred to stop you from answering?

A. The collision, sir.

Q. And what happened to you and within your observation in the forward engine room?

A. I was thrown down to the deck plates toward the forward bulkhead. Things are still a little blurry as to what did happen. But I remember the steam was coming in and the salt water coming in. I am not that good of a swimmer, sir, so I was scared. I climbed above the air injectors.

Q. And how high did the salt water rise at that time?

A. It seemed to me that it was maybe 4 foot from the overhead, sir.

Q. And did you observe any lighting come on when the main lights went out?
A. Not immediately after the main lights went out, sir, but while I was above the air injectors, I noticed one battle lantern did come on.

Q. And where was it located?
A. I think it was on the main throttle board, sir.

Q. Is that the one that illuminates the main throttle board?
A. No, sir. That's the one that illuminates the throttle for the main "circ" pump.

Q. Main what pump?
A. Main circulating pump.

Q. And can you recall what actions you took to get out of the main engine room - forward engine room?

A. I climbed as high as I could. I couldn't get any higher. All I could do was wait.

Q. What ladder did you climb up?
A. I didn't climb up a ladder, sir. I was directed to the hatch by Lockwood. I don't know how I got over to Lockwood.

Q. And through what hatch did you leave the engine room?
A. The inboard hatch, sir, in front of sickbay.

Q. And is that on the port side?
A. Yes, sir.

Q. Do you recall who preceded you out the hatch and who followed you?
A. I don't know who preceded me out of the hatch, but I remember Lockwood came out after I did.

Q. You indicated that the water rose, I believe, fairly rapidly. Is that correct?
A. Yes, sir.

Q. And what effect did that have on the steam?
A. I believe that forced the steam out of the space enough to where we weren't burned worse than we were.

Q. Were you under water at anytime in the engine room?
A. Not completely under water, sir.

Q. How high did the water come on you, at the highest point, when you were at your highest point?
A. Up to approximately my chest, sir.

Q. And where were you at that time?
A. I was above the air injectors.

Q. Did you observe the actions of the other personnel in Main Control when this occurred?
A. No, sir. I didn't. I could not see anyone else. I could hear everyone else shouting, but I couldn't see anyone else.

Q. Did the personnel seem to help each other in getting out?
A. Yes, sir, we did. We worked together.

Q. Was there any particular person who took the lead and led the others?
A. Not to my knowledge. Just all of us were working together. Outside of Peacock, he did pull me out of the hatch. I know that.

Q. Was he already out and he pulled you out?
A. Yes, sir. He was.

Q. And would you describe your own injuries as a result of this incident.
A. I had

Q. And how ?
A. They seem to be coming along excellent now, sir.

Q. And you have been released from the hospital?
A. Yes, sir.

Q. Can you give an estimate of the time between the time you received the full astern bell and the actual collision?
A. It was within seconds after we received the full astern bell, sir.

Counsel for the board: Counsel has no further questions of this witness, sir.

EXAMINATION BY THE BOARD

Questions by the senior member:

DECLASSIFIED

Q. Peters, can we go over again how you established the time of the full back bell?

A. Yes, sir. I had just finished making a fresh pot of coffee, in preparation for calling the next watch. And I remember I looked at the clock and then we had the full back bell. I had just looked at the clock and we had the full back bell and I grabbed the throttle.

Q. And the clock that you looked at was on the throttle board?

A. Yes, sir.

Q. You said that you saw one battle lantern come on. Are you quite certain that you did?

A. Yes, sir.

Q. Could you say with certainty, how many battle lanterns came on?

A. I only saw one come on, sir.

Q. Could there have been others that came on and you may not have seen them?

A. Yes, sir.

Q. Some of the battle lanterns in the forward engine room, I presume, are relay actuated?

A. Yes, sir.

Q. Are there any that are not relay actuated?

A. Yes, sir. We had manual controlled battle lanterns also.

Q. Is it possible that some battle lanterns may have come on underwater and not within your observation?

A. The battle lantern that I saw was underwater. But I imagine there were others that could have come on that I didn't observe.

Q. On the throttle board, where is the clock that you were looking at, at 0312, in relation to the ahead throttle?

A. It's off to the left of the ahead throttle, sir. Approximately the level of the throttle board.

Q. And where is it in relation to the astern throttle?

A. Just off to the left, sir.

Q. As you stand in front of the board, is the ahead throttle on your left or your right?

A. On the right, sir.

Q. What clothes were you wearing at the time of the collision?

A. Dungaree uniform, sir.

Q. Were you wearing a dungaree shirt?

A. Yes, sir.

Q. Was it a long sleeve shirt?

A. It was a long sleeve shirt, sir, but I had my sleeves rolled up.

Q. Were the parts of your body that were covered by clothing of any kind?

A. Yes, sir. I - the only part of my body that was that was covered with clothing. The rest was uncovered, sir.

Q. Do you know what ?

A. Apparently steam, sir.

Q. Could it have been a hot steam line?

A. There were several. It may have been hot steam lines. It could have been, sir.

Q. Did you have a t-shirt on under your shirt?

A. No, sir.

Senior Member: The board has no further questions.

Counsel for the board: Machinist Mate Peters, you are informed that you are privileged to make any further statement covering anything relating to the subject matter of the investigation that you think should be a matter of record in connection therewith, which has not been fully brought out by previous questions. Do you have anything to add?

MM3 Peters: Nothing, sir, outside of the Australian sailors treated us excellently while we were aboard the MELBOURNE.

Counsel for the board: Thank you.

The witness was warned concerning his testimony and withdrew from the board room.

FA Michael W. Peacock, U. S. Navy, was called as a witness by counsel for the board, was duly sworn, and testified as follows:

Counsel for the board: While we are waiting for FA Peacock I might say that Lockwood is still in the hospital. We hope that he will be available before the board terminates.

DECLASSIFIED

DECLASSIFIED

EXAMINATION BY COUNSEL FOR THE BOARD

Questions by counsel for the board:

Q. FA Peacock, you have been called as a witness for this board of investigation which is inquiring into the circumstances surrounding the collision of HMAS MELBOURNE and USS FRANK E. EVANS, because it is understood that you have evidence which may assist the board in its investigation. Under United States law no witness may be compelled to answer any question, the answer to which may tend to incriminate him and you may refuse to answer any question. Do you understand what I have said?

A. Yes, sir.

Q. Would you state your full name, your rate and your present assignment?

A. Michael Wayne Peacock, FA, Electrician's mate.

Q. And to what ship are you assigned?

A. FRANK E. EVANS.

Q. And how long have you been in the Navy?

A. Approximately eight months.

Q. And how long have you been assigned to FRANK E. EVANS?

A. About 5 months.

Q. And to what division were you assigned in EVANS?

A. "R" Division.

Q. And what were your general duties in the "R" Division?

A. Electrician's Mate.

Q. Are you an Electrician's Mate striker?

A. Striker.

Q. And on the early morning of 3 June, were you assigned to a watch?

A. I was standing the switchboard watch in the forward engine room.

Q. And calling your attention to the time about, shortly after 0300, do you recall any particular events that occurred at that time?

A. I remember that of getting a full back bell.

Q. Can you recall what the bell was prior to receipt of that full back bell?

A. It was full forward.

Q. And do you recall the revolutions?

A. It was 206 revolutions, 20 knots.

Q. And do you recall how long 206 revolutions had been rung up?

A. I couldn't tell you. There hadn't been very many changes on my watch.

Q. All right then, returning to the full back bell, could you tell us about the receipt of that bell and what action was taken?

A. Well, we got the full back bell, and the wrong direction alarm went off.

Q. By the wrong direction alarm, you mean what?

A. Well, from full forward to full back, there is this alarm that goes off. I heard that and I just stood there and looked at it. They were trying to answer it as fast as they could, and smash, that was it. I got tossed under the throttle board.

Q. Where were you standing at the time you got tossed under the throttle board?

A. I was standing under the blower in front of the electrical board.

Q. And how far is that from the main throttle?

A. Oh, approximately 10 or 12 feet.

Q. And is it on the same level as the main throttle?

A. Same level.

Q. And what happened after you were thrown under the main throttle board?

A. Well, I looked up over my right shoulder and I saw the electrical switchboard falling over. There were a few sparks and I looked up and the ladder going to the inboard hatch.... It was falling over and I thought it was going to fall right on top of me, but it stopped. And a steam pipe must have broke, ruptured or something and started burning me. I covered my face and there wasn't much. Just a few seconds later the sea water just came gushing in there. And I got up, I thought...I was going to start climbing things...And it settled, and it was up to about my chest.

Q. And what level were you standing on at that time?

A. I was standing on the upper level.

Q. And it was up to your chest when you were standing at that level?

A. I was standing on the deck plate.

DECLASSIFIED

DECLASSIFIED

C

Q. And did it rise any higher than that, do you recall?

A. No, sir. I knew about where the inboard hatch was and I was trying to find it. And I saw it and Baughman was in front of me, and he couldn't see it. So I told him to look to his left and I just started...He was looking around and I kind of pushed him in the general direction and he finally saw it. I pushed him out of it, and I got out.

Q. Were you swimming or walking?

A. We were crawling over pipes - just trying to get out of there. I don't know exactly which ones they were.

Q. What was the state of the lights in Main Control space at that time?

A. Well, after I saw the hatch, there was one battle lantern "go off" on the port side.

Q. By go off, you mean lit up?

A. It was lit up. And it was on approximately 10 seconds - 10 or 15 seconds. I could see forward a little bit and I knew where the hatch was and I had already seen that, but I crawled out. Baughman was out, and I was behind him. The light went out and Peters and Lockwood were still down there. They were yelling and I struck my hand down there and Peters grabbed ahold of it and I pulled him out. Mulitsch grabbed ahold of him and helped him out to the passageway. And I stuck my hand down there again and Lockwood - I tried to get Lockwood and he grabbed me and I pulled him out. And we all got out and went out on the main deck, starboard side, and Peters was there. They were starting to put him in a stretcher. And I went up forward and looked at the front of the ship. I didn't believe it. I was kind of - I don't know - sort of in a state of shock you might say. Then I went back to the fantail and waited around until they got ladders across and crossed from the EVANS to the MELBOURNE at port side. They took me up to sick bay and gave me a shower and put me in a rack. And they started cleaning up my I was there for approximately 3 hours I guess. They transferred me to the KEARSARGE in a helicopter and put me back in sick bay. I was there for three days.

Q. And how badly were you

A.

Q. And what were you wearing at the time?

A. Dungaree pants, t-shirt, work shoes and socks and blue work hat.

Q. Did you have on a dungaree shirt.

A. No, sir.

Q. T-shirt only?

A. T-shirt only.

Q. And did you recall any lights in the forward engine room after the main lights went out, other than one battle lantern?

A. No, sir.

Q. Where was it located?

A. Port side forward. It is located right there by the switchboard on the port side.

Q. Was it illuminating...Was it lit up under water or above water?

A. It was above water, sir.

Q. Did you observe the actions of other people in the forward engine room after the collision?

A. Well, we were all - Peters, myself, Baughman and Lockwood - we were all close together. And we were all just trying to get out of there.

Q. Did the personnel assist each other?

A. Yes, sir. We tried to help everybody as much as we could.

Q. Did you note anyone taking charge of the situation, or did you all work together?

A. We all worked together. Everybody was just as dazed as the next one.

Q. Do you know how Chief Macayan got out?

A. No, sir. I don't.

Q. And the present status of your injuries, how are they now?

A. My has not healed quite yet, but otherwise I am all right.

Counsel for the board: Counsel has no further questions of this witness, sir.

EXAMINATION BY THE BOARD

Questions by the senior member:

Q. Peacock, after you got up on to the main deck, you said you went over to the starboard side?

A. Yes, sir.

Q. Why did you do that?

A. I don't know. Peters was in the passageway there, and he was yelling. I went over to see what was the matter with him, picked him up and drug him out to the starboard side because I saw people out there. I think they had come up there to see if anybody was still in the engine room and the probably came up to look in the outboard hatch, to see what the condition was down there. Well, I saw them out there so I went out.

DECLASSIFIED

C
DECLASSIFIED
C

Q. Do you know who any of these people were, besides Peters?

A. John O'Neil, and Beard, DC2.

Q. Was there anybody in the passageway on the port side, by sick bay, directing your movements?

A. No, sir.

Q. Did you actually see the switchboard fall over?

A. Yes, sir.

Q. How far over did it go?

A. It was about three-quarters over when the lights went out and I covered my face. I just saw it going over like that. (The witness indicated at about a 45 degree angle).

Q. Did something stop it from going any further do you think?

A. It's hard to tell, sir. I couldn't say.

Q. Did you notice any other heavy equipment moving at the time or just after the collision?

A. I saw the ladder to the hatch falling over and a few of the steam lines behind it move. There is a pole near by the electrical board. I saw that bend over too.

Q. A stanchion?

A. It's a metal pole about this big.

Q. It's not a pipe?

A. No, it's not a pipe.

Q. It's not part of a piping system?

A. No, sir.

Q. It's a support of some kind?

A. Yes, sir.

Counsel for the board: Let the record indicate that Peacock indicated the diameter of about six inches. Is that right?

A. Yes, sir.

Senior Member: The board has no further question of this witness.

Counsel for the board: FA Peacock, you are advised that you are privileged at this time to make any further statement covering anything related to the subject matter of the investigation that you think should be a matter of record which has not been fully brought out by previous questions. Do you have anything to add?

FA Peacock: I would like to comment on how well we were treated by the Australians over there. They took real good care of us. That's one thing that I would like to bring out.

Counsel for the board: Thank you.

The witness was duly warned concerning his testimony and withdrew from the board room.

Senior Member: The board will recess until 1300.

The board recessed at 1053 hours, 24 June 1969.

DECLASSIFIED

DECLASSIFIED

The board opened at 1305 hours, 24 June 1969.

Senior Member: The board is open.

All persons who were present when the board recessed were again present.

Counsel for the board: This is an open hearing. It is necessary to point out that any person who has been told he is a witness, or who may be a witness, is asked to withdraw from the board room.

Fireman Andrew Charles Joseph Mulitsch III, U.S. Navy, was called as a witness by counsel for the board, was sworn and testified as follows:

EXAMINATION BY COUNSEL FOR THE BOARD

Questions by counsel for the board:

Q. Fireman Mulitsch, you have been called as a witness for this board of investigation, which is inquiring into the circumstances surrounding the collision of HMAS MELBOURNE and USS FRANK E. EVANS, because it is believed that you have evidence which may assist the board in its investigation. Under United States law, no witness may be compelled to answer any question the answer to which may tend to incriminate him and you may refuse to answer any such questions. Do you understand what I've said?

A. Yes, sir. I do.

Q. Would you state your full name, rate, and present duty station?

A. Andrew Joseph Charles Mulitsch, III, Machinist Mate Fireman, USS FRANK E. EVANS.

Q. And were you attached to FRANK E. EVANS on 3 June 1969?

A. Yes, sir. I was.

Q. How long have you been in the Navy, Fireman Mulitsch?

A. A couple of days over one year.

Q. And how long have you been attached to FRANK E. EVANS?

A. Since February 13th, 1969.

Q. To what division were you assigned?

A. To "M" Division.

Q. And what were your general duties in the "M" division?

A. I was a fireman, general maintenance, and I stood watches in the forward engine room.

Q. And were you assigned to a watch in the early morning on the third of June?

A. Yes, sir.

Q. What watch did you have?

A. I had the lower-level watch.

Q. In what space?

A. In the forward engine room.

Q. And what were the duties of your watch in the lower level?

A. To keep a close eye on all the pumps and make sure that they ran properly. Make periodical checks and to handle any casualties that might occur.

Q. Inviting your attention to the period just before collision occurred, where were you at that time?

A. I was standing on the lower level preparing to ascend to the upper level.

Q. And do you recall what bell was rung up on the number one main engine at that time, prior to the collision?

A. I had no knowledge of any bells.

Q. What did you observe at the time of collision?

A. There wasn't anything to observe. All of a sudden the lights went out and there was a tremendous jolt and I was thrown to the deck plates.

Q. You did not see the actions of any other person immediately before the collision?

A. No, sir. I didn't.

Q. And after you were thrown to the deck plates, what happened then?

A. Just as I was thrown down, I saw steam coming ~~steam coming down~~ and the lights went out. I thought we lost a steam line so I jumped into the bilges and then the space flooded out and I was carried upward.

Q. How far up?

A. I was pinned underneath the upper level deck plates.

Q. And was the water up that high?

A. Yes, sir. It was about five feet above my head then.

DECLASSIFIED

RECLASSIFIED

Q. And how did you get out from underneath the deck plates?
A. I managed to work my way through one of the deck plates that was worked loose, and then I worked my way to the surface of the water.

Q. Were any lights on at that time?
A. No, sir. There were no lights.

Q. Were there any emergency lights that had come on?
A. None at all.

Q. From that point, could you describe what happened?
A. It was very confusing - a lot of screaming. Everybody thought they were going to die. I saw no lights, but I knew the hatch was overhead in the immediate area. I looked up and I felt the billboard for the evaporators, and I looked up and saw a light shining across the hatch. I yelled out that there it was and someone pushed me aside. It was the Chief, and he went up ahead of me and I followed him.

Q. And then what happened at that point?
A. I helped the Chief out on the main deck. I went back and I helped Peters out and I tried to get help for the rest of them because there was nobody else in sight, but I knew they were down there cause I could hear them still. I went back about that time, Lockwood, who was the only one down there then, and I went back and called for more help. Nobody came and so I came back and he was on his way out then. I helped pull him out.

Q. And do I understand the order in which the people left the engine room was the chief first then yourself and then who followed you?
A. Machinist Mate Third Class Peters.

Q. And who then after him - are you aware?
A. I had no knowledge of who was the next one. I know Lockwood followed them, as far as I know.

Q. Lockwood was the last man out as far as you know?
A. To the best of my knowledge.

Q. And how seriously were you injured Mulitsch?
A. I had no injuries.

Q. Could you tell how seriously Chief Macayan was injured?
A. Not at the time. When I took him out on the main deck, he was hysterical and then it seemed like he passed out.

Q. Did you note any particularly outstanding performances by anyone in the engine room?
A. No, sir.

Q. At this time I invite your attention to a statement you have previously made and ask you to read it and refresh your recollection. Having done that would you like to reconsider your last answer and amplify perhaps on what you said?

A. Well, when I made this statement, I had talked to Lockwood and this is based on what he had told me.

Q. And what does the statement say?
A. Shall I read it out loud?

Q. Yes. If you would please?
A. I think FA Peacock did an outstanding act. He was the last one out and assisted Lockwood. I don't know what possible help he may have been to the others. All the boys down there were burnt badly, especially Peacock and Lockwood. They all did an heroic act in saving themselves if no one else. It was hell.

Q. Is that based on your own knowledge or what you had learned from someone else?
A. It is based on my knowledge to the point that he did do an outstanding act in saving himself and helping anyone else if he did, but now I'm sure he was not the last one out. Lockwood was the last one out.

Q. Do you have anything else that would assist the board in understanding what went on in the forward engine room at the time of the collision?
A. No, sir. I don't.

Q. And after you left the forward engine room, where were you taken or where did you go?
A. I remained in the general vicinity and assisted in carrying Peters, in a stretcher, back to the fantail and I was evacuated to the MELBOURNE.

Q. How did you reach the MELBOURNE?
A. From the ECM deck onto the flight deck of the carrier.

Q. Did you have a chance to note the time of the collision?
A. I believe it was in the general vicinity of 3:15.

Q. At any time after the main lights went out in the forward engine room, did any emergency battle lanterns come to your knowledge?
A. I saw none.

RECLASSIFIED

C
DECLASSIFIED
C

Counsel for the board: Counsel have no further questions of this witness.

EXAMINATION BY MEMBERS OF THE BOARD

Questions by the Senior Member:

Q. Fireman Mulitsch, the board understands that Chief Macayan who was in the forward engine room with you received some injuries. Are you aware of that?

A. Yes, sir. I am.

Q. Were those injuries apparent when he left the forward engine room ahead of you?

A. No, sir. I knew there was something wrong with him after, but I didn't know the extent of his injuries.

Q. When you were on watch in the lower level of the forward engine room, could you say precisely where you were at the time the collision occurred?

A. I was standing right at the foot of the ladder.

Q. And do you know at what point you came up through the deck plates?

A. No, sir. I don't. Somewhere in the general vicinity of the front of the evaporators, of the upper level...

Q. Do you have any way to account for the fact that you were not injured at all, whereas, I believe, virtually all of the others in the forward engine room were?

A. Somebody up there likes me.

Q. You all came up through the same ladder?

A. Yes, sir.

Senior Member: The board has no further questions for Fireman Mulitsch.

Counsel for the board: The counsel has one more question.

EXAMINATION BY COUNSEL FOR THE BOARD (Cont'd)

Questions by counsel for the board:

Q. Do I understand that you were submerged in salt water almost immediately after collision?

A. Yes, sir.

Counsel for the board: Fireman Mulitsch, you are informed that you are privileged to make any further statement covering anything related to the subject matter of the investigation that you think should be a matter of record in connection therewith that has not been fully brought out by previous questions. Do you have any additional remarks?

Witness: No, sir.

Witness was duly warned concerning his testimony and withdrew from the board room.

Fireman Ralph James Hall, U.S. Navy, was called as a witness by counsel for the board, was sworn and testified as follows:

EXAMINATION BY COUNSEL FOR THE BOARD

Questions by counsel for the board:

Q. Fireman Hall, you have been called as a witness for this board of investigation which is inquiring into the circumstances surrounding the collision of HMAS MELBOURNE and USS FRANK E. EVANS, because it is believed that you have evidence which may assist the board in its investigation. Under United States law, no witness may be compelled to answer any question the answer to which may tend to incriminate him and you may refuse to answer any such questions. Do you understand what I've said?

A. Yes, sir.

Q. Would you state your full name, rate, and present duty station?

A. Ralph James Hall, Fireman, U.S. Navy, USS FRANK E. EVANS.

Q. How long have you been in the Navy, Fireman Hall?

A. I've been in the navy a year and a half.

Q. And how long have you been assigned to USS FRANK E. EVANS?

A. I've been assigned to USS FRANK E. EVANS ever since April 8th, 1968.

Q. And to what division are you assigned?

A. I'm assigned to "M" division.

Q. And what are your duties in the "M" division?

A. My duties in "M" division are standing throttles down in the after engine room, working in the after engine room and standing lower levels, sometimes - where ever they need me.

Q. And were you assigned a watch in the early morning of the third of June?

A. Yes, I was, sir.

DECLASSIFIED

C

DECLASSIFIED

Q. And to what watch were you assigned?

A. I was standing throttles in the after engine room.

Q. And were you standing that watch or were you in that position at the time of collision between EVANS and MELBOURNE?

A. Yes, I was, sir.

Q. Could you tell the board the first knowledge you had that something was occurring?

A. First knowledge I received was, I received a back full and at that point I didn't know what was really wrong.

Q. Just prior to the time you received the back full bell, what speed was the number two engine indicating?

A. The number two engine was indicating 206 rpm's, 22 knots.

Q. And what signal was rung up on the Engine Order Telegraph?

A. On the Engine Order Telegraph it was full ahead...

Q. Did you note the time you received the full astern?

A. I would say around 3:15.

Q. And how long had you been at 206 revolutions prior to the time of the bell, if you can recall?

A. I really can't say.

Q. Would you indicate what you did upon receipt of the full astern bell?

A. When I received the full astern bell, I hollared out to the top watch Fritz. I grabbed ahold of the Engine Order Telegraph, and indicated to the bridge that I had answered the bell. Where it stopped I do not know. As I did that, I grabbed ahold of the head throttle valve and I gave it one quick movement closed and at the same time I opened up the astern valve.

Q. And were you doing this by yourself?

A. Yes.

Q. Did you complete the answering of the bell?

A. No. I did not.

Q. What happened after that?

A. Right after that, I was thrown to the deck plates and once I got up I started closing the ahead valve again. At that time, I heard a rumbling noise and a real loud noise overhead. I looked up and it was our main steam line moving back and forth. I got out of the way of it, and just as I did there was water and steam coming out of the main steam line. I looked over to the after switchboard. I was going to look for Fritz and I didn't see him but I saw sparks and flames coming out of the switchboard flying across. What it was at the time I didn't know. After that, I heard the top watch say get out so I went up the inboard ladder.

Q. Had you finished securing the ahead throttle?

A. No, I did not. The top watch did.

Q. By the top watch, who was that?

A. Fritz, MM1.

Q. And what about the astern throttle?

A. The astern, I couldn't tell you about that. All I know is I opened it up when I received the back full.

Q. Who was keeping the bell book in the after engine room?

A. I was, sir.

Q. At this time, I give you two sheets marked Engineer's Bell Book of USS FRANK E. EVANS which are marked Exhibit 69 for identification and ask you if you recognize them?

A. Yes, I do, sir.

Q. What do you recognize them as?

A. As evidence of what we were doing before the collision and evidence that that is my signature at the bottom.

Q. And is that the bell sheet you were keeping that night on board FRANK E. EVANS?

A. Yes, sir.

Q. And what is the second sheet underneath that one?

A. The second sheet is the bell sheet prior to the third of June. It was the second and at the time, 0000 hours, we started a new bell sheet. I secured on that one with my name.

Q. And how were they removed from the after engine room of the EVANS?

A. I removed the bell sheet with the 206 on it - the top one. I don't know how the other one got out.

Q. Do you recognize it as the previous day's bell sheet?

A. Yes, I do.

Q. And it does represent the after engine room bell sheet?

A. Yes, sir. It does.

DECLASSIFIED

Q. To your knowledge, were any other records removed from the after engine room?
A. No, sir.

Q. Looking at the bell sheet for the third, what does it indicate the time for the 206 revolutions was rung up?
A. 0311.

Q. Can you recall the time between that bell and the back full bell?
A. No, sir. I can't.

Counsel for the board: Counsel requests the admission of that record into evidence as Exhibit 69.

Senior Member: The document may be admitted as Exhibit 69. I have one question concerning it. All these entries on this bell sheet and I would like to go backwards from 0311 when 206 rpm is indicated. The previous one is 0310 at 184. The one before that is 0300, a counter reading. The counter reading is made every hour is it?

Witness: Yes, sir.

Senior Member: Does this indicate to you that there were no other engine orders to the after engine room during the period from 0300 to 0310?

Witness: Yes, sir.

Senior Member: Are you quite sure that that's the case?

Witness: Yes, sir.

EXAMINATION BY COUNSEL FOR THE BOARD (Cont'd)

Questions by counsel for the board:

Q. Fireman Hall, it is also noted that the backing bell you referred to as not entered. Would you state the reason it was not entered on that sheet?

A. Yes, sir. I received the back full and I just did not have the time to write it in.

Q. Now you indicated that you, shortly after collision, received the word to leave the engine room. Did you subsequently return to the engine room?

A. Yes, I did, sir.

Q. And what were the circumstances?

A. I returned to the engine room. Our top watch Fritz, he was on the phone at the time and he turned to me and said, "I can't get main control." He turned around and looked at our auxiliary steam and it was 780 degrees pressure - 780 pounds pressure. So Champley, another fireman, and myself, he told us to secure the bulkhead steam stop and that's what we did.

Q. By bulkhead steam stop, you mean from the after fireroom to the after engine room?

A. Yes, sir.

Q. And you indicated that at sometime you saw something go flying across the reduction gear I believe?

A. Yes, sir.

Q. Have you later had a chance to tell what that was?

A. Yes, sir. When I went aboard to get my clothes out of the after part of the ship that was afloat, I went down to the engine room to see what it was. It was one of our tool boxes that we kept our cleaning gear in that was on the port side of the ship by the reduction gears and came flying across and ended up by the generator.

Q. And after you left the after engine room for the second time, while you were still alongside MELBOURNE, where did you go?

A. I went onto the fantail, sir.

Q. And what did you do there?

A. I helped Peters. He was in main control. , and I put a life jacket around him, Champley and myself. I carried him down the side of the ship where they carried him over to the MELBOURNE.

Q. The bell book contains certain entries as to time. Do you recall where you observed the times for those entries - what clock?

A. Yes, I do.

Q. What clock was it?

A. The clock on the throttle board in the after engine room.

Q. And is it right in front of you when you are on the throttle?

A. Yes, it is sir.

Q. Now do you know how accurate that clock was?

A. It ran a little slow, very little slow.

DECLASSIFIED

Q. How often was it checked?
A. About once every four days.

Q. And who did the checking?
A. Somebody would come down from the bridge.

Q. Was it a quartermaster usually?
A. Yes.

Q. And did you check with the bridge or with main control in the intervening periods between the four day checks by the quartermaster?
A. No, sir, not that I know of.

Q. Do you recall the last time it had been checked?
A.. No sir, I don't.

Q. By running a little bit slow, how much slow do you mean? How much per day?
A. Maybe a half a minute a day.

Counsel for the board: Counsel has no further questions.

EXAMINATION BY MEMBERS OF THE BOARD

Questions by the Senior Member:

Q. On this bell book sheet, in some entries the signal is shown as Roman numeral two. What does that indicate?
A. Roman numeral two means full ahead.

Q. And on some others there is a indication of Roman numeral one?
A. That is a standard ahead, sir.

Q. Was anybody in the after engine room manning a phone circuit?
A. No there wasn't, sir. Do you mean a head set?

Q. A head set?
A. No, there wasn't.

Q. Is that the usual case?
A. Yes, sir.

Q. Are there the same number of people on watch in the after engine room as there are in the forward engine room normally?
A. Yes, sir.

Q. Suppose you wanted to talk to main control and the forward engine room, what channel of communication would you use from the after engine room?

A. I would use the phone right behind the throttle board and it has numbers on it to where you want to call either main control or the forward or after fireroom. You turn the crank and it will ring up main control or whoever you want to call.

Q. Do you know what circuit that is?
A. Three, sir, main control is three.

Q. You don't know the designation of the circuit though?
A. That's the 2 JV sir.

Senior Member: The board has no further questions.

Counsel for the board: I have one or two additional.

EXAMINATION BY COUNSEL FOR THE BOARD

Questions by counsel for the board:

Q. When did the lights go out in the after engine room after the collision?
A. The lights went out about a second after we hit, it went really fast.

Q. Did any emergency lighting come on?
A. Yes, it did, sir.

Q. How much?
A. Enough so that you could see the throttle board and where the ladder was, part of the reduction gears and that's about it.

Q. And approximately how many battle lanterns came on to your knowledge?
A. About four, sir.

Q. And was that all of the automatic actuated battle lanterns that was in the engine room?
A. No sir, we have more.

DECLASSIFIED

C

C

DECLASSIFIED

Q. Did they not come on?
A. I couldn't tell you, sir.

Q. You just don't recall?
A. Yes, sir. I don't recall.

Q. But you could see around the engine room as a result of the emergency lighting?
A. Yes, sir.

Counsel for the board: Counsel has no further questions.

Senior Member: Board has no further questions.

Counsel for the board: Fireman Hall you are informed that you are privileged to make any further statement covering anything related to the subject matter of the inquiry that you think should be a matter of the record but which has not been fully brought out by the questions you have been asked. Do you have anything to add?

Witness: No, sir.

The witness was duly warned concerning his testimony and withdrew from the board room.

Richard M. Fritz, Machinist's Mate First Class, U.S. Navy, was called as a witness by counsel for the board, was sworn, and testified as follows:

EXAMINATION BY COUNSEL FOR THE BOARD

Questions by counsel for the board:

Q. Petty Officer Fritz, you have been called as a witness for this board of investigation, which is inquiring into the circumstances surrounding the collision of HMAS MELBOURNE and USS FRANK E. EVANS, because it is understood that you have evidence which may assist the board in its investigation. Under United States law, no witness may be compelled to answer any question the answer to which may tend to incriminate him and you may refuse to answer any such questions. Do you understand what I've said?
A. Yes, sir.

Q. Would you state your full name, rate, and present duty station?
A. Richard M. Fritz, Machinist's Mate First Class, USS FRANK E. EVANS.

Q. And to what division are you assigned?
A. "M" division.

Q. How long have you been in the Navy?
A. Almost five years.

Q. And how long have you been assigned to FRANK E. EVANS?
A. Since January 2nd.

Q. Of 1969?
A. 1969.

Q. And what have your previous duties been prior to coming to FRANK E. EVANS?
A. I was a nuclear power plant operator on USS ENTERPRISE.

Q. And since coming to FRANK E. EVANS what have been your duties aboard?
A. In charge of main control. Not immediately, but I was broke in as operator and then I got in charge on main control.

Q. And were you assigned to a watch in the early morning of three June?
A. Yes, sir.

Q. What watch were you assigned?
A. Top watch in the after engine room.

Q. And what are the duties of that watch?
A. I would say to make sure that the watch goes well. In case of any casualties or emergencies or circumstances to see that things are handled correctly.

Q. And how many personnel were assigned to your watch in addition to yourself, in the after engine room?
A. Four.

Q. And do you recall their names?
A. Yes, sir, Taylor, the evaporator watch; King, was the electrician; Hall, was the throttleman; and Champly was the lower level.

Q. Directing your attention to the moments immediately preceding the collision, do you recall the speed that was rung up on the number two engine just before any emergency or any other bell was received?
A. Yes, sir, 206.

DECLASSIFIED

DECLASSIFIED

- Q. 206, and what speed does that correspond to?
A. 22 knots, sir.
- Q. And what was the order on the Engine Order Telegraph?
A. Full.
- Q. And do you recall how long you had been at that speed?
A. No, sir.
- Q. At about that time then, where were you standing?
A. I was sitting.
- Q. Where were you sitting?
A. I was facing the starboard side with my back to the throttleboard. On the right side was the after electrical board. On my right side was a ladder going to the outboard hatch. Over against the starboard bulkhead there, was a degaussing panel.
- Q. And what was the first notice you received that something unusual was occurring?
A. I'm not really sure there was some warning, but it's not clear in my mind. The first I really remember for sure was, I had stood up for some reason and was about to turn around when the collision happened.
- Q. Did you hear any bell rung up?
A. I did hear something. I know I heard something. I think it was a bell, but it happened so fast. I can't say what it was that caused me to stand up.
- Q. Did you hear the throttleman say anything?
A. I think I did.
- Q. You don't recall what it was?
A. No, sir.
- Q. What did you do at that time, when you felt the collision?
A. After I felt the collision?
- Q. Yes, well when you heard the first notice of whatever it was?
A. I stood up and was about to turn around to find out what was happening?
- Q. And then what happened?
A. Well, the ship took a hard roll and I fell against the bulkhead.
- Q. And what action did you take at that time?
A. I hollered for everybody to get out.
- Q. Do you know the state of the throttles at that time?
A. No, sir.
- Q. Did you take any action with respect to the throttles at that time?
A. No, sir.
- Q. And what did you observe the other personnel in the space doing?
A. The first I really saw, that I remember, was a lot of water coming down and then it went dark and I saw the four people going up the ladder. Everybody was going up the ladder like I had said.
- Q. And where was the water coming from?
A. The outboard hatch and ventilation ducts.
- Q. And did you notice any steam coming out of any of the pipes or anything of that sort?
A. No, sir.
- Q. There were no ruptures of any of the steam pipes?
A. Not that I could tell at that time, no.
- Q. Did you yourself, leave the engine room at that time?
A. Yes, sir, I followed the four men up.
- Q. What had happened to the lights in the engine room?
A. I don't remember exactly when they went out. I believe it was immediately.
- Q. Did any emergency lights come on?
A. Yes, sir.
- Q. Could you tell how many?
A. No.
- Q. Was there adequate illumination to allow you to leave the engine room?
A. Yes, sir.
- Q. Did you subsequently return to the engine room?
A. Yes, sir, immediately.

DECLASSIFIED

- Q. How long was it after you left the engine room?
A. Not more than 10 seconds.
- Q. And what did you find when you went back or what did you do when you went back?
A. I went and closed the ahead throttle?
- Q. And what did you do as to the astern throttle?
A. I did nothing.
- Q. Was it open or was it closed?
A. I don't know, I didn't look at it.
- Q. And what was the status of the steam to the turbine at that time?
A. There was still steam to the turbine, yes. The turbine was turning ahead.
- Q. And did you take any action with respect to it other than closing the ahead throttle?
A. Shortly after, when more men came back down, I had them close the main steam bulkhead cutoff.
- Q. And what is the effect of that on steam into the engine room?
A. It secures all the main steam into the main engine.
- Q. Do you know what happened to the steaming boiler for your turbine?
A. No, sir.
- Q. Do you have any other observations of what occurred in the after engine room which would be helpful to the board in appreciating the situation there?
A. As far as I can see, the only other things that were really done down there was that auxiliary steam was secured as much as we could do. That would be to the lower level and the D.C. part of the electrical board was punched out.
- Q. Was there any damage to equipment in the After Engine Room to your knowledge?
A. Not that I could tell. I looked down to the lower level to see if there was any bad flooding or maybe a steam leak down below and the machinery all seemed to be running all right in a quick look.
- Q. Did you have a chance to observe the After Engine Room after the ship was returned to Subic?
A. Yes, sir.
- Q. Did you observe any additional damage at that time?
A. No, sir.
- Q. And after you left the engine room for the second time, where did you go?
A. I went up the outboard hatch, starboard side, went forward and across the thwartships passageway to main control and saw that it had been abandoned already. It was full of water and there were no men there. I went forward in the inboard port passageway to the Forward Fireroom. There were men going down to see if there were men left down there. I returned to the starboard side and went up on the torpedo deck, looked around up there, came back down and went to the fantail to abandon ship.
- Q. And, approximately, how long after the collision was it when you left the engine room for the final time?
A. I would say ten minutes at the most, but it's kind of hard to tell.
- Q. Petty Officer Fritz, I have delivered to you Exhibit 69, which has been admitted into evidence and appears to be the bell book in use in the After Engine Room. Do you recognize it as such?
A. Yes, sir.
- Q. The times that are recorded on that bell book, can you give the board any help in determining the accuracy of the clock from which they were recorded, procedures for checking it and so forth?
A. I don't know of any definite procedure to checking the time on the clock.
- Q. Do you recall the clocks being checked by the quartermasters at any time?
A. They come down occasionally, but I don't know what schedule it is or how often they are checked.
- Q. Do I understand that to mean that you also do not recollect the last time the clocks had been checked?
A. No, sir, I do not recollect.
- Q. You indicated that you had a station in main control under certain circumstances. Does that mean that you stood your watches at times in the forward engine room?
A. Yes, sir.
- Q. And how did it happen that you were standing in the after engine room on this particular occasion?
A. Chiefs stand engineering officer of the watch in main control. The other leading petty officers in the division stand their top watch in the after engine room because it is a billet for a first class.
- Q. And when you stood your watch in the forward engine room, what job did you have up there?
A. Throttleman.

Q. I see. How often had you stood the watches up there?
A. Every time we went to OQ or during UNREP.

DECLASSIFIED

Q. You were the throttleman under those circumstances?
A. Yes, sir.

Senior Member: How about special sea detail?

Witness: Yes, sir, then too.

Counsel for the board: Counsel has no further questions for this witness.

EXAMINATION BY MEMBERS OF THE BOARD

Questions by the Senior Member:

Q. Petty Officer Fritz, you mentioned there were four men on watch with you if my recollection is correct. So that there were a total of five men in the after engine room at the time of the collision, is that correct?

A. Yes, sir.

Q. Was there no messenger on watch in the after engine room?

A. No, sir.

Q. Was it usual to have any sound powered telephones manned on the head set in the after engine room?

A. No, sir.

Q. Had this ever been done in your experience in the after engine room? That is, in your experience have you ever seen watches stood where a man was on watch wearing head phones on a sound powered circuit?

A. Under normal circumstances, no.

Q. Under what circumstances would this take place?

A. General Quarters, special sea detail.

Q. Was it usual not to have a messenger of the watch?

A. Yes, sir. I would say at the time it was usual, when I first came aboard they had messengers of the watch, but sometime before we did not.

Q. Do you know why? Don't try to guess, if you don't know for sure, then don't say.

A. No, sir, I don't know why.

Q. Fritz, would you review briefly your experience, prior to coming to USS FRANK E. EVANS. How long had you been in the nuclear power program?

A. I was in nuclear power school until April of 66.

Q. Starting when?

A. I joined the Navy, the 31st of July in 64. I went through boot camp, through MM/A School, to Nuclear Power School and into nuclear power prototype and I was aboard the ENTERPRISE from April 29th, 1966 until December 27th, 1968.

Q. So USS FRANK E. EVANS is the second ship which you have served for a regular tour?

A. Yes, sir.

Senior Member: The board has no further questions.

Counsel for the board: Petty Officer Fritz, you are informed that you are privileged to make any further statement covering anything related to the subject matter of the investigation that you think should be a matter of record in connection therewith and which has not been brought out by previous questions. Do you have anything to add?

Witness: No, sir.

The witness was duly warned concerning his testimony and withdrew from the board room.

Senior Member: We will have a brief recess.

The board recessed at 1400 hours, 24 June 1969.

DECLASSIFIED

DECLASSIFIED

The board opened at 1415 hours, 24 June 1969.

All persons connected with the board, who were present when the board recessed, were again present.

Commander E. Victor Stevens, Royal Australian Navy, was called as a witness by counsel for the board, was sworn and examined as follows:

Counsel for the board (CDR Glass): You have been called as a witness for this board of investigation which is inquiring into the circumstances surrounding the collision of HMAS MELBOURNE and USS FRANK E. EVANS, because it is understood that you have evidence that may assist the board in this investigation. Under Australian law it is necessary to warn you, that you may refuse to answer any question the answer to which may tend to expose you to a penalty or forfeiture. It will be for you to raise the objection and for the board to decide whether you must answer the question or not.

EXAMINATION BY COUNSEL FOR THE BOARD

Questions by counsel for the board (CDR Glass)

Q. Will you please state your full name and rank?

A. Errol Victor Stevens, Commander, Royal Australian Navy.

Q. Your ship is?

A. HMAS MELBOURNE.

Q. And you were appointed to that ship when?

A. In December 1967, sir.

Q. In what capacity?

A. As the Executive Officer.

Q. Can you tell us what previous experience you have had as an Executive Officer?

A. Apart from a short period in a shore appointment as an Executive Officer, I was the Executive Officer of HMAS VAMPIRE in 1962 and 1963.

Q. And have you come prepared today, Commander, to give us a detailed account of the operations which were carried out in and around MELBOURNE following the collision?

A. I have.

Q. And to enable you to do that more comprehensively, have you prepared certain notes relating to the detailed matters which took place?

A. I have.

Q. Are those notes based principally upon observations which you personally made at the time?

A. Yes.

Q. And to the extent that they are not, are they based on reports which were made to you by other persons in the ship and which you believe to be true?

A. That is correct.

Q. You will then have the board's permission to use the notes to refresh your memory as you go along if you wish to do so. Now, can you tell us where you were stationed during the time that you are going to discuss with us - or whether you moved about?

A. Do you wish me to go right....

Q. No, no, just in general terms. Were you in one spot or did you move around?

A. I moved around quite considerably.

Q. Now then, coming back to the beginning, what was the first pipe over the ship's broadcast system which gave notice that a collision was impending?

A. I was asleep in my bunk at the time down aft and I was awakened by the pipe, "Hands to Collision Stations."

Q. Can you give us the approximate time of when that happened?

A. It was approximately 0314 or 0315 - about that period.

Q. What followed that announcement?

A. This was followed by the pipe, "Hands to Emergency Stations", and the alarm buzzer was pressed, the emergency alarm buzzer. This was followed, almost immediately afterwards, with the pipe, "Away all boats," and the order was also given to, "Release life rafts and life buoys."

Q. By this time of course the collision had occurred. Are you able to give us your recollection of the time of its occurrence?

A. About 0315. This all happened within a very short period of time.

Q. What was the state of training in the ship as regards the assumption of emergency stations?

A. We had practiced emergency stations a number of times since we had first gone to sea - since the refit at the end of January or early February. We must have practiced emergency stations at least five or six times in that period before June the 3rd.

DECLASSIFIED

Q. How did personnel react to the announcement on this occasion?
 A. They moved very quickly to their stations with no confusion. In fact, I was quite astonished at the speed with which they did move to their emergency stations.

Q. Is there anything else from your notes that you wish to add to that description?
 A. When we go to emergency stations all the NBCD parties close up automatically.

Q. What does NBCD stand for?
 A. Nuclear Bacteriological Chemical Damage Control Parties. We went to "State 1, Condition ZULU, which is the highest state of damage control preparedness.

Q. And what else do wish to say in regard to that matter?
 A. Apart from the damage control parties, each department has its own Emergency Station Watch Bill. For instance, the seaman close up by the boats and ladders. The special sea dutyman close up to emergency steering position. The supply department goes to the galleys and the various issuing points, and the electrical and engineering departments are mainly connected with the damage control parties, they close up as pointed out earlier, their full state. The air department is closed up to full flying state. Any personnel who haven't got an actual detailed emergency station - they fall in on the flight deck so that they are available to back up any particular party or any particular part of the ship which needs extra hands to do whatever job is required.

Q. And did all those things happen on this occasion?
 A. They all happened within.... shortly after they piped, "Hands to Emergency Stations."

Q. What happened with respect to the spare hands on the flight deck?
 A. The spare hands stayed on the flight deck. It must have been two or three minutes after the actual collision occurred. I'd come down from the bridge and there were a number of seamen just near the base of the island who hadn't got emergency stations, so I told them to go and assist with getting the ladders and boats out. The rest of the hands stayed there until about 3.20 or 3.22, when they were cleared off the flight deck because of flying operations.

Q. What was the state of the weather at this time?
 A. It was fine with little or no wind. There was good visibility. There was scattered high clouds and a glassy sea with no swells. The moon rose at 2013 on the 2nd of June and set at 0748 on the morning of the 3rd of June. The phase of the moon was three days after full. Sunrise was at 0516 on the morning of the 3rd. Throughout the rescue operations there was little change in these conditions - a factor which undoubtedly contributed to the very rapid rescue of survivors.

Q. Now what happened following the collision. Firstly, to the bow section of USS EVANS.
 A. The forward section of EVANS floated down the port side of MELBOURNE and gradually settled. She was gradually settling from the after end of the forward section, until it finally sank about 200 yards off MELBOURNE's port quarter at about 0322.

Q. What was its condition in the water before it sank?
 A. I did not personally observe this, but as I understand it, it rolled over on its port side.

Q. And that time of sinking, 0322, is that the time you yourself observed it or was it reported to you?

A. I did not see the port section of EVANS at all.

Q. But you did, I gather, observe the stern section?
 A. The stern section moved slowly down out our starboard side, touching a few places, until it was abreast the starboard after end of the flight deck which is abreast the quarterdeck. It was secured to our Quarterdeck at approximately 0325.

Q. By what means?
 A. We unreel two of our berthing lines and secured it by means of that. The engines were also moved slightly to assist in holding the EVANS alongside.

Q. And from that time on until the section was cast off, was there any difficulty in maintaining it in that position alongside the starboard quarter?

A. When I arrived on the quarterdeck there was one line on. As I said earlier, the weather was very calm. It was moving slightly, a slight roll on it, but I was not happy with it and ordered another line brought out, and, in fact, we finished up with two lines holding it securely there. So after the second line was placed across I was quite happy.

Q. What was done with respect to liferafts?

A. This happened when the pipe was made to throw the liferafts over the side and the lifebuoys. It was mainly the flight deck personnel who released six twenty-man liferafts on the port side which was nearest, of course, the forward section of EVANS. There were two liferafts let go from the stern, one from each quarter on the stern. There were four lifebuoys thrown from the stern.

Q. Did you see any members of the MELBOURNE's ships company go over the side?

A. I personally did not see anybody jump over the side. I saw people in the water afterwards, but I personally did not see anybody then. There were at least a half a dozen of our sailors that jumped over the side and either swam directly to assist survivors or to free the life rafts, and commenced towing them to where the survivors were in the water.

Q. What was the position with regard to boats?

A. MELBOURNE carries three boats. The one on the port side was our number two motor cutter which was what we called our sea boat. That was manned almost immediately and it was away within two minutes. The Admiral's Barge....

Q. I think you can tell us how many survivors were rescued by means of that number two motor cutter?

A. Number two motor cutter brought back 29 survivors plus one dead sailor.

Q. Do you know from what part of EVANS that dead body was recovered?

A. It was recovered from the forward section of EVANS.

Q. And for what period of time was that boat in use?

A. The boat continued in use throughout the day as required. It did several trips afterwards to the stern section of EVANS once it had been cast adrift. It was searching most of the day.

Q. What was the next boat to which you were coming?

A. The next boat to get away was the Admiral's Barge which is on the starboard after side of MELBOURNE. The crew was there but we could not get it away immediately because the stern section of EVANS in fact fouled its gantry, and we had to wait until that was clear before that got away. That in fact picked up eight survivors from the after section, I'm sorry, from the forward section of EVANS. It also continued searching afterwards.

Q. Yes, and the third boat?

A. The third boat is our utility boat which is on the starboard side forward. This boat had damaged its port shaft, port propeller and port rudder in Manila. When we sailed, it was hoisted inboard and the port shaft, port rudder was taken out and the engines were put under maintenance. At the time of the collision the port shaft was out and the port rudder was out, so there were holes in the bottom of the boat. The starboard engine, the one good propeller, was under maintenance. We temporarily patched the holes in the boat with wooden plugs and got it out when the stern section of EVANS got past, put it down in the water and got the engine going after. It must have been about ten or fifteen minutes before we could get the engine, starboard engine, back into some sort of state of working order. The controls actually at the helmsman's position were out - under repair - but we could get the engine to work by the engineroom sailor, in charge of the engines, adjusting the engine by hand. Eventually, he got it going, but by this time, which must have been half past three, there were a number of other boats in the sea. I was not so sure as to how well the second engine would work, and we did not in fact use the boat for rescue operation.

Q. Was there any requirement for it at the time?

A. As far as we could tell there were sufficient boats on the scene and helicopters for me not to use this particular boat.

Q. What was done with regard to the ladders?

A. We have two. We have the port and starboard drifter ladder, which is a rope and wire ladder and rolled up when not in use. As soon as the emergency stations were sounded, these were in fact lowered. It was just a matter of knocking a couple of lashings off. These were lowered into the water. The starboard one was not used during the actual rescue operations, but the port one was used to recover survivors from the forward section of EVANS and the boats were unloaded there. The port accommodation ladder was lowered and we rigged scrambling nets. These are stowed on two deck. We took them down to three deck and lowered them from three deck down to the waterline on both sides. They were also used by people to get out of liferafts and boats back on board.

Q. What are the approximate dimensions of these scrambling nets?

A. The scrambling nets are made of wire, and they are roughly 15 by 20 feet. They vary slightly in size.

Q. Which dimension is that?

A. Well, you can put them either way. They are 15 by 20, they are rectangular.

Q. What was done as the stern section of EVANS came alongside the starboard quarter, and the berthing lines were put into position?

A. We rigged two jumping ladders and also an aluminum ladder down onto the upper deck of the EVANS. At the same time, there were scrambling nets that were thrown from the starboard after quarter of the flight deck down onto EVANS superstructure.

Q. Did you see any people from MELBOURNE using them?

A. Yes. There was a number of MELBOURNE officers and sailors that went on board EVANS and carried out a search and assisted EVANS's survivors onto MELBOURNE both from the Someplace over the quarter deck and over the superstructure onto the flight deck.

Q. How did they get down to EVANS?

A. Some got down from the flight deck, either by jumping or eventually by the scrambling net. Others went down the jumping ladder and aluminum ladder onto the stern section of the upper deck of EVANS.

Q. What vertical distance were they jumping - those who did?

A. I personally was on the quarterdeck and went down to EVANS by a jumping ladder myself. It was only about six to eight feet, I think. But those on the flight deck it depended when they went. The first personnel, as I understand it, jumped anything from five to ten feet. The others went down the scrambling nets.

Q. What can you tell us about the search throughout the various spaces of the EVANS which was then conducted?

A. When I went on board, it wasn't until I actually got onto the stern section of EVANS, that I learned that personnel had in fact got down from the flight deck onto EVANS. When I got on EVANS, I was astonished to see some of our chaps already on board. I wondered how they had got there. I eventually found out they had come down from the flight deck. I spoke to the senior officer.

I am not sure of his name, in the after section and checked with him what the state of the stern section was. I asked him whether he had, in fact, checked through the various compartments. He said he had. At that stage, I also met Lieutenant Commander Patterson who had come down from the flight deck and he told me he had some of his chaps there and they were starting to search. So when the officer on the EVANS told me that he had already checked - we discussed the damage - and he was of the opinion that the stern section would not stay afloat very long. I also agreed on this assumption from what I had seen. Between us, we decided to tell all the personnel to clear the stern section. Some went on up the quarterdeck and some went up by the flight deck. There were several of MELBOURNE's personnel carrying out a final check down below decks, to confirm that there was nobody left on board. We did not find anybody on board.

Q. Could you develop a little further the reasons which led you and other persons to believe that that section might no longer float?

A. Before I went onto the stern section the draft, in my estimation, was about two feet. The stern section was definitely higher out of the water. There was, as I said, a slight movement on EVANS. The superstructure were falling down from the.... The superstructure was hitting the starboard quarter of the MELBOURNE's flight deck and pieces of superstructure were falling down and I just had the feeling that she was, what we describe as "lolling", which is a most unstable condition. Then when we went on board and looked inside some of the compartments the water was up to the.... It must have been two or three feet below the upper deck level. There were several hatches - there was one in particular up forward I noticed was badly distorted and wouldn't close properly. I just formed the impression that it wouldn't last long.

Q. Perhaps I didn't understand you correctly, did you say that the draft then was two feet or the free board?

A. What I meant was the upper deck, what I call the upper deck section of the EVANS, was approximately two feet above the waterline forward. The stern section was much further out of the water than that.

Q. Down by the head, in other words?

A. Yes.

Q. What did you observe about the behaviour and composure of the EVANS survivors on the stern section?

A. I was most impressed with their steadiness and bearing, and the way there was absolutely no sign of any panic or confusion.

Q. And how many people were there?

A. I estimate and in checking, I think approximately a hundred personnel were on board the after section of the EVANS. But at no time did I see a hundred in any one group. This is because they were scattered around various parts of EVANS.

Q. Did you form an impression as to how many of the hundred, approximately, had been injured?

A. There were not many. I got the impression about a half a dozen of what I would call reasonably serious. There were a number of others with minor cuts and scratches and minor burns.

Q. How was the operation of getting these hundred or so survivors from EVANS onto MELBOURNE carried out?

A. I had a discussion with the senior officer in EVANS and between us and Lieutenant Commander Patterson, and I think it was Chief Airman Hearnes from MELBOURNE, we passed the word for these people to evacuate the stern section via the flight deck and via the quarterdeck. There were several other MELBOURNE personnel there and, of course, the EVANS personnel themselves. They were helping getting the chaps off the stern section.

Q. Well, having got them all off the stern section, what was then done about it?

A. Once we got everybody off the stern section, at this time I went onto the quarterdeck. I had a further word with an officer from the EVANS just to confirm - he was quite happy that we had checked everything.

Q. Are you able to identify him?

A. I don't know which officer it was. Our engineering officer was there also on the quarterdeck. He is our damage control specialist. We conferred once more about the state EVANS was in, the stern section and how long it was before it was likely to go. Our engineering officer gave the opinion of five minutes. I then rang up the Captain and told him that we had checked, had cleared the stern section of EVANS, and that I was quite convinced that there was nobody left on board and I felt that she would sink very shortly. My advice was that we should cast the stern section of EVANS clear.

Q. How many people, if I may interrupt you, concurred in this view that she was likely to soon sink?

A. Certainly our engineer officer and the officer that I spoke to from EVANS. Having rung the Captain and told him what the situation was, I then, the engineer officer and myself, went up to the bridge and once more told the Captain what we had told him over the phone and eventually I got the message to cast the.... Got permission to cast the stern section clear.

Q. When was that done?

A. This was, approximately, about 0400, and about 0407....

Q. In that period?

A. Well, it was actually cast clear at about 0407, when we cast the lines off.

Q. And what happened to that stern section thereafter?

A. It partly drifted clear and the ship's engines, the port engine, was given a touch ahead to assist in getting us clear. Then it drifted astern, and the USS EVERETT F. LARSON shortly after came alongside it.

C

DECLASSIFIED

C

Q. And did you see what LARSON did with the stern section?

A. I took no particular notice of this. I noticed that she secured her alongside, but what she was actually doing to the stern section I do not know.

Q. May I now Commander, ask you about the details of the survivors?

A. From our records there were 199 personnel that survived the collision and all were on board MELBOURNE by 0345. We know that 29 survivors were picked up by our number two motor cutter which was the port forward boat. 8 were picked up in the Admiral's barge, 2 by helicopter and we estimate that about 10 came in liferafts and about 100 boarded MELBOURNE directly from the stern section, by either the quarterdeck or the flight deck. I am not able to break that down as to how many came in over the flight deck or how many came in over the quarterdeck. We are not sure how the remainder of EVANS personnel got on board, but we think it must have been by swimming directly to the port side and coming on board by the ladders that had been rigged on the port side.

Q. If my calculations are correct, that would be about 30 persons whose means of getting to MELBOURNE can't be established, don't you think?

A. We have no record in the ship of this.

Q. Can you give us any information about other ships' boats picking up survivors?

A. To the best of my knowledge no other ships' boat picked up survivors. Certainly, I know there was boats from other ships that actually towed liferafts back to the ship but the chaps had already got into the liferafts by that time. No other ships' boats actually brought back survivors in their boat. There were lots of boats quickly on the scene but by this time everybody had already been recovered from the sea.

Q. Now there was one U.S. sailor in a rather special position, was there not?

A. Yes. There was one U.S. sailor, the signalman, was in fact discovered in the wreckage from the EVANS on the forward end of the flight deck. He was removed to sickbay under the supervision of the flight deck sickbay attendant. He was subsequently evacuated by helo to KEARSARGE and then I understand later ashore.

Q. That was Rodriguez, was it not?

A. That is correct. He, in fact, was the first person to reach our sickbay.

Q. I think you have already said that one sailor picked up by the number two motor cutter was dead on arrival. Is that correct?

A. That is correct.

Q. Do you know what part of the ship he was taken from?

A. He had come from the forward section of the EVANS.

Q. And what numbers were regarded as missing and presumed lost?

A. 73 personnel.

Q. What steps had been taken to compile lists of the survivors and the next of kin?

A. As soon as the survivors started coming on board, we appointed an officer to coordinate these activities, and we dished out our next of kin forms which were taken around to all survivors to fill in. Of course the survivors were coming on board by different sources, different places, so they were scattered quite a lot. But by 0440, as far as we could tell, we had the names of all surviving personnel on board. They were assisted in this task by some of the officers in EVANS.

Q. What treatment in general terms did the survivors receive?

A. Those that had come in from the forward section that were injured were taken straight to sickbay. Those that were injured that had come in from the after section were taken down to the wardroom, which is our emergency sickbay. Their wounds were attended to. They were then given dry clothing and there was hot or cold drinks, cigarettes, shoes, overalls and so on in clothing was ready to dish out as they required it. Then there was a meal available for those that wanted it and eventually we got all of the survivors, those that weren't evacuated by helicopter, to the quarterdeck, and once more there were hot and cold drinks, cigarettes available. We got our band there to play to them and we gave them a beer issue before they were subsequently evacuated.

Q. When was the evacuation operation commenced?

A. The evacuation commenced about 0905 and was completed by 1000.

Q. How were they taken off?

A. They were taken off by boats from just about every ship in around - MELBOURNE's boats, KEARSARGE boats. In fact, just about every ship that was present sent its boat over and they formed a.... I was embarrassed there was too many boats there. We had quite a crew waiting to take the survivors off.

Q. Where were they taken to?

A. They were all taken to KEARSARGE.

Q. I think you said the operation was completed by 1000, is that right?

A. By 1000.

Q. I'd like to ask you, Commander, about the air operations.

A. After the pipe "Hands to collision stations", came over the main broadcast, the main broadcast pipes do not go over the flight deck automatically, and FLYCO, which is our control center for flying operations, piped over the flight deck broadcast "Hands to collision stations; take cover; brace yourself; aircrew abandon the Tracker". Then, "Hands to emergency stations," we rebroadcast over the flight deck system also.

DECLASSIFIED

Immediately following the collision, FLYCO gave orders for all serviceable helos to be ranged. Air Operations was informed to muster all aircrews in the Briefing Room. Immediately after impact, the flight deck teams rigged fire hoses at the forward end of the flight deck and down the starboard side. Some foam was sprayed near an AVCAT fueling point starboard side forward where the stern section of EVANS had made contact and crushed a refueling catwalk. There was also a certain amount of foam sprayed onto the stern section of EVANS.

Q. Yes. Now you had some search sectors established. I'll get you to produce a plan of those in a moment. But up 'til 0540, how were those search sectors centered?

A. The search sectors were based on MELBOURNE as the datum, with a bias of more aircraft towards the 'sinking' datum as it was felt that survivors would drift at about the same rate as the ship. Search aircraft were used mainly within 500 yards of MELBOURNE with some aircraft from 500 to 1000 yards. By 0540, Air Operations produced a search plan. All aircraft were allocated to search areas and controlled on Launch/Land frequency from FLYCO until about 0610, when control of aircraft reverted to the Air Direction Room. The search sectors were based on the 'sinking' datum and covered out to 5 miles.

Q. Now do you produce two documents and can they be marked for identification as Exhibits 70 and 71. Exhibit 70, Annex A, shows the movements and deployment of helos up to 0645?

A. That is correct.

Q. And does Exhibit 71 labelled, Annex B, show the search sectors which were used up to 0540?

A. That is correct.

Counsel for the board (CDR Glass): Counsel asks that those two documents be admitted into evidence as Exhibits 70 and 71.

Senior member: We will admit them as such.

Questions by counsel for the board (Cont'd)

Q. Can you tell us about the weapons and electrical situation on MELBOURNE?

A. All electrical damage control parties and emergency positions were closed up and reported to the Main Switchboard within 5 minutes of the Emergency Stations broadcast. An additional DC generator was placed on the DC ring main, and the main split into its emergency state with all DC generators on load. No supplies were affected by the collision, thus no further alteration to the distribution system was required. Urgent calls were received for additional lighting in all weather deck spaces on both port and starboard sides of the ship. This was provided by using portable flood and "smoke" lights stowed in the Main Switchboard and Damage Control lockers, as well as rigging runs of festoon light in most weather spaces. A majority of the high frequency transmitting aeriels on the starboard side were broken or damaged when the after section of EVANS floated down the starboard side. A temporary wire aerial was rigged for the 602E transmitter and it was soon back on the air.

Q. Commander, now coming to the last matter, the hull and engineering position, can you tell us about that?

A. Immediately following the collision, the ship went to Emergency stations and initial assessments were made of the damage forward. Apart from a free flood to number one trim tank, and a slow flood in number two trim tank, no water was being taken to any compartment, and there was no risk of fire. With a view to the ship getting underway in due course, shoring operations were commenced against number sixteen bulkhead, which is our collision bulkhead, from five deck down to the keel. This work was delayed by the necessity to empty store rooms, but was completed by 1300 on five and six decks and in number three trim tank by approximately 1500. When emergency parties closed up, an immediate check was made throughout the ship for any shock or whip damage and none was detected.

Q. Can I just lead you on what remains? Is it correct to say that the main engines remained at immediate notice for full power until approximately 1030 - that's right?

A. That's correct.

Q. And that after examination of underwater damage by divers certain operations were taken in relation to number two trim tank?

A. That is correct, sir.

Q. And when the ship eventually got under way she was able to achieve a speed of 15 knots and was not in any hazard on the voyage to Singapore?

A. That is correct.

Q. Now, Commander, I think you want to say something in relation to particular matters. Firstly, in regard to your impression of the behaviour, generally, of the EVANS crew.

A. I would like to say how impressed I was with the steadiness and the good discipline of all the EVANS survivors. There was absolutely no panic, and I was most impressed with the quiet and orderly manner in which they evacuated the stern section.

Q. You wanted, also, did you not, to say something about the MELBOURNE personnel who boarded EVANS?

A. I would like to say that I was also very impressed with the MELBOURNE personnel, particularly those who went from the flight deck onto the stern section of EVANS. It was a dark, unfamiliar ship they were going onto, and they had no knowledge how long the stern section would stay afloat.

Q. And have you got something to say about the crew of the boats and helicopters?

A. I would like to express my admiration for all the crews of all the ship's boats and the helicopters who got away so quickly and searched for extremely long periods without any rest.

DECLASSIFIED

I would particularly like to express my admiration for the personnel who jumped into the sea, to assist survivors from MELBOURNE, because it was dark at this time and they had no knowledge of what MELBOURNE's movements were going to be.

Q. Are you able to identify any of them by name?

A. I can identify some of the personnel by name, but we are in fact.... HMAS MELBOURNE is in fact, writing a letter officially about this giving all the names and I feel that it would be unfair at the moment if I left some names out.

Q. Perhaps arrangements can be made for a copy of that letter to be sent to the board?

A. I will see that that is done.

Counsel for the board (CDR Glass): Counsel have no further questions.

Senior member. We will have a brief recess.

The board recessed at 1505 hours, 24 June 1969.

DECLASSIFIED

The board reconvened at 1530 hours, 24 June 1969.

Senior Member: The hearing is open.

All persons connected with the board who were present when the board recessed were again present.

CDR Errol Victor Stevens, Royal Australian Navy, was recalled as a witness by counsel for the board, was reminded that he was still under oath, and testified as follows:

EXAMINATION BY COUNSEL FOR THE BOARD

Questions by counsel for the board (CDR Glass):

Q. I ask you firstly, whether you recall seeing the moon when you came on deck after the collision?

A. I cannot personally recollect seeing the moon.

Q. Can you recollect whether there was or was not a condition of moon - light?

A. There certainly was moonlight.

Q. I believe, Commander, that you are able to account for some of the debris that originated in EVANS and ended up on parts of MELBOURNE.

A. That's correct.

Q. We are firstly interested in the ASW Group One badge. What are you able to tell the board about that?

A. The ASW Group One badge was in the center of a piece of metal approximately nine feet by about four feet. This piece of metal is what I refer to as the main piece of EVANS' debris, was embedded on the port bow below the flight deck at about the port anchor.

Q. Now, I have here two photographs showing the port bow of MELBOURNE. I have been furnished with coordinates by which you can identify a particular square and also with internal coordinates so you can identify a part of the square. Can you, by those means, establish in each photo where you discovered these pieces of metal?

A. The actual bridge was situated in M-9. The piece of metal in fact runs from LIMA-9 through M-9 to NOVEMBER-9.

Q. In relation to those 3 squares, what letters will enable us to establish the position in the 3 squares?

A. Each of these squares is subdivided. The badge was in fact, the bottom of ECHO, the lower side of ECHO.

Q. The bottom side of ECHO coming to HOTEL, in which square?

A. In MIKE 9.

Q. MIKE 9. Thank you.

Counsel for the board: Can you identify that photograph first?

Counsel for the board (CDR Glass): It is requested that a photo which is identified as Print BRAVO be admitted into evidence as Exhibit 72.

Senior Member: Yes. It may be.

EXAMINATION BY COUNSEL FOR THE BOARD (Cont'd)

Questions by counsel for the board (CDR Glass):

Q. Now, turning to Print ALFA, which counsel asks to be marked for identification as Exhibit 73 at this stage, can you give us the coordinates to establish where the badge was found in this photo?

A. It would be GOLF 3.

Q. And in GOLF 3, what letter?

A. It would be CHARLIE FOXTROT.

Q. GOLF 3 large square, CHARLIE FOXTROT small square.

Senior Member: Exhibits 72 and 73 are admitted into evidence, Commander. Can you say whether, Commander, the badge was attached to that piece of debris to your knowledge or was it associated with it?

A. It was actually painted on that piece of debris. That piece of debris shown in the photograph is the one which had the badge painted on it.

EXAMINATION BY COUNSEL FOR THE BOARD (Cont'd)

Questions by counsel for the board (CDR Glass):

Q. What was the approximate size of the metal fragment which the badge was painted on?

A. Approximately 9 feet by 4 feet.

DECLASSIFIED

- Q. With the greater length in the horizontal direction or vertical?
A. The greater length was in the horizontal plane.

DECLASSIFIED

EXAMINATION BY THE BOARD

Questions by a member (RADM Stevenson)

- Q. How big was the badge?
A. The badge was 3 feet in diameter, sir.

Counsel for the board (CDR Glass): Has the board any further questions on the subject of the badge?

Questions by the senior member:

- Q. And what disposition has been made thus far for that piece of debris?
A. That piece of debris is at present being retained on MELBOURNE's flight deck, sir.
Q. Have you received ultimate disposition instructions for it?
A. Yes, sir. When I left the ship on Monday, we had instructions to get in touch with the TSDAO in Singapore for him to take custody of it.

Senior Member: Thank you.

Senior Member: The board has no further questions on that point, Commander.

EXAMINATION BY COUNSEL FOR THE BOARD (Cont'd)

Questions by counsel for the board (CDR Glass):

- Q. With respect to any other debris...

Senior Member: Commander, excuse me. One of the members has a question.

EXAMINATION BY THE BOARD

Questions by a member (CAPT Anderson):

- Q. What I wanted to ask, Commander, is where was the piece of metal. Was it on top side or the bottom or was the top of the badge aft or forward with relation to MELBOURNE?
A. The badge was roughly in the center of the piece of metal and the piece of metal was against MELBOURNE's side. So from outboard looking at MELBOURNE, you could see the inboard side of that piece of metal. The badge was against MELBOURNE's ship side.

Questions by a member (CAPT Davidson):

- Q. WHEN you say inboard, you mean inboard to EVANS, don't you?
A. The inboard side of EVANS structure was showing outboard of the MELBOURNE.

Senior Member: That concludes for the moment the questions on that subject, Commander.

Counsel for the board (CDR Glass): Yes, sir.

EXAMINATION BY COUNSEL FOR THE BOARD (Cont'd)

Questions by counsel for the board (CDR Glass):

- Q. With regard to any other piece of debris which came from EVANS and ended up on MELBOURNE, can you identify its source in EVANS and its location in MELBOURNE?
A. I cannot identify its source in EVANS, but we discovered pieces of boiler brick and boiler brick keys in the number 1 trim tank. Number 1 trim tank has the hole on the starboard side.
Q. And apart from the description you have given, you can't further identify the origin of the fragments in EVANS?
A. I checked with our Engineer Officer and he stated that these pieces did not belong to the MELBOURNE. But he could not definitely say that they came from EVANS.
Q. Nor if they did, what part of EVANS? The parts of the boiler?
A. He assured me very confidently. He said they obviously came from EVANS, but he couldn't testify where.
Q. Were there any other pieces of debris you could identify?
A. There were no other pieces of debris that I could identify. Although we had some potatoes. We discovered some decayed potatoes in Number 1 trim tank which obviously could not have belonged to MELBOURNE, but nothing else that I could positively identify.

Counsel for the board (CDR Glass): Does the board have any questions on debris?

Senior Member: Yes.

EXAMINATION BY THE BOARD (Cont'd)

Questions by the senior member:

DECLASSIFIED

Q. CDR Stevens, through various sources the board has been notified that different items of debris have been recovered after the collision. Included among these to name just a couple, were some crypto material recovered by the Fleet Communications Officer. The board in its visit to MELBOURNE, after the ship was in drydock, viewed a piece of electronic equipment embedded in the forecandle of MELBOURNE and so on. In addition, you have mentioned a few. Would it be possible for you to draw as near a complete listing as possible, together with precise indications of location each was recovered and transmit that to the board by message?

A. Yes, sir.

Q. We would like now to sweep together all the fragments found on this subject into one document and feel that you would be in the best position to do this and would appreciate if if you would take care of it upon your return to your ship.

A. Yes, sir.

Senior Member: Thank you.

EXAMINATION BY COUNSEL FOR THE BOARD (cont'd)

Questions by counsel for the board (CDR Glass):

Q. Returning to the subject of survivors. We are given to understand that there was an earlier report of a larger number of survivors than were later actually established. Are you able to throw any light on that?

A. This came about because there were several handing out Next of Kin Forms and the survivors were initially scattered in different places in the ship. And some people in fact filled out more than one form. It was only on subsequent checking - on checking names as opposed to the number of Next of Kin Forms - that it was discovered that we had duplications of some of these forms.

Q. What was the original figure as you recall, which was later discovered to be erroneous?

A. As I understand it, there was a figure of 213 mentioned at one stage. I don't know if there were any other figures quoted.

Q. We have heard a figure mentioned of 216. Was that ever mentioned to you?

A. I don't recollect the figure 216. No, sir.

Q. Was any medical assistance asked for or provided by any ship in company?

A. I do not know whether MELBOURNE asked for medical assistance. I know medical assistance was provided.

Q. By which ships?

A. If I could just check my list.

The witness referred to some notes.

A. Doctors came from USS KEARSARGE, KYES, Australian ships PARRAMATTA, SUPPLY, VAMPIRE, and STUART.

Q. And did helos from other ships take part in the treatment and return of survivors?

A. Helicopters from USS KEARSARGE were quickly on the scene. They took part in the search and in the transfer of the medical, both doctors and patients, between the various ships and from MELBOURNE back to KEARSARGE.

Q. Were you familiar with the fact that two of EVANS' officers had gone to the EVANS after section after it had been cast off?

A. I was.

Q. Did you see them carry out this operation?

A. As I understand it, just to make sure that we are talking about the same scene, I arranged for a boat for the Executive Officer of EVANS and I think it was one of the engineering officers - there were other key personnel. They left our starboard forward drifter ladder in a boat to go to reembarc in the stern section of EVANS after we had cast it adrift.

Q. What were the arrangements made with them at the time with regard to communications with them, provision of a boat for them and things of that nature?

A. Our boat was to take them across and to lie off EVANS stern section, so they could see MELBOURNE at the same time, so to be available to be called back to MELBOURNE or to go back alongside EVANS.

Q. Was there any understanding at the time of how long they would be gone?

A. There was no time limit fixed on this at all.

Q. Were there any communications apart from the use of a boat between MELBOURNE and EVANS?

A. If I understand it, we had an aldis light in the boat. We also had a portable walkie-talkie in the boat.

Q. And in the end, how long were they gone from MELBOURNE as you recollect?

A. I'm not sure how long they were away. I remember the coxswain of this particular boat, Leading Seaman Varley, telling me that somebody in LARSON, USS LARSON, had asked or told them they weren't to go alongside or they weren't to go on board the stern section.

Q. And did they come back to MELBOURNE or go to LARSON, do you remember?

A. If I am aware the officers from, the party we sent across to the stern section of EVANS, did not come back into HMAS MELBOURNE.

Q. Can you tell us anything about liferafts and their employment which didn't come from MELBOURNE?
 A. There were several liferafts from EVANS, USS EVANS, in the area. I am not sure of the exact number because I understand some of the other ships recovered some of the liferafts. But there were definitely some from EVANS around.

Q. With regard to lifeboats, was the Number 2 Motor Cutter a 32 foot Kitchener geared boat?
 A. It was a 32 foot Kitchener geared boat.

Q. Did you have in addition to the boats mentioned, have a Gemini Dinghy?
 A. We had a Gemini Dinghy.

Q. Was that used for personnel rescue?
 A. It was not used during the rescue operations. It was used in the subsequent search operations.

Q. At what stage was it put into the water?
 A. I do not know exactly, but sometime after midday.

Q. Can you tell us if any consideration was given to use of MELBOURNE's pumps, to check the inflow of water into EVANS?

A. Yes. CDR (E) and myself discussed, on the quarterdeck, whether we should try or whether we could do anything for the stern section of EVANS. As I mentioned in my earlier evidence, we thought it was too late.

Q. Have you viewed from outboard of MELBOURNE the amount of illumination thrown by the moonlighting on the flight deck?

A. I have not.

Q. What about other lights from MELBOURNE? Have you viewed them from outboard?

A. I have never seen MELBOURNE's navigation lights on from outboard.

Q. Could you give us an estimate of the period of time in which all of the survivors were picked up out of the water?

A. The last survivor came on board MELBOURNE at 0345. The vast majority of the survivors were on board shortly after 0330.

Q. Was this last to arrive taken from the water?

A. He was picked up by helicopter.

EXAMINATION BY THE BOARD

Questions by a member (RADM Stevenson):

Q. Did you have free swimmers in the helicopter?

A. I do not know what the individual crews were, sir.

Counsel for the board (CDR Glass): Counsel has no more questions at this stage, sir.

Senior Member: The board has no further questions of CDR Stevens. However, I would like to express my personal view that the rescue operations supervised and carried out by HMAS MELBOURNE immediately following the collision, was a superb piece of work. And I have no doubt that the energetic and competent way in which MELBOURNE went about this contributed to the saving of lives.

CDR Stevens: Thank you, sir.

Counsel for the board (CDR Glass): There is one formal matter, sir.

EXAMINATION BY COUNSEL FOR THE BOARD (Cont'd)

Questions by counsel for the board (CDR Glass):

Q. Could I ask you, Commander, to identify this register as one relating to the starboard shaft of HMAS MELBOURNE. In particular do these entries relate to the period of the 2nd and 3rd of June?

A. Yes, that is correct.

Q. And I would also like you to identify this second register as relating to the same period, with respect to the port shaft of HMAS MELBOURNE.

A. That is correct.

Counsel for the board (CDR Glass): Counsel offers the first record into evidence as Exhibit 74 and the second as Exhibit 75, on the basis that we may include photographs for the record.

Senior Member: Let us accept those into evidence.

Counsel for the board (CDR Glass): CDR Stevens, you have a privilege at this stage if you wish to exercise it, of making a further statement of any matter relating to the subject of the inquiry that you think should be placed on record which has not yet been fully brought out by the questions to date. Is there anything that you wish to add?

CDR Stevens: I have nothing further to add, sir.

Counsel for the board (CDR Glass): Are you able to tell us if there is any other record relating to the starboard shaft in addition to the one that has just been tendered into evidence, or is that the only record kept of operations in that space?

C

3
DECLASSIFIED

CDR Stevens: I am afraid I do not know the answer to that.

Counsel for the board (CDR Glass): Thank you.

The witness was duly warned, excused, and withdrew from the hearing room.

LT Robert James Burns, Royal Australian Navy, was called as a witness by counsel for the board, was duly sworn, and testified as follows:

EXAMINATION BY COUNSEL FOR THE BOARD

Questions by counsel for the board (CDR Glass):

Q. LT Burns, you have been called as a witness by this board of investigation which is inquiring into the circumstances surrounding the collision of HMAS MELBOURNE and USS FRANK E. EVANS, because it is understood that you have evidence which may assist the board in its investigation. Under Australian law it is necessary to warn you that you may refuse to answer any question, the answer to which may tend to expose you to penalty or forfeiture. It will be for you to raise the objection and for the board to decide whether you must answer the question or not. Do you understand that?

A. Yes, sir.

Q. Would you please state your full name and rank?

A. Robert James Burns.

Q. And your rank?

A. LT, Royal Australian Navy.

Q. And are you a member attached to HMAS MELBOURNE?

A. I am, sir.

Q. Since when have you been so attached?

A. October 1968.

Q. And what duties have you been assigned in MELBOURNE?

A. I'm the diving officer, and the officer in charge of the quarterdeck part of the ship.

Q. What experience and training have you had as a diving officer?

A. I qualified as a Clearance Diving Officer in June 1963. And I spent most of my time since then in diving jobs, or in small ships, working with divers.

Q. Can you tell us where you were when emergency stations were piped in the ship?

A. I was in my cabin.

Q. Where did you go?

A. To take over the quarterdeck.

Q. And when you got to the quarterdeck, what did you find the position there with regard to lifebuoys?

A. All lifebuoys had been released or thrown over the side and some liferafts were being thrown over the side.

Q. How many lifebuoys are stored there? Can you tell?

A. Four.

Q. And liferafts, in number, how many?

A. I'm not quite sure of the number, sir, but there is quite a few on both sides of the vicinity of the quarterdeck.

Q. How many liferafts on the quarterdeck did you see get in the water?

A. I didn't see one actually thrown over, but there were at least 4 I know of in the water in the vicinity.

Q. What was the first action that you took?

A. I saw a chap in the water who was in trouble. I jumped over the side and went to his aid - to help him out.

Q. Where was he in relation to MELBOURNE?

A. He was in the water coming down the starboard side of MELBOURNE's quarterdeck, about 10 or 20 feet. The ship still had some way on it at that stage.

Q. When you got to him, what did you do?

A. I put him in a liferaft, well, towed him over to a liferaft, put him in. He had some injuries. I used his t-shirt and the drogue of the liferaft to bandage him up. I left him and went on to another character I heard calling out in the water.

Q. Well, before you leave him now, will you tell us what his injuries were?

A. He seemed to have been crushed. His left side was... Well, I think he had a broken rib. I am not a medical man, but I think he had a broken rib or maybe a couple of broken ribs and he was coughing up a little bit of blood. And he had a smashed arm.

Q. Could you ascertain his name?

A. No, I didn't.

DECLASSIFIED

Q. Well, you got him inboard that raft, didn't you?
A. Yes, sir.

Q. And at that stage, how far was it from MELBOURNE? How far was the raft from MELBOURNE?
A. About 150 to 200 yards, sir.

Q. And where did you go when you swam away from that raft?
A. Well, I heard somebody else calling out in the water and I saw a man in the water when he was about another 150 or 200 yards further away from the ship. I swam over to him and took him into another liferaft.

Q. Where was that liferaft that you got him into.
A. It was pretty close to the position of the lifebuoys. It was one of EVANS' liferafts.

Q. In a moment I will get you to draw a diagram of relative positions of these liferafts and lifebuoys. Will you be able to do that?
A. Yes, sir.

Q. While we continue with the narrative, what was this second man's condition?
A. A little bit of shock, and he had an injured left hand.

Q. And, as I think you said, you got him into the second liferaft.
A. Yes, sir.

Q. Were you wearing a life jacket yourself or not?
A. No, sir.

Q. Were you using any gear?
A. No, sir.

Q. Well, where did you proceed from that second raft?
A. Well, I heard people calling out in the water, and it appeared to be from MELBOURNE's port quarter. I knew where the bow of the EVANS was and I swam over in that direction. I couldn't find anybody and I returned back to the last liferaft where the second chap was.

Q. Well, what distance did you swim from the second raft to where you heard the voices on MELBOURNE's port side?
A. I have no real idea, sir. I swam around for quite a while checking liferafts out while I went past them.

Q. When you got up to where the voices were coming from, did that bring you near where the bow section of EVANS was?
A. About half way from where the liferafts were to the bow section was, sir.

Q. Can you tell us the name of the second man whom you put in the second raft?
A. He was an SH3 and I understand it to be G-O-L-D-Z, from California. He had said that he had recently joined the ship when I was talking to him.

Q. Well, you discovered that, didn't you, when you went back to that second raft the second time?
A. Yes, sir.

Q. Well, having gone back there and established his name, what was the next thing that you did?
A. I had with me a flashing rescue light, which I trained in the direction of the New Zealand ship BLACKPOOL and their 3 in 1 whaler came over and picked up the raft that we were in and another raft and towed us back to MELBOURNE.

Q. Where was this other raft that you towed along side?
A. It was about 20 yards from the raft that I put the second chap in.

Q. Was that empty or did it have anyone in it?
A. It was empty, sir.

Q. Where was the first raft by this stage, with the first survivor?
A. It was back close towards the ship. I couldn't actually see it, but there was a helicopter in the immediate vicinity of the raft.

Q. And as I think you said, BLACKPOOL's whaler towed the two rafts back to MELBOURNE?
A. Yes, sir.

Q. Now, would you be able to make a drawing on that board over there, using a felt tipped pencil, which gives us a rough idea of where you recovered these men in relation to where MELBOURNE was at the time.

A. That's the stern of MELBOURNE, sir, and the stern of EVANS along side. The first survivor was picked up at approximately this position. The second one more in that position. The bow of EVANS when I saw it in the water, was in about this position, appeared to be over here somewhere.

Q. All right. Now, would you put 1 under the first "X" where you picked up the first survivor, 2 under the second "X" and "V" next to the bow of the EVANS. Now, can you give us a rough idea of the distance from the MELBOURNE's stern to "X" 1 and to "X" 2?

A. Only an estimation, sir. That was about 150 to 200 yards. This was about the same, maybe just a little further.

DECLASSIFIED

Q. Between the two points, "X" 1 to "X" 2.
A. Yes, sir. And I wouldn't like to estimate that one at all, sir. It was a lot further than I thought it was.

Q. Where was the area where you investigated because you heard voices?
A. Down in this area here, sir.

Q. And when you were swimming around there, did you come upon any people in the water?
A. Not people in the water, sir. A motor cutter was operating in the area, and there were a couple of liferafts in the area also.

Q. Well, the area that you have described as the area where you swam investigating, it appears there with a straight line with a hermes type of serpent entwined on it. Is that near the mark?
A. Yes, sir.

Q. Thank you. Could you resume your seat, please?

Q. I want to ask you about liferafts. What liferafts did you see in the water during your swimming operations?
A. There were three or four American rafts in the area and I noticed about 4 Australian rafts as well. I'm not sure where any particular ones were. The first survivor was put in to an American raft. There was an Australian raft very close by then. The second one went into an American raft. There was another American raft close there, and two Australian rafts another 20 yards away.

Q. Well, would the position be that you had more rafts in the water than were called for in the situation that you investigated?
A. There was definitely plenty of rafts.

Q. In that total area, would 8 be, 4 Australian and 4 American, the number of rafts that you personally encountered?
A. As far as I can remember, there were about 8. Yes, sir. Plus 4 lifebuoys in the area, and lifeboats in the same position.

Q. Is it your belief that no one would have been lost for want of a liferaft or lifebuoy in that area astern of MELBOURNE?
A. That's correct, sir.

Q. Did you see how long it was before EVANS bow section sank?
A. I had no idea of time throughout the whole of it.

Q. Do the SAR divers come under your authority, Lieutenant?
A. They work for the Commanding Officer of the helicopter squadron. I am responsible for their diving practices when they are not jumping from helicopters - their routine monthly diving.

Q. Are you able to tell us the extent to which they participated in the work of the helos that night or any other rescue work that night?
A. I have no idea about the helos that night. They were employed all during the subsequent day.

Q. With the helos?
A. Yes, sir.

Q. And by day, you mean starting from what time?
A. Well, I went up onto the bridge at approximately 12 noon, and the sky divers were up in the helicopters at that stage.

Q. And you don't actually know when their employment began?
A. No, sir.

Q. Can you tell us what illumination was available in the area in which you were swimming?
A. All the liferafts had a seacell light on top of them. There were smoke flares there giving off some light. There was illumination from helicopters in the form of searchlights. MELBOURNE's boats were using aldis lights and damage control lights. BLACKPOOL's boats were doing the same. The escort ships that were closing in on the area were using search lights and signal lamps to illuminate.

Q. Well, would you say that the state of the illumination left nothing to be desired for rescue purposes?
A. It was just about as bright as day, sir.

Counsel for the board (CDR Glass): Counsel offers in evidence Exhibit 76, the drawing which now stands on the easel. By your authority, I will mark the stern of the MELBOURNE with the letter "M".

LT Burns: Yes, sir.

EXAMINATION BY COUNSEL FOR THE BOARD (Cont'd)

Questions by counsel for the board (CDR Glass):

Q. We are interested to know LT, whether you noticed any cases of malfunction with regard to any of the life saving equipment?
A. None whatsoever, sir.

C O
DECLASSIFIED

Q. On the contrary did you notice the equipment you saw function properly?

A. Yes, sir. Just about every raft I went into, you could hear the gas bleeding off, as it was a fairly warm night, and there was excess gas in the rafts.

Q. And did this apply to both American and Australian rafts?

A. Yes, sir.

Q. I think you have also said the lighting arrangements in regard to all the life saving equipment functioned properly?

A. The seacell lights were working on each one I went to, sir.

Q. What sort of lights did you call them?

A. Seacell lights, a cell when immersed in salt water...

Q. S-E-A-C-E-L-L?

A. Yes, sir.

Counsel for the board (CDR Glass): Counsel has no further questions, sir.

Senior Member: The board has no further questions.

Counsel for the board (CDR Glass): LT Burns, you have the right if you wish to make any further statement regarding matters under investigation, that you think should be placed on record, and which has not yet been brought out by the questions to date. Is there any additional matter which you wish to introduce?

LT Burns: No, sir.

The witness was warned concerning his testimony and withdrew from the hearing room.

Senior Member: There will be a brief recess.

The board recessed at 1622 hours, 24 June 1969.

DECLASSIFIED

DECLASSIFIED

All persons connected with the board who were present when the board recessed were again sent.

EXAMINATION BY COUNSEL FOR THE BOARD

Questions by Counsel for the board:

432

DECLASSIFIED

DECLASSIFIED

Q. Did you observe anything particular as to MELBOURNE in the way of lighting or anything of that nature?

A.. No, sir, I didn't.

Q. Following your discovery that the bow had been cut off, what did you do?

A. I went back to the fantail and when I got back there, Mr. Covert was telling people on the fantail to spread out. Then I - there is a hatch on the fantail about two feet high and I stood up on it. I didn't say anything about taking command, but I realized that I was the senior officer present on the stern of the ship at that point.

Q. And what did you do in the way of organizing the persons on the fantail?

A. Well, the first concern I had was that I thought we were going to sink pretty quickly there and we had some injured people and I was sure there was some that couldn't swim. So I had those that couldn't swim raise their hand and asked for a exchange of life jackets from those who were good swimmers for those who couldn't swim.

Q. What action did you take to locate additional life jackets?

A. Mr. Hiltz, the Weapons Officer was looking around for life jackets at that time. He came up with them shortly after that. I can't say exactly how long but we finally got the belt type life jackets back there and I believe everyone had a life jacket when we got all those back there.

Q. What action did you take with respect to life rafts?

A. I sent the DCA up the starboard side to--

Q. By DCA you mean what?

A. Damage Control Assistant, Mr. Lare, to try and put our boat in the water. I had noticed it hanging there by one of the davits when I went up there, and I thought it would still float if we could cut it down. He was unsuccessful in that and I believe he got two, I believe it was three of the EVANS' life rafts over the side. Also, I noticed that the MELBOURNE was alongside at this time, and I noticed that MELBOURNE had dropped 3 or 4 of her life rafts off her stern. I sent First Class Signalmen Pruden and one other seaman over there to try to bring them alongside.

Q. How did you direct them to do that?

A. I told the First Class Signalmen to go over there and try to get those life rafts alongside here.

Q. My question meant, how was he to get them alongside?

A. He was to swim over and pull them over.

Q. And did he do that?

A. He swam over there, but he was unable to get them alongside.

Q. What did Pruden do at that time then?

A. Well, prior to this is the incident I think you are talking about. Shortly after I got back to the fantail, Pruden and one or two other sailors came out of the hatch I was standing on. Pruden reported to me that all the living spaces back aft were clear of people and they had set ZEBRA back there.

Q. Had he done that on his own initiative?

A. He did that on his own initiative.

Q. And did Pruden then remain in the life raft to which he had swum?

A. No, he came back to the ship. I don't recall seeing him after that but I'm sure he came back to the ship.

Q. To your knowledge, did the EVANS' life rafts inflate in a normal manner when they were released?

A. Three of them inflated, I don't know whether they what procedures they went through to get them inflated or whether they inflated by themselves.

Q. After the MELBOURNE was alongside, what actions were taken to secure the EVANS to the MELBOURNE?

A. My own personal knowledge of what went on, I don't know. I was back on the fantail the entire time.

Q. Were you able to determine that there had been some lines passed?

A. Yes, sir.

Q. What measures were taken to remove personnel, first of all to treat the injured personnel on board EVANS?

A. There were a few first aids kits on the fantail. They were trying to bandage those that were bleeding and comfort those that were burnt as much as they could. We gathered them all together on the fantail and as soon as we got the word that we were up alongside the MELBOURNE and there was a ladder over, we sent the injured over to be removed from the ship.

Q. And how were they removed?

A. Some of them crawled up the ladder that were able and the others were hoisted up on stretchers.

DECLASSIFIED

DECLASSIFIED

Q. And what efforts were made, in addition to the ones you reported by Pruden, to determine that there were no survivors remaining below in the stern section of EVANS?

A. Well, I think it was about five minutes after Pruden reported to me, the Chief Engineer came back there and reported that the main engineering spaces were clear of people. I told him to get a couple of his engineers and go through the after section again ensuring that all the people were out and that ZEEBA was set back there.

Q. Did you subsequently receive a report from him?

A. Yes, sir, I did.

Q. And what was the report?

A. That ZEEBA was set and there were not any personnel back there.

Q. Did you receive a report as to the conditions of the throttles of the engines?

A. Yes, sir. Mr. Covert reported that he had secured the after plant.

Q. Did you observe any personnel from MELBOURNE come aboard?

A. Yes, sir. I only remember seeing two of them, although I understand there were more. I saw, as I learned later, the Executive Officer was on the fantail and another man. I don't know if he was an officer or an enlisted man.

Q. And what did they do when they were aboard?

A. They were trying to verify that we had everyone off the ship or out of the spaces down below. Mr. Covert and I reported that we had checked and double checked the spaces and that everyone was out.

Q. And to this time had anything occurred which changed your mind that the ship might be sinking?

A. It seemed to be going down by the bow still and I thought it was going to sink.

Q. Could you tell how much freeboard there was at the forward section of the stern section?

A. It would just be a guess. Another thing that led me to believe that there was more going wrong was that I heard some noises from where I thought was down below, and as it turned out, I think it was MELBOURNE's flight deck rubbing against our stack. But I thought it was possibly bulkheads giving way.

Q. Do you know if water was going into the forward engine room during this period?

A. I knew the forward engine room was flooded.

Q. Did you receive any report as to the extent of flooding?

A. I was told the forward engine room was flooded just below the hatch going down the main deck passageway, and that the after fireroom was taking water.

Q. Approximately how long after the collision did you begin removing personnel from EVANS to MELBOURNE?

A. I would say 20 to 30 minutes.

Q. And how long was it until all personnel were removed?

A. I would say it only took about 10 minutes to get everyone off.

Q. And what was the basis for the decision to remove personnel from EVANS' stern?

A. I thought the ship was sinking.

Q. Was this opinion concurred in with anybody else with whom you consulted?

A. The Chief Engineer, Mr. Covert.

Q. And prior to leaving the ship, did you make any efforts to safeguard any material of any sort?

A. Other than setting ZEEBA, no, sir.

Q. And did you subsequently come aboard and do any safeguarding action?

A. Yes, sir. I came back the next morning, I think it was about 0800 or a little later, and secured the classified material in my stateroom and went through the rest of the officers' staterooms back aft and picked up whatever classified material was in the open.

Q. Was that the same day?

A. Yes, sir.

Q. And where was the EVANS at that time?

A. It was in the same position where the collision occurred.

Q. Was there any other ship alongside at that time?

A. Not when I first got aboard, while I was aboard, the LARSON came alongside.

Q. Would you state the circumstances, then, of your going back aboard EVANS to do this task?

A. I was on the MELBOURNE and the Executive Officer and myself and the supply officer and the first class personnelman aboard ship went back to secure the pay records, the personnel records and the classified material that we could find.

DECLASSIFIED

Q. What was the basis of the decision to return? Had you by this time determined that it may not be sinking?

A. It was still afloat, and we thought it might not sink so we went back there. We weren't allowed to go right on board. The LARSON apparently had been put in charge of what was going on and they had a damage control party on board. So we stopped at the LARSON for about a half an hour before they let us go back to the ship to secure this material.

Q. Now returning to the initial period after collision - could you state the status of discipline on the stern section of EVANS during this period?

A. It was not any problem at all, sir. The crew did exactly as they were told. They behaved in a manner that made me proud to be a member of the crew.

Q. Were there any individual performances that you think were worthy of mentioning to the board?

A. Yes, sir. I believe the performance of the First Class Signaller Pruden going through the after section of the ship at a point when it appeared to me it was sinking and I'm sure that everybody else had the same thought. He went through there making sure that all the people were out of there on his own initiative and came up and reported it to me.

Q. Any other individual performances?

A. Yes, sir. LTJG Covert did a very good job. He was thinking clearly and doing his job properly. Secured his plant and made sure all of his people were out of there and conducted a search and reported to me everything that he was doing.

Q. Did you observe the actions of MELBOURNE after you went aboard with respect to the treatment of the crew of EVANS?

A. Yes, sir. They were well organized and were functioning smoothly when I got aboard. Taking a muster, the injured were all taken to one area and the rest of us were all taken to the wardroom.

Q. After your reboarding of the EVANS to remove classified material, what disposition did you make of that material?

A. I brought it back to the KEARSARGE with me and stowed it in one of their safes, sir.

Q. And the subsequent disposition after that time?

A. I took it off the KEARSARGE and stowed it in a safe on the base here.

Q. After the collision, did you notice any malfunctions of equipment which affected the rescue operations in any way?

A. No, sir, not off hand.

Counsel for the board: Counsel have no further questions for this witness sir.

EXAMINATION BY THE BOARD

Questions by the Senior Member:

Q. Mr. Dunne, were there any medical officers aboard EVANS at the time of the collision?

A. There was a Chief Corpsman.

Q. Were there no other corpsman?

A. There was a seaman that worked for him. He wasn't designated as a corpsman.

Q. Did he survive?

A. No, sir.

Q. Did the Chief survive?

A. No, sir.

Q. Were first aid kits available to you in your work on the fantail with the wounded?

A. Yes, sir.

Q. Were there adequate numbers of them?

A. Yes, sir.

Q. Were they adequately stocked?

A. I can't say for sure.

Q. Did you feel the need for additional materials for first aid at that time?

A. We might have needed something for the burns. We didn't know what to do for the people that were burned. There didn't seem to be anything in there to help them out.

Q. There was no burn ointment or dressing of any kind in the first aid box?

A. I can't say that, sir.

Q. You felt the need for additional burn material?

A. Yes, sir.

Q. Did it become desirable to use a sedative or pain killer of any type for any of the wounded?

A. I don't believe so, sir. They were hurting but I didn't hear anyone screaming or anything like that. The thought didn't cross my mind at the time.

DECLASSIFIED

Q. Do you know whether morphine was in the first aid kits or not?
A. I don't know, sir.

Q. But you didn't feel the need of it?
A. No, sir.

Q. Do you have any comment on the state of damage control training of USS FRANK E. EVANS that was revealed by the reaction to this collision?

A. I think our damage control training state was fairly high, sir. I think the crew reacted well, and I think we did all right as far as keeping the ship in shape after the collision or what was left of it. The battle lanterns that I heard about all worked. And the, well I didn't see it, but just what I've heard that the damage controlmen were running around trying to get the job done, to make sure ZEBRA was set. Actually it was set right away by personnel in the compartments as it should be.

Q. Were there more than just First Class Signalman Pruden who assisted in setting condition ZEBRA?

A. Yes, sir, there were one or two sailors who were with him and I understand that some of the engineering people were going around also. I didn't see that myself.

Q. Do you know of any instances of your own knowledge in which battle lanterns did not function as designed?

A. I know of no instances.

Q. Were any such instances reported to you second hand?
A. No, sir.

Q. Did you notice any malfunction of any life saving equipment in any way?
A. No, sir.

Q. You indicated you were redistributing a number of life jackets which was smaller than the number of people. How do you account for the fact that there were not enough life jackets immediately available?

A. This was immediately after I got back to the fantail, sir, and we hadn't had a chance to break them out yet in the different places where they were stowed. There were some kapoks that were stowed on the main deck that were out and these are the ones that I was trying to get redistributed.

Q. Were life jackets stowed at various central points around the ship or was each man issued his own and required to keep it with him?

A. They were stowed at various points around the ship, sir.

Q. Were there life jackets in the berthing compartments?
A. I don't believe so.

Q. Did you notice any instance of lack of training in any particular general area of training?
A. No, sir, I can't say I did.

Q. Do you have any comment on whether the emergency lighting provided by design in the ship was adequate under the circumstances?

A. My only comment would be from second hand information, and as I understand it, the lighting in the forward part of the ship saved quite a few lives up there.

Q. In the forward part of the ship?

A. Yes, sir, and in the after part of the ship, I understand that the people that came out of the forward engine room were able to find their way out due to a battle lantern right over the hatch. This is second hand information.

Q. With respect to the jobs that you told various people to do below decks, did you receive any reports that it was too dark to do what was needed to be done?

A. No, sir, there seemed to be plenty of battle lanterns and flashlights available to people.

Senior Member: I have no further questions of Lieutenant Dunne.

Counsel for the board: I have one further, if I may.

EXAMINATION BY COUNSEL FOR THE BOARD

Questions by counsel for the board:

Q. You indicated, I believe, that after you had broken out life jackets from all the storage spaces, everyone had a life jacket by the time the ship was abandoned, is that correct?

A. Yes, sir.

Senior Member: I have another question.

DECLASSIFIED

DECLASSIFIED

EXAMINATION BY MEMBERS OF THE BOARD (Cont'd)

Questions by the Senior Member:

Q. Mr. Dunne did you give any consideration or did anyone else to your knowledge give consideration to attempt to check the flooding which had been reported by means of the ship's equipment?

A. Mr. Covert reported to me that he tried to get the diesel going and couldn't get any power to run his pumps down there. He couldn't locate a P250 pump that he had back aft.

Q. He could not locate the pump?

A. No, sir.

Q. Is this a portable pump?

A. Yes, sir.

Q. How do you interpret that report that he could not locate the pump?

A. It either wasn't in the damage control locker where it was supposed to be or it was knocked loose.

Q. Do you know why the diesel was not available or would not start?

A. I understand it did start, but we couldn't get the board to work. We were afraid of a fire down there also.

Senior Member: No further questions.

Counsel for the board: Lieutenant Dunne, at this time you are privileged to make any further statement covering anything relating to the subject matter of the inquiry that you think should be a matter of record in connection therewith which has not been fully brought out by the previous questioning. Do you have anything to add?

Witness: No, sir.

The witness was duly warned as concerning his testimony and withdrew from the board room. Lieutenant (junior grade) Jeffery W. Covert, U.S. Navy, was recalled as a witness by counsel for the board, reminded of his previous oath and testified as follows:

EXAMINATION BY COUNSEL FOR THE BOARD

Questions by Counsel for the board:

Q. We have already advised you of the subject matter of the hearing and of your own personal rights in the matter. Lieutenant (junior grade) Covert in your prior appearance before this board, you were asked questions concerning events prior to the collision. At this time, it is desired to examine you as to matters immediately at the time of the collision and following that. Do you understand?

A. Yes, sir.

Q. About 0300 on the morning of 3 June, where were you?

A. I was asleep in my bunk in the after officer's quarters.

Q. And where is your room in after officer's quarters located?

A. It's on the main deck, in the after superstructure on the main deck level on the port side, the furthest aft stateroom.

Q. Can you recall the approximate frame number?

A. About frame 140.

Q. And what was the first indication you received that something was happening?

A. I'm a light sleeper; and the first indication I heard, I heard the noise and found myself out of my bunk.

Q. What type of noise did you hear?

A. A loud grating sound. The ship then rolled to the starboard side. I braced myself against my desk. After some time - I don't know how long we stayed over - we came back up right and I then went on to my other --

Q. Do you have any estimate as to how far to the starboard side the ship may have rolled?

A. I would say between 65 and 75 degrees.

Q. And when it then resumed an upright position what did you find in your room?

A. There was water in the room, water and a great deal of debris, mattresses, chairs.

Q. Do you have a roommate?

A. Yes, sir.

Q. And who is that?

A. LTJG Hopson.

DECLASSIFIED

DECLASSIFIED

Q. And what was the next action that occurred in your vicinity?
A. The next thing I did, I grabbed a couple of flashlights I had stuck in my desk, I tried to find Mr. Hopson and at that time LTJG Murphy came by and said go to your general quarters station. I had no idea as to what had happened, I knew something had happened, we had the water back there. I didn't know whether it was a fire main rupture or whether I had, maybe, even had just a bad dream.

Q. And were the lights on at this time?
A. No, sir.

Q. Was any emergency illumination on?
A. Yes, sir.

Q. What type?
A. There is a battle lantern outside my stateroom.

Q. And did it provide adequate illumination?
A. Yes, sir.

Q. And what did you do after hearing Mr. Murphy say, go to general quarters?
A. I told Mr. Murphy to settle down, I'd find out what the trouble was. I then proceeded up the fore and aft passageway up in the area of main control.

Q. And is that on the port side of the ship?
A. Yes, sir, it's on the inboard, against the port bulkhead on the inboard side.

Q. And what did you find when you went forward?
A. The ship had a lot of steam in the passageways. It was a steamy atmosphere.

Q. Let me go back one step, was this port passageway, port inboard passageway, also illuminated?
A. I believe it was, yes, sir.

Q. Can you recall by what means?
A. The normal lighting was not on. The diesel was running, but I cannot recall whether the lighting came on or whether it didn't come on. I do not believe it did come on. Battle lanterns were in the port passageway and were lit.

Q. You may proceed now.
A. I then went forward to main control and proceeded to the inboard hatch of main control, the forward engine room. I lowered myself down the inboard hatch, couldn't find the ladder, so I lowered myself down a little bit further, hung on the coaming that surrounds the hatch, looked around and yelled. I couldn't find anybody but then I noticed that the water was coming in, and it was up then up to about my waist which made it almost or up to the water line outside the ship, up to the water level of the sea. I lowered myself down in there and hung on a steam line, looked around and I believe I went around in there a little bit, crawled here and there looking to see if there was anybody down there.

Q. Did you see anybody there?
A. No, sir.

Q. Was the forward engine room illuminated by any means?
A. I could see a light off in one corner, I believe it must have been a battle lantern.

Q. Just one?
A. Yes, sir, it had a yellowish glow.

Q. After then crawling around in the forward engine room, what did you do at that point?
A. Then I went back up the hatch.

Q. Did you dog it down?
A. Yes, sir. I went back around through the athwartships passageway to the outboard side of the starboard side of the ship, went aft to the hatch to the after engineroom and went down in there.

Q. And what did you find when you went there?
A. The plant was secured. There was water in the bilges. The ladders were wet going down to the space. The plant was secured and I believe there were two machinists down there finishing securing the plant.

Q. Do you recall who they were?
A. No, sir.

Q. How long did you remain in that space?
A. I can't recall how long it was. I just spent enough time down there to ensure that the bulkhead stops were closed.

Q. And did you go into the after fireroom at all?
A. Yes, sir. I got out of the after engineroom and went forward to the fireroom, went down there and made sure that the boiler was secured. There was still one burner that wasn't secured, and I secured it.

DECLASSIFIED

DECLASSIFIED

Q. Was anybody in the fireroom?
A. No, sir.

Q. And who was on watch there prior to the collision, do you know?
A. I believe it was a second class BT by the name of Moland.

Q. Did you see him at any time?
A. Yes, sir. I saw him as I was coming up out of the fireroom, he was going back down.

Q. Did he indicate for what purpose he was going down?
A. He was going down to check to see that it was secured properly.

Q. And did you receive any report from him as to what happened?
A. No.

Q. Did you receive any report from the two men in the after engineroom as to what had happened?
A. No, sir.

Q. Would you then continue after that?
A. Down in the after fireroom, I could hear the water coming in. It sounded like a great quantity of water, the bilges were rising. It was up to the bottom of the deck plates at that time. I went forward to the bulkhead between the after fireroom and the forward engineroom to see if I could see where the water was coming from. I couldn't see at all where. I had my flashlight, but I could not tell the source of the leak or where the entrance of the water was.

Q. Was there any other source of illumination in the after fireroom other than your flashlight?
A. I can't say for sure. I believe the battle lanterns on the water gauge glass were illuminated because I checked to see if we did have water in the boiler and it was full.

Q. Would you then proceed to your examination of the forward bulkhead of the after fireroom?
A. After trying to determine where the leak was and being unsuccessful, I surmised that we were cracked down along the bottom of the ship on the keel and also we had a rupture, a crack somewhere up high - up near where the water line was. I could hear the water falling. I went back up topside to see if I could get some people together to see if we could get some sort of plan organized. I went back to the fantail and LT Dunne had organized the remainder of the crew as far as getting the wounded back there and the life jackets distributed.

Q. Did you make any reports to Lieutenant Dunne as to the status of the engineering plant?
A. I told him that everything was secured, the boiler had been secured. I told him I didn't know how long the ship would float. I told him it was in a critical situation.

Q. And what did you base that report on?
A. I based that on the depth of how much freeboard we had left and how fast the water was filling up the engineroom or the fireroom rather.

Q. Had you observed the freeboard in the forward part at this time?
A. Yes, sir.

Q. And approximately how much freeboard was there?
A. I would estimate there was a foot and a half to two feet.

Q. And that was at the most forward part of the remaining section of the ship?
A. Yes, sir.

Q. What is the normal freeboard at that point?
A. I believe, and I'm not positive on this, but I believe it is about six feet.

Q. Did you make any recommendations to LT Dunne at this time?
A. I recommended that we get the people off the ship.

Q. And did you make any determination as to the damage control status of the ship at this time?
A. I recognized the personnel as I saw them, we had no communications, permanently installed communications at that time. We had set up a portable communications system between the forward part of the ship and the after part of the ship. Mainly I felt that we should keep track of the water level as to how it was going down by the bow and how fast it was going down by the bow.

Q. And what sort of a communications system did you set up?
A. A portable cable with headsets, a soundpowered system.

Q. Did you man it at both ends?
A. Yes, sir, as far as I know it was manned at both ends.

Q. Did you take any action yourself to check the setting of the damage control condition ZERRA?
A. As soon as we, I might add, I'll back up a little bit here, Captain. I did not realize that the ship was split when I was down in main control. I was under the assumption that we still had, I thought we had just flooded the forward engineroom. It was not until I had come back out of the forward engineroom and the after fireroom that I realized that we did not have the forward part of the ship. So up till then I was not really concerned, I was concerned but I did not think the ship was really in danger. It wasn't until I saw that the bow, the forward section was missing that I felt the ship was in a critical situation. Due to the state of that bulkhead I was very leery, very worried about that forward bulkhead.

DECLASSIFIED