

Q. Did he have a life jacket?

A. No, sir. He was dressed in singlet and underpants only.

Q. Do you know who that was?

A. I believe it was the Executive Officer.

Q. Well, you took him back to the ship, did you?

A. Yes, sir.

Q. And what did you then do?

A. When the survivor got out of the aircraft, we decided to put the sonar operator out of the aircraft just at the same time.

Q. With what object in view?

A. The aircraft was very close to its maximum all-up weight, and I thought if I got rid of one extra crew member out of the back, I would be able to pick up two people the next time I went out.

Q. And when did you get airborne the next time?

A. Approximately one minute after I landed on, I landed on at 0333, and I took off again at 0334. That would be to the nearest minute.

Q. And for how long did you continue to search?

A. On takeoff I went back to the same area. There were two more helicopters in that area. They were the SAR aircraft. I then called the ship and said that I didn't want any more aircraft in that vicinity, that it was a small area, that it was dangerous and I was then told to carry out a search in the perimeter of that area on the starboard side of MELBOURNE. This I did until I was recalled and landed on at 0400.

Q. And after 0400, I'm sorry. Did you see anything noteworthy during that period?

EXAMINATION BY THE BOARD

Questions by a member (RADM Stevenson):

Q. You just said the starboard side of MELBOURNE. Did you mean the port.

A. No, sir.

Q. You were talking about the port side before.

A. No, I went to the starboard side of MELBOURNE to clear the area and see if there were any people over on that side that may have been missed earlier.

EXAMINATION BY COUNSEL FOR THE BOARD (Cont'd)

Questions by counsel for the board (CDR Glass):

Q. Where was the location of the spot by range and bearing from MELBOURNE where you picked up this man by winch?

A. I would estimate this to be approximately on the port quarter, probably closer to the beam or the stern of the carrier. The range about 250 to 300 yards. I can only estimate this from the time that we got the survivor, I climbed to about 100 feet and then descended back on to the decks. It was a very short distance.

Q. During the period you were in the air the second time what did you see?

A. There was virtually nothing in the water, but I kept getting glances of splashes out of the corner of my eye. This eventually I found to be fish, quite large fish, in groups and they were splashing in the water. It gave the impression that it could have been a man swimming and this is what drew my attention to it.

Q. And did you see anything else apart from the fish before you came back at 0400?

A. No, sir, only the other aircraft. I didn't see any wreckage at all on the starboard side of the carrier.

Q. And what happened with your aircraft after you came back at 0400?

A. The aircraft that I was flying was left on deck, ready if required.

Q. Are you able to tell us what rescue operations were carried out by other helos? And with what success?

A. The remaining aircraft which flew, the aircraft that took off at approximately 0334, just before I did. This aircraft - you will excuse me if I read from the debrief of the aircrew concerned?

Q. You believe this information to be true, do you?

A. Yes, sir.

Q. All right.

Senior Member: Would you repeat again the time that this aircraft took off?

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A. This aircraft, I thought, sir, took off at 0334. However, from the narrative that I have here, which I will read. "Wessex 830 was scrambled immediately after the collision and became airborne at 0327." This time is possibly wrong. The crew of this aircraft received no briefing. They were scrambled and it is possible that the observer's watch may have been wrong. "The aircraft proceeded to the search area on MELBOURNE's port quarter and sighted several boats in the water, but no survivors. At this time there were 4 Wessex searching a small area and the crew elected to search a little beyond the wreckage perimeter. At approximately 0340, a survivor was sighted 300 yards from that area, away from MELBOURNE, and as he appeared quite exhausted the observer elected to lower the SAR diver for a double lift pickup. This was accomplished in about 5 minutes, after which the survivor was landed on MELBOURNE and taken by stretcher to sick bay. It was later learned that he suffered no injuries, and it is believed that he was the last man rescued from the water."

Q. And is that rescue the only helo rescue that you know about in addition to the one you performed yourself?

A. Yes, sir. There were only two people winched out of the water by helicopter, one by my crew and the other by the crew of 830.

Q. And until what time did the helicoptera search continue?

A. The actual search of the area continued through, the last takeoff at 1620, and that was for one hour forty-five minutes. So at least 2 Wessex from MELBOURNE continually airborne throughout that period.

Q. I think you said that you were airborne from MELBOURNE at 0305, did you not?

A. Yes, sir.

Q. Are you able to tell us at that time, what you observed of the lighting shown by HMAS MELBOURNE?

A. I am not sure, sir. The aircraft did what we term a running turn around. We changed the crew and refueled the aircraft when it came back off the screen. It was a bright moonlight night, and our intention and the drill in the squadron is to keep the lighting to a minimum. I have requested this before, and I think that we took off with deck lighting only. I am not sure.

Q. And when you refer to deck lighting, what lights do you have in mind?

A. The deck outline, centerline lights only.

Q. What color are they?

A. White lights.

Q. Are they inset or flush with the deck?

A. They are virtually flush with the deck. They come up probably one inch.

Q. Are they visible from outboard?

A. No, sir.

Q. Have you from outboard of MELBOURNE, observed the moonlighting illumination on the flight deck?

A. Yes, sir, many times.

Q. What degree of brilliance do these moonlights have from an outboard position?

A. This varies on how far away from MELBOURNE you are.

Q. Yes. Well, then say within 3000 yards, what degree of brilliance do they show? At a distance of 3000 yards?

A. On a very dark night you would see them. On a night such as the 2nd and 3rd, I don't think you would see them until you were down to within 1000 or 1500 yards.

Q. At the same range of 3000 yards, what view would you have of MELBOURNE's navigation lights if they were burning?

A. If you were in the proper sector to see them, you would see the navigation lights before you saw the moonlighting.

Q. Your vision of the moonlights and the navigation lights was taken at what altitude above sea level?

A. The normal operating height, which is quite low.

Q. What is quite low?

A. 125 feet.

Q. Can you tell us how many helos were in the air at the time of the collision?

A. Two, sir.

Q. Yours and one other?

A. Yes, sir.

Q. I think you said that yours was ahead with the convoy at the time of the collision?

A. In the convoy screen, sir. What I meant was MELBOURNE's screen.

Q. What distance were you then at the time of collision from MELBOURNE?

A. Approximately 14,000 yards.

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- Q. And what was the distance of the other helo from MELBOURNE at the time of collision?
- A. He was a little bit further because - I have his exact position at the time. He was 3000 yards ahead of what is termed as box center, which would put him 16,000 yards from MELBOURNE.
- Q. And did you have any view at all of the collision between the two ships from where you were?
- A. None whatsoever, sir.
- Q. If you had been looking, could you have seen anything at that distance?
- A. Yes, sir. I feel sure I could have, because as soon as we were recalled, the observer gave me a course to get back to the carrier, and I said that it was unnecessary because I could see the shape of the carrier from where we were. And definitely say it was the carrier.
- Q. Could you see the direction in which she was heading from that distance?
- A. No, sir.
- Q. At what range were you when you could first tell that?
- A. I would safely say, sir, that I was very close, because the closer one gets to the ship the more of the silhouette blends in with the water and you tend to lose this aspect which you can gain this information from.
- Q. Can you tell us where the two helos were at 0310?
- A. I have to refer, sir. 831 would be approximately 12,000 yards away from the carrier on a course of approximately 220 going to its box position. The other aircraft was - I have to refer again. The aircraft 823 at 09 was actually in the hover. He was in this 270, 3000 yards from box center. This I gained from the narrative of the observer which I have.
- Q. And in that position, what is the distance from that helicopter to MELBOURNE?
- A. 16,000 yards.

Senior Member: We will have a brief recess.

The board recessed at 1456 hours, 25 June 1969.

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The board opened at 1512 hours, 25 June 1969.

Senior Member: The hearing is now open.

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

Counsel for the board (CIR Glass): The board is now in open session, 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.

Lieutenant Commander Rogers, Royal Australian Navy resumed his seat as a witness and testified as follows:

EXAMINATION BY COUNSEL FOR THE BOARD

Questions by counsel for the board (CIR Glass):

Q. Are you able to tell us the name of the man that was rescued by the second helo?
A. No, sir.

Q. Are you able to tell us anything that would enable us to determine his identification. For example his complexion. Was that reported to you?

A. After the flying operations had finished, we were talking and I have a recollection of either the pilot of the observer of the aircraft saying that he was dark and slim. This is purely a recollection and I wouldn't be sure.

Q. And according to the records you've consulted, when was he picked out of the water?
A. At approximately 0340, according to the narrative.

Q. You have said, I believe, that at the time of the collision, your helo would have been thirteen thousand yards from the carrier and the other one sixteen thousand yards. At those distances, could the lights of the carrier be seen?

A. Not normally. It is possible, under some conditions of visibility, to see the red obstruction lights from that distance but I wouldn't have expected to see them on that night.

Q. And in fact, I think you said you weren't looking in any event?
A. That's right.

Q. Are you able to identify the three pages of this document as a statement of the details of the search operation carried out by your squadron?

A. Yes, sir.

Q. And do the three pages also contain significant elements from the narrative?

A. They are identical typed copies of the narrative as presented by the observers of each aircraft.

Counsel for the board: Counsel offers into evidence these three pages as Exhibit 78.

Senior Member: Could we establish the accuracy of the times shown here. They all end in zero or five.

Witness: The times recorded, are taken from the flight authorisation books, and all times recorded in that book are the times that the rotors were engaged on the aircraft, to the nearest five minutes. This does not necessarily mean that was the actual takeoff time.

Senior Member: Yes. That will be received as Exhibit 78.

EXAMINATION BY COUNSEL FOR THE BOARD (Cont'd)

Questions by counsel for the board:

Q. And the second document, consisting of two pages, contains certain other information with respect to the squadron. In particular, it contains details of the dip positions which were being observed?

A. It contains what I believe to be a true - the dip position of Wessex 823 at 0309 golf relative to the station given him. It does not give 831's position.

Q. Are you able to tell us what that was?

A. 831's position would be approximately 270, 1000 yards from box center at the time we were recalled. The aircraft was not in the hover.

Q. This document also records, that at 2010, there was a message, "Return to mother." Is that correct statement of time in your view?

A. No, I think the time is wrong, although the narrative is in Zulu time. The time should be 2016 or 2017 Zulu.

Q. It is your belief that a similar correction should be made to the times that follow the 2010?

A. Yes.

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Counsel for the board: Subject to that correction, we offer this document in evidence as Exhibit 79.

EXAMINATION BY THE BOARD

Questions by the senior member:

Q. Mr. Rogers, what reasoning leads you to believe that the time you've indicated in Exhibit 79 are incorrect?

A. The second report there, which I think the time is 10 or 14, where he said they were informed that the ship had been in a collision, was only the one message that was received by both aircraft at the one time. According to my aircraft, this was at 0318 golf.

Q. Was any post-collision check made of the times shown in the clock of either aircraft?

A. The aircraft does not carry a clock.

Q. Was any post-collision check made on the watch from either aircraft from which their log times were taken?

A. The time check was given at the briefing at 0200, when the actual wristwatches of the air crew should have been checked.

Q. Was there any post-collision check at the time?

A. No, sir.

Senior Member: Very well, we will receive that as Exhibit 79.

EXAMINATION BY COUNSEL FOR THE BOARD (Cont'd)

Questions by counsel for the board (CDR Glass):

Q. Are you able to throw any light on the position of the bow section of EVANS when it sank in relation to MELBOURNE?

A. Only from the general position of the survivors in the water, with dinghys that were there and the general debris in the area. I would say that this was approximately 300 yards, fine off the bow of the MELBOURNE. Correction, just astern of MELBOURNE, fine on the port quarter.

Q. And were you able to make any observation as to the proper functioning or otherwise of life rafts in the water?

A. Most of the rafts I saw were properly inflated. I don't know if there were any survivors in the rafts, but I did see at least one raft that had collapsed and was partly submerged.

Q. Could you identify it as an Australian or U. S. raft?

A. No, sir.

Q. Where was that partly collapsed raft located?

A. From memory only, it was very close to other rafts and generally in the center of the area where the survivors were swimming.

Q. I think you have said that the main body of survivors was in the area which you assumed was the place where the bow section sank. Is that right?

A. Yes, sir.

Q. Are you able to tell us what you observed about the behavior of survivors who were not equipped with life jackets?

A. Generally, sir, I was very impressed with the behavior of the people in the water. They appeared to be very calm. There were people floating on their backs using what I believe is the U. S. standard naval survivor technique. Those who were all right, waved and we just kept looking. Generally, I was very impressed with how calm they appeared to be.

Q. What degree of lighting was there in the area as you circled around?

A. There were lots of search lights as I remember. Boats using lights and the two helicopters with landing lights on. I didn't take all that much notice of other lights because I was looking down into the water. Visibility was very good.

Q. Were you in radio communication with MELBOURNE while you were operating the helo?

A. Yes, sir.

Q. Can you tell us what reports you made to MELBOURNE, regarding the location of the swimmers whom you observed?

A. None, sir, as a definite report. I didn't make any report other than the fact that at one stage I was hovering over a body and that I was moving off to winch him in. That was the only report I made to the ship, to the best of my knowledge. I may have made others during the time. It's quite possible that I pushed the wrong button sometime and transmitted outside the aircraft instead of inside the aircraft. That was the only definite report I made when I was trying to indicate my position.

Q. When you observed these three swimmers, how far from them was assistance in the form of boats and life rafts?

A. No more than 50 yards at any time. Where I saw swimmers actually in the water, I shone the landing light on them and then swung the light through to the nearest dinghy or boat, so that the swimmer could see the dinghy or the boat could see the swimmer.

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Q. And did you see any of them actually getting into the dinghys or boats?
A. No, sir.

Counsel for the board: Counsel has no further questions.

Senior Member: The board has no further questions.

Counsel for the board: You have a privileged, Lieutenant Commander Rogers, to make any further statement you think is appropriate regarding the subject of investigation which has not been brought out by the questions so far. Do you wish to add anything?

Witness: No, sir. Except that in a case like this, where there was a very small area where the survivors were, if there had been any more than two helicopters operating in that area, it would have been very dangerous. This I think is very vital to survival and rescue techniques.

Counsel for the board: Do you think that any better result could have been obtained if more than two helicopters had been in use?

Witness: No, sir.

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

Leading Seaman Peter John Varley, Royal Australian Navy, was called by counsel for the board, was sworn, and testified as follows:

EXAMINATION BY COUNSEL FOR THE BOARD

Questions by counsel for the board (CDR Glass):

Q. Leading Seaman Varley, 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 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 if you must answer the question or not. Do you understand those matters?

A. Yes, sir.

Q. What is your full name?

A. Peter John Varley.

Q. And your rank?

A. Leading Seaman Radar Plotter, Royal Australian Navy.

Q. And how long have you been in MELBOURNE?

A. Since November last year.

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

A. Eight years, eleven months. I have 21 days of service left in the Navy.

Q. Now what were the duties assigned to you in MELBOURNE?

A. At the time of the collision, I was second in charge of the watch on deck, the leading hand of the watch on deck. My primary duties are firstly, to act as coxswain of the motor cutter, if, and when needed. Secondly, if the Petty Officer who was in charge on deck was sent away at any time, I'm responsible for detailing lookouts and also for the helmsman and the helmsman trick in the wheel house.

Q. Now what was the first notice that you had that a collision was about to occur?

A. I heard several blasts on the ship's siren and immediately following this I heard the broadcast on the ship's broadcast system, "hands to collision stations."

Q. Once or more than once?

A. Twice to my recollection. The second time I jumped up into the motor cutter, which was suspended out from the ship's side, to check everything was satisfactory.

Q. On what side of the ship?

A. The port side.

Q. And in that motor cutter suspended on the port side of the ship, did you observe any other ship in the vicinity?

A. Not immediately on hopping into the motor cutter, no. But some seconds after, I'm not to sure how long, I saw the bow of a ship appear in front of the MELBOURNE, going from right to left. It was a few seconds after I saw this, giving her time to come approximately midships of our bow that the collision occurred.

Q. What did you observe to be the angle between the heading of the two ships at the time of collision?

A. I could see it very clearly. It seemed to be a little bit more or a little bit less than 90 degrees. The MELBOURNE was pointing straight that way and the EVANS appeared to be slightly on that angle. What the heading was I wouldn't have the faintest idea, sir.

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Q. The angle was less than 90 on the port or on the starboard side of the "T"?
A. On the port side. It was heading slightly across on that angle.

Q. And what was the effect upon the EVANS of the collision?
A. They were two very heavy blows. The first one, the EVANS heeled outboard away from us. The second one, our bow seemed to ride slightly upwards and then the bow section started moving down the port side fairly slowly.

Q. And what did you do?
A. Well, firstly I didn't do anything. The bow section started moving down the port side and there was quite a bit of steam and noise. I thought at the time it was the complete ship but some seconds later the bow section came parallel to the boat I was in at about 25 to 30 feet out. At this time, the noise was pretty bad and the steam was getting worse and someone yelled out there was a danger of it exploding. I jumped out of the boat and by this time there were people moving down aft because "Emergency stations" had been piped. I started moving slowly down aft. I got down perhaps another 50 or 60 feet when I heard the broadcast, "Away all boats." I made my way back as fast as I could to the motor cutter and jumped in and took charge from there.

Q. Did you have a view at any time of the way in which this bow section was lying in the water?

A. Yes, sir. When I jumped out of the boat, the bow section was slightly aft of the motor cutter and it was heeling with starboard side in the water. I would say the position of the bridge...Part of the bridge would have been in the water at that stage. It remained in that position and as I walked down aft or ran down aft, the section followed me. When I saw it from the after boat space it was slightly further in the water, down by the stern section.

Q. How far had it turned by this stage, 90 degrees to starboard or more than 90 degrees?

A. A little less than 90. It wasn't quite flat on the water line but it wasn't very far from it. I didn't really notice. I was worried about the boat.

Q. When you got the command, "Away all boats," you say you went forward and took up your position in the motor cutter in the port side. How long was it before your crew had joined you?

A. When I got to the motor cutter there was already some people standing on the deck next to it. I don't know who they were, but it was only a matter of a minute or so by the time we got the people into the boat itself. I think we had about 15 people who tried to jump into the boat to act as life savers. I had to send quite a few of them out.

Q. And how many did you take down with you in addition to the boat's normal crew?

A. Two extra. We had a bowman and a driver plus myself as the normal boat's crew. I also had another petty officer signalman with an aldis lamp, plus another leading seaman of the same rate as myself.

Q. How long after the collision was it when your boat was into the water?

A. This I'm not too sure of, sir. I couldn't give you a definite answer, but it wouldn't be more than 4 to 5 minutes. The bow section hadn't sunk at the time when we got lowered into the water. However, it wasn't very long afterwards that it did sink.

Q. And what was its position in relation to MELBOURNE when it did sink?

A. Well, sir, it was on the port quarter, but how far I don't know. I've heard various reports but in my own mind I think it was approximately 300 or 400 yards.

Q. When you got your boat into the water, what direction did you head?

A. Well, I turned immediately away from the ship's side of MELBOURNE and headed, I think, 90 degrees out to get clear and assess the situation because we could hear quite a few people yelling out, "Over here, over here," and I wanted to make well sure we were clear of any obstructions in the water before we started picking up survivors.

Q. And where was it you picked up your first survivors in relation to MELBOURNE?

A. I think the first one was about 50 or 60 yards away on the port beam. Just about where the collision occurred. In that area, we picked up most of our survivors, in one fairly small circle.

Q. And were the survivors whom you picked up swimming free or were they hanging onto pieces of debris?

A. Most of them were clinging onto pieces of debris, lockers, but there were several that I saw that were free swimming. The first one we picked up was a free swimmer - swimming for the aircraft carrier.

Q. How many did you take on board altogether?

A. I'm not too sure, but I have been told that we had thirty people all told, 29 survivors, plus one dead man.

Q. Does that agree with your recollection?

A. Working it out, yes, sir. Because the boat was so crowded, that we couldn't have fitted anymore in.

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Q. Do you remember what happened in relation to this man who was dead?

A. Yes, sir. We had picked up quite a few survivors and I was going around in a fairly wide circle slowly and the Petty Officer Telegrapher up forward was using the aldis lamp to look at the debris to see if any people were clinging. One of my crew members, an Able Seaman Evett jumped into the water and supported this man and I backed the boat towards him, gave him a hand to bring the man inboard and put him in the bottom of the boat. He appeared at the time to be unconscious. I didn't have much time to be really concerned with it. I looked at him and he didn't seem to be breathing. Able Seaman Evett checked him and he said that, in his opinion, he wasn't alive. So we covered him up as best we could in the bottom of the boat and left him there.

Q. From approximately how big an area, did you collect the thirty or so survivors?

A. I'm afraid I wouldn't have the faintest idea, sir.

Q. About how long did it take you to collect thirty or so survivors?

A. Well, we picked up the great majority of them within fifteen minutes. I remained searching for a short time afterwards and we picked up one or two individual people in the water. There was still quite a few people in a big radius yelling out - giving indications of their positions more than anything. At that time the steering gear in the motor cutter was getting very difficult to handle. The normal capacity for life saving is forty and we had 35. I don't think the motor cutter is designed for very easy maneuverability with forty people, and I certainly found out it wasn't.

Q. And what decision did you make at that stage?

A. I wasn't too sure that the man in the bottom of the boat was dead or not and there was one or two people in the boat who were bleeding rather heavily. I thought it would be much easier to go back to the MELBOURNE, take the survivors onboard and then come back for any other people that remained, and this is what we did.

Q. And when you got back to MELBOURNE, how did the survivors get off the boat?

A. Well, originally I saw the stern of a destroyer tied up to the MELBOURNE. At this time I had intended to take them to the stern of the destroyer, which is much lower and much easier to get onto. I was waved off and started up the port side of MELBOURNE. The accommodation was partially lowered but not enough for the wounded men. I carried on up forward at the time. I wasn't too sure if there was anything there to get the people out, but they had a big scrambling net and I had a little bit of difficulty getting alongside because the lowering blocks for the boat were still lowered into the water and were obstructing my passage. I eventually got alongside and most of the survivors in the boat scrambled up the scrambling net.

Q. What was done for the others?

A. There was approximately three or four left in the boat. One of them was an officer as I found out later. Lieutenant Goodwin, the Officer in Charge, took charge. He decided it would be much easier to remove the body if we raised the boat to the upper deck level and removed him in a wire stretcher, which was done. Then we were lowered to the water.

Q. And were the three or four living people in the boat, having difficulty in getting out of the boat, using the scrambling net?

A. No, sir. There were two up forward. I don't know why they didn't get out. They didn't have any difficulty in getting out of the boat after we raised the boat up. This officer down aft, remained with the body. I didn't ask him why. I was too concerned in getting the boat raised.

Q. Was the boat hoisted inboard?

A. No, sir. It was hoisted up, but not inboard. It just remained level with the ship's side. They just had to jump out onto the ship's deck.

Q. Then what was done with the boat?

A. The boat was lowered to the waterline and we had a small delay while a new battery for the aldis lamp was obtained by the electricians. As soon as this was obtained, we proceeded on with the search.

Q. How long would you estimate intervened between the time you came alongside with the survivors and the time you pushed off the second time?

A. Well, a very rough estimation, sir, about 5 minutes to 10 minutes. Minutes seemed like hours at that time. I just don't really know.

Q. When you pushed away from the ship's side, which area did you return to?

A. I had an approximate position of where I saw the bow of the EVANS start to sink. I headed in the direction of where we were before. The Petty Officer Telegrapher was using his lamp all the time and it was just a general search in the area.

Q. Did you take any more people aboard from the sea?

A. Not out of the water. No, sir.

Q. Did you see anymore survivors on that second trip out?

A. After about ten minutes search, I decided to check some of MELBOURNE's liferafts. There were several of them in the area and as we got up close we saw some people in one of the three liferafts together. One of my crew members secured the three liferafts together. I put them in tow and took them back to the MELBOURNE. There were approximately five survivors in the three liferafts.

Q. Were those three liferafts you brought back MELBOURNE's rafts?

A. Yes, sir, they were.

Q. Did you, at any times, see any U. S. rafts in the water in the area where you were working?

A. Yes, sir, I did. Several times we saw liferafts of U. S. manufacture. They might have been the same ones, but I know definitely I saw four different types. There were two or three which had failed to unfold, one of them which had supported four or five survivors that we had picked up. There were 3 or 4 more that were partially or wholly submerged in the water but had just enough buoyancy to float on the water.

Q. Were you able to observe what had gone wrong with them?

A. No, sir. At that time, we weren't particularly interested. I did consider sending one of my crew members underneath one of them which seemed to be rather lumpy to see if there was anyone there, but I decided against it. Later on in the morning after sunrise we towed several of the liferafts back to the USS LARSON and at one time there as we were towing one back, it completely unfolded and started inflating. There was a large gash in one side which didn't let it inflate very far. It only had very slight buoyancy.

Q. Did it appear to you that it had been damaged in the collision?

A. I don't know, sir.

Q. Until what hour did you continue to search in the motor cutter?

A. We continued searching until approximately 0700 in the morning. At that time I was called back to HMAS MELBOURNE for further orders.

Q. Did you find any more people in the water or any more people in rafts?

A. No, sir.

Q. And when you were called back to MELBOURNE, what duties were you given?

A. When I was called back, I was instructed by Commander Stevens that in a very short time I was to take a damage control team of the USS EVANS back to the after section to ascertain the amount of damage and other particulars. I waited for approximately ten or fifteen minutes. Then we took the damage control team back towards the EVANS after section. However, we were called alongside the USS LARSON, and told by their Executive Officer to remain alongside LARSON until their damage control team had completed their investigation. We remained there. My crew and myself had breakfast on the LARSON. Then we were told by the Executive Officer of the LARSON that we could take several people over to the after section of the LARSON, which we did, sir.

Q. Could you tell us more, in a little more detail, what you did in the way of taking liferafts back to LARSON?

A. Yes, sir. After we went from LARSON to the EVANS we came back and we were told by the Commander of MELBOURNE to remain in view of MELBOURNE and the LARSON. However the Executive Officer, of the LARSON asked us if we could get all the liferafts and debris that we could and bring them back to the LARSON. We proceeded to do this. Firstly, the liferafts. I think the first time we towed back three, all partially inflated, took them back and gave them to the deck people on the LARSON. I think we collected one more. Then we started collecting all the various personal belongings, lockers and bits and pieces that we could find.

Q. Was there a great deal of that?

A. Not that much. No, sir. There was quite a bit when we were started picking up survivors, but I think a lot of it had been widespread or sunk by that time.

Q. Approximately when did the sun rise that morning?

A. This I have been trying to ascertain, sir. Everything was so unreal and we were so busy looking for survivors. I know we were in the water for quite some time, searching for survivors before the sun did rise. We needed the illumination of the helicopter lights for quite awhile before the sun rose.

Q. Were you quite satisfied that there were no persons left in the water by the time you discontinued your search?

A. Yes, sir. We discontinued the search at 0700. It was broad daylight and there were helicopters everywhere. We went across the whole area several times.

Q. Can you recall, when your boat was launched and touched the water, whether the MELBOURNE then had way through the water or not?

A. No, sir. To the best of my recollection, the boat didn't sag back or anything. We were almost completely stopped in the water.

Q. Neither headway nor sternway?

A. That's correct. I did check this to make sure because LT Goodwin gave me authority to slip the boat when I was happy, and when the boat was at the waterline or near the waterline. I wanted to make sure that we weren't going very fast because the blocks were very low and could hit people in the boat. At that time I remember thinking that we had completely stopped.

Q. In addition to the aldis lamp, what means of communication with the carrier did you have in the motor cutter?

A. When the boat was launched, none other than the light. It is part of the safety equipment on the watch on deck that we have a two-way radio, TCN, I believe it is called. This was on the watch on deck position at the time. It is kept out of the boat so that we can test it everytime the watch is relieved. However, due to the general confusion when launching the boat, there were quite a few people in the area, and this was omitted from the boat.

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Q. Did you take it on board at any later stage?

A. We did take it on later when we took the damage control people from the MELBOURNE to the EVANS by way of LARSON. I asked for it, and it was handed down to the boat. We used it from then on.

Q. Did you have any occasion to communicate with the carrier during your search operations?

A. We did communicate by light two or three times to my knowledge. One time we ask the MELBOURNE which would be the best side to come alongside. By the time they got around to answering it, if they ever did, we had come alongside. We were very close to the ship's side at this stage.

Q. Did you engage in any form of teamwork with the helos that were operating?

A. At one stage, we were told by light from the MELBOURNE that there was a helicopter that had a survivor below him and they said the first one on our left. Well, there were two helicopters at the time in very close proximity that we weren't too sure and we flashed both of them by light. We could see them very clearly - see the pilot - but we sort of waved towards them and they waved back and that's all the indication we got. We searched the area pretty thoroughly and there wasn't any survivors that we could see.

Q. Did the helos' searchlights bring to your attention the presence of any survivors?

A. Yes, sir. Originally, when we had the boat half full of survivors, there was one occasion when we saw the area lit up and could see survivors in the water. One factor against it was the helicopters were so close to the water that their wash was churning up the water making it difficult to see the swimmers.

Q. In regard to the man that was brought on board by Able Seaman Evett. Was anything done by the way of artificial resuscitation?

A. Yes, sir. I believe that Able Seaman Evett attempted, after we brought the body on board. Able Seaman Evett followed very closely behind in the water and we put the man in the after section of the boat on his back and I believe Able Seaman Evett did attempt to give chest resuscitation. The man only had a pair of trousers, on and he had a very vivid purple and red patch extending all on his left side of his chest and when Able Seaman touched it, it gave way. I considered it was much more dangerous to do anything of that nature, seeing that he wasn't breathing to my knowledge or observation, I decided that we had better leave him.

Q. Did you think there was anything to be gained by applying artificial respiration?

A. No, sir. I did not. There was blood coming from the area of his head that I could see, a very slight trickle, but I watched him for some time. I couldn't see any movement of the chest and when Able Seaman Evett was bringing the body back to the boat the head was underwater two or three times due to the wash of the boat and he gave no indication of beathing or choking.

Counsel for the board: Counsel has no further questions.

Senior Member: The board has no further questions.

Counsel for the board: Have you any statement you would like to make Leading Seaman Varley in regard to any matter that has not been brought out by the questioning to date?

Witness: Yes, sir. Only one. Two or three times to my knowledge during the search for survivors, we came up to groups of many in the water and they told us, most of them were clinging to wreckage, and they told us to go and help other people, indicating their positions, they told us non-swimmers and other people that were in worse positions than they were. This happened twice which I took notice of. The third time there was quite a few men in one group, I told them to get into the boat which they did do.

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

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Able Seaman Quartermaster Gunner Allen Jonathon Evett 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. 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 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. Do you understand those two observations?

A. Yes, sir.

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

A. Allen Jonathon Evett, Able Seaman Quartermaster Gunner.

Q. How long have you been in MELBOURNE?

A. 18 months, sir.

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

A. Thirty-four months, sir.

Q. Where were you when you heard a pipe, "hands to collision stations?"

A. I was in the port Sea Boat Space, sir.

Q. And what was the next pipe which you heard?

A. "Hands to Emergency Stations."

Q. What did you do then?

A. I immediately jumped into the Sea Boat. The boat was then lowered to the water line and slipped. We immediately proceeded to pick up survivors from the forward half of the EVANS.

Q. How long was it before the boat got into the water?

A. Approximately five minutes, sir.

Q. And who was in it besides yourself?

A. Leading Seaman Varley, Leading Seaman Place, MR Murphy and Yeoman Daniels.

Q. And when you hit the water, did you observe whether there was any way on MELBOURNE at the time - headway or sternway?

A. I would not have a clue, sir.

Q. In which direction did the cutter proceed?

A. We proceeded straight out from the port side of the ship, sir, towards the forward half of the EVANS. It was going astern of the MELBOURNE at the time, sir.

Q. Did you come upon survivors in that area?

A. Yes, sir. We did.

Q. How far from MELBOURNE was the first survivor you picked up?

A. Approximately, about 200 yards, sir.

Q. And within what distance from him, approximately, were the other survivors that you picked up?

A. I'd say in a radius of about 500 yards, sir.

Q. A circle with a radius of about 500 yards would have included all of the survivors, is that your belief?

A. That's my belief, sir.

Q. How many did you get altogether into the motor cutter from the water?

A. We picked up 29 survivors plus one dead, sir.

Q. And did you have something to do with that dead man?

A. Yes, sir.

Q. Will you please tell us what you did? First, what you saw and then what you did about it?

A. Well, at the time we had approximately 25 survivors in the boat and we were searching for some more. I saw this body floating face down in the water. I dived in and pulled him towards the boat. Leading Seaman Varley and one of the survivors lifted him into the boat. I immediately climbed in after him and applied cardiac chest massage. I got no response so I covered him with a pair of overalls to keep him warm.

Q. How long did you continue with it?

A. I only did it for about 2 minutes, sir.

Q. And what estimate did you make of the prospect that he would get any benefit from it?

A. When I started, sir, I pushed down and I felt bones grating against each other. I immediately stopped. I thought to myself, if I had kept on going, it probably would have made it worse for him.

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Q. Was there anything in your opinion that could have been done for him?
A. In my opinion, sir, no.

Q. Was he, in your opinion, then dead or not?
A. At the time, I didn't think he was, sir. But Leading Seaman Varley had a look at him and he said he was dead.

Q. Well, do you remember bringing the 29 or 30 people back to MELBOURNE?
A. Yes, sir.

Q. Do you remember how they were brought inboard?
A. Yes, sir.

Q. How was it done?
A. Most of the survivors climbed the forward drifter ladder. We had about 3 personnel in the boat who could not move. The boat was then hoisted to deck level and the three personnel were taken to sick bay.

Q. And the dead man?
A. And the dead man, sir.

Q. How long was it before you got your boat back into the water from the time you came alongside?
A. Between 10 to 15 minutes, sir.

Q. And which direction did you then proceed?
A. We proceeded out from the ship's port side, where we were. We were told to search for some more survivors and, if possible, bring them back as soon as we had them.

Q. Did you come on any more survivors in the water?
A. No, sir.

Q. Did you come on any more survivors in any other position?
A. Well, we were told to come back to the ship. On our way in we saw three life rafts. There were some personnel in them. I don't know how many. We towed them to the port after ladder bay, where they were taken charge of by other sailors from the ship.

Q. You say you don't know how many were in those three life rafts?
A. No, sir. I don't.

Q. Do you recall what employment you were given from that point of time on?
A. We were told to continue the search for survivors, sir. Then approximately 0630 we were told to go by the starboard drifter ladder and pick up some EVANS personnel and take over to the FRANK E. EVANS, which we did. When we got to the USS LARSON, the Captain of the LARSON told us to bring the personnel on board for breakfast. We were then told to take a sailor from the EVANS to the EVANS. We did this. We were told to report back to the LARSON to pick up two torpedoemen. We went and picked them up and took them back to the EVANS. Then we were told to tow some life rafts that were still in the water over to the LARSON. We then got a signal from the ship to return to the ship and pick up a diving team. We reported to the ship and we were relieved by a fresh crew.

Q. And by that time it was daylight, was it not?
A. Yes, sir.

Q. Now, are you satisfied that, at the time you were secured from duty, there were no other survivors to be found in the water or in rafts in the vicinity of MELBOURNE?
A. Yes, sir.

Counsel for the board: I have no further questions.

Senior Member: I have no questions.

Counsel for the board: Is there any statement you wish to make about any subject being looked into by this board that has not been brought out by the questions so far?

A. No, sir.

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

Leading Seaman Thomas George Place 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. Leading Seaman Place, you have been called as a witness for this board of investigation which is inquiring into the circumstances surrounding the collision of the 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 a penalty or a forfeiture. It will be for you to raise the objection and for the board to decide if you must answer the question or not. Do you understand those matters?
A. Yes, sir.

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Q. What is your full name?
A. Thomas George Place, sir.

Q. And your rank?
A. Leading Seaman Radar Plotter.

Q. And how long have you been in HMAS MELBOURNE?
A. 11 months, sir.

Q. And how long have you been in the Navy?
A. Eight years, six months, sir.

Q. And where were you at the time you heard the pipe, "Emergency Station?"
A. I was asleep in the port after ladder bay of MELBOURNE.

Q. And where did you proceed upon hearing the pipe?
A. Straight to my Emergency Station, No. 2 Motor Cutter.

Q. And was that in due course put into the water?
A. Yes, sir.

Q. And when the boat was put into the water, where did it head?
A. We headed straight for the forward section of the EVANS.

Q. And how far was that from MELBOURNE at that stage?
A. I'd say roughly 200 yards.

Q. And how long did it remain afloat after your boat got into the water?
A. I couldn't give an exact time, sir. It wasn't very long.

Q. Was it still floating or had it sunk by the time your motor cutter arrived in the vicinity?
A. It went under as we arrived, about 20 or 30 yards away.

Q. What did you see of the survivors in that area?
A. Our first group consisted of, I'd say, about 8 to 10 men, clinging to a large fender. We had come alongside them and they told us to proceed further on and pick up two more men who were in the water and couldn't swim.

Q. Were these two men who couldn't swim, clinging to anything?
A. Yes, sir. One had a large locker and the other had a rubber float of some sort. I couldn't say what it was.

Q. Well what did you do for them?
A. We pulled both of them into the boat. Turned the boat around and started back for the others.

Q. Did you notice Able Seaman Evett do anything at any stage?
A. Yes, sir. It was after we picked up some more survivors. Able Seaman Evett sighted a body on our port side. He immediately slipped over the side, secured the body and brought it aboard. He tried to revive the person, but had no success. He covered him with a pair of overalls.

Q. Did you think there was any chance of bringing him to life at that stage?
A. No, sir.

Q. Did you do something after that yourself?
A. Yes, sir. I saw a man in the water, laying on his back. appeared to be very weak from shock. I told him to swim towards the boat and he couldn't move. I went over the side myself and pulled him to the boat.

Q. You brought him aboard?
A. Yes, sir.

Q. And what condition was he in?
A. He was coughing a little bit. I think it was just a little salt water he swallowed.

Q. And was he all right after that?
A. He lay down in the boat after that. By the time we got to MELBOURNE he had revived sufficiently to climb up the scrambling net.

Q. How many survivors, altogether, did you pick up out of the water?
A. 29 or 30, sir.

Q. And when you brought them back to the ship, how did they manage to get on board?
A. The majority used the port scrambling net to make their way up to the 3 deck. There was one man who had a bad right leg and another fellow who had a bad arm, I think it was. There was also the body. We were going to put the body into a stretcher, and also the man with the bad leg, but they couldn't do it. We hoisted the boat to deck level and passed them off from deck level.

Q. How long was it from the time you came alongside with the survivors, until you got the boat into the water again?
A. I'd say between four and five minutes, sir.

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Q. What did you do then?

A. We proceeded back to the general area where the forward section had sunk, and proceeded to carry out an extensive search for any more survivors in the area.

Q. Did you find any in the water?

A. No, sir.

Q. Did you find any, anyplace else?

A. No, sir.

Q. Did you find any rafts?

A. Yes, sir. We came along side three rafts. One of which was half submerged in the water. We searched through them and we were going to take them in tow and carry on with the job.

Q. Did they have any survivors in them?

A. No, sir.

Q. Did you come across any survivors in rafts?

A. Yes. Earlier in the night, we towed a raft to MELBOURNE with three or four survivors in it.

Q. I believe later on you were given the job of taking some people to EVANS, and you were detailed to pick up certain rafts by LARSON, is that correct?

A. Yes, sir.

Q. Can you tell us whether there was much oil in the water in the area where you were searching?

A. No, sir. Not a lot.

Q. In your belief were there any other persons in the water who could have been picked up in the area where you were searching?

A. No, sir. If there had a been we would have got them.

Counsel for the board: Counsel has no further questions.

Senior Member: The board has no questions.

Counsel for the board: You are informed you may make a further statement concerning any matter relating to the subject of the inquiry if you think it has not already been brought out by the questions. Is there anything you would like to say?

A. The only thing I'd like to say, sir, is the coolness and level-headedness of the men in the water from the EVANS.

Counsel for the board: Thank you.

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

Senior Member: We will have a short recess.

The board recessed at 1620 hours, 25 June 1969.

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The board opened at 1632 hours, 25 June 1969.

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

Mechanical Engineer Gary R. James, 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 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?

Witness: Yes, sir.

EXAMINATION BY COUNSEL FOR THE BOARD

Questions by counsel for the board (CDR Glass):

Q. What is your full name?

A. Gary Richard James.

Q. Your rank?

A. ME.

Q. What does it stand for?

A. Mechanical Engineer.

Q. How long have you been in the Navy?

A. Four years, sir.

Q. How long have you been on board HMAS MELBOURNE?

A. Two years, sir.

Q. And when the collision occurred were you on watch or asleep?

A. No, sir. I was sitting on the side of my bunk.

Q. Then where did you go to?

A. I went straight into my overalls and straight to my emergency station.

Q. Was there a petty officer who asked you to render some assistance?

A. Yes, sir.

Q. Who was that?

A. Petty Officer Heard.

Q. What did he ask you to do?

A. To assist him to free the life rafts on the port side of HMAS MELBOURNE, and to find any survivors.

Q. Where did these life rafts come from which were on the port side of MELBOURNE?

A. There on the port side, sir, on 2 deck. I reckon about three quarters of the life rafts were in the water fully inflated.

Q. What did he ask you to do about these life rafts in the water?

A. To check to see if any survivors were in the rafts, to cut them from the MELBOURNE and to look for survivors in the water and to hail any boats in the area to pick up survivors if we found some.

Q. What was the first thing that you did?

A. I went down the ladder, I went into the water. I had a knife and Petty Officer Heard and I swam to the life rafts and proceeded to check them and cutting their lines.

Q. How far were these life rafts from the MELBOURNE at this stage?

A. They were alongside the ship in small groups, gradually drifting to the after part where her props are.

Q. Did you cut them loose?

A. Yes, sir, tying all the life rafts together in a bundle and the emergency packs to the sides of the rafts.

Q. When that had been done, what did PO Heard do?

A. He went to the stern of the MELBOURNE to a group of rafts and I swam to another group of rafts which were further out, about 20 yards from the ship. I swam out to there, getting the life rafts together and checking the rafts for survivors.

Q. How many life rafts of MELBOURNE were there in the water at this point?

A. I don't know the correct number, sir. I think there would be fifteen at the most.

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Q. Were they all properly inflated or not?

A. Yes, sir. Every one was properly inflated and there was only one upside down.

Q. When you swam over to this collection of life rafts did you see anyone in the water?

A. Only when I climbed onto the life raft I saw this sailor off of the EVANS yelling out and splashing, and I swam out to assist him on a raft.

Q. Did you get him into the raft?

A. Yes, sir.

Q. What did you then do?

A. Hailed a passing motor cutter. I don't know where it come from but he said, "You got any survivors?" and I said, "Yes, I got one here." We put him in the boat and it went straight to the MELBOURNE.

Q. What was the next time thing you did after that?

A. Able Seaman Richardson hailed for some assistance to get another sailor into another life boat and I swam over to assist him. I was in the water and Able Seaman Richardson was in the raft, and he grabbed ahold of his hands and together he pulled and I pushed the sailor into the life raft.

Q. What was the condition of that survivor when you got him into the raft?

A. A bit shaken up, sir.

Q. Did you find out the names of either of these two men whom you helped into rafts?

A. No, sir.

Q. Did you see any other survivors additional to the two that you helped?

A. Yes, sir. I saw them in other groups of life rafts and in a passing motor cutter going back to MELBOURNE.

Q. How many did you see in life rafts in addition to the two that you helped?

A. I saw around about six, six. I couldn't be sure of the number. All I could gather was by their voices.

Q. Is there anything else that you did that morning that you wish to tell us about?

A. I only got the emergency packs tied to the life rafts and waited for the life rafts to be towed back to MELBOURNE.

Q. Did you have a life jacket on when you were swimming around?

A. No, sir.

Q. How long were you engaged in this operation altogether?

A. About three quarters of an hour.

Q. Did you see any raft other than these MELBOURNE rafts in the area?

A. There were some rafts off EVANS partly submerged and half inflated.

Q. How many did you see in that condition?

A. I saw about three half inflated, I saw one submerged about ten feet under the water.

Q. Did you examine these rafts to see what had gone wrong with them?

A. No, sir. We just tied them together in a group and checked to see if there was any survivors in them and there was none.

Q. Did you see any other survivors in the water in addition to the two men you helped?

A. Yes, sir. Further out, being winched up into helicopters and getting pulled out of the water by fellows in motor cutters.

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

Senior Member: The board has no questions for ME James.

Counsel for the board: You have the right to make a statement concerning any matter ^Tthat has not yet been brought out by the questions asked of you. Do you wish to make any further statement?

ME James: Yes, sir. The coolness of some of these EVANS sailors. Some were very cool in the life rafts and I congratulate them for not being hysterical.

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

Postal Clerk Third Class Charles M. Smith, U. S. Navy, was called as a witness by counsel for the board, was sworn, and examined as follows:

Counsel for the board: Petty Officer Smith, you have been called as a witness for this board of investigation which is inquiring into the circumstances surrounding the collision of RMAS MELBOURNE and USS FRANK E. EVANS, because it is understood that you have evidence that 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 that?

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PC3 Smith: Yes, sir.

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EXAMINATION BY COUNSEL FOR THE BOARD

Questions by counsel for the board:

Q. Would you state your full name?
A. Charles Michael Smith.

Q. Your rate?
A. PC3.

Q. And that stand for?
A. Postal Clerk Third Class.

Q. To what unit are you assigned? To what ship are you assigned?
A. FRANK E. EVANS.

Q. Would you state how long you have been in the Navy?
A. About 2 years 6 months.

Q. How long have you been assigned to FRANK E. EVANS?
A. One year 3 months.

Q. What were your duties on board on the 3rd of June?
A. Do you mean at the time of the collision, sir?

Q. What were your normally assigned duties on board EVANS?
A. In the morning, usually the KEARSARGE or MELBOURNE would send a flight over, a helo over to pick up the mail, I would dispatch it....

Q. You were the postal clerk on board the EVANS, and that was your principal duty to run the post office, is that correct?
A. Yes, sir.

Q. Inviting your attention to the time of the collision, where were you?
A. I was asleep, sir.

Q. What was the first notice that you had that something unusual had occurred?
A. Well, I was shaken quite a bit, I was thrown out of my rack.

Q. Where is your bunk located, in what compartment?
A. "OC" Compartment.

Q. Where is that located on the ship?
A. That's aft of, all the way aft.

Q. Is it one deck below the main deck?
A. Yes, sir.

Q. Just forward of the after steering compartment?
A. Yes, sir.

Q. Would you then continue, you said you were shaken by the collision.
A. Yes, sir. My rack is right behind a big air conditioner and I was thrown out of my rack and I hit the air conditioner, bounced back into my rack, hit the air conditioner and back into my rack. There is only about seven or eight inches between my rack and the air conditioner.

Q. Could you tell whether you were moving or the air conditioner was moving?
A. It was me. No doubt about it, sir.

Q. The air conditioner stayed in place though?
A. Yes, sir.

Q. Then what happened after you settled down after returning to your rack the second or third time?

A. I didn't really know what was happening and it didn't seem like anyone else knew, so I got my pants and was going up on the fantail to see what had happened. I went up the ladder on to the fantail and I saw the MELBOURNE right beside us. I just thought that maybe we had bumped into them or something, I really didn't know what had happened.

Q. Did you notice the performance of any personnel in the compartment in which you were located? Was anyone seemingly in charge or taking action to direct the efforts of the other people?

A. At first I didn't notice anyone. Someone said, "Let's get the hell out of here," and that's the reason I got out. I went back down in the compartment to get my keys to the post office after I was on the fantail and someone said the front of the ship had sunk, and I decided that the back of the ship might sink, so I had better go to the post office and get the mail, and I had a life jacket in there also. I went back into the compartment and Kilian, DC3, was down there telling, there was a lot of stragglers that didn't know what had happened and they were messing around looking for their billfolds and looking through their lockers, he was down there telling them to get out.

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Q. What other actions did he take that you observed?
A. He was passing out life jackets on the fantail.

Q. Was anyone setting Condition ZEBRA in the compartment?
A. He set Condition ZEBRA, Kilian did on the scuttle going by the ship's store and by the post office.

Q. Did you notice the actions of a man named Jones, Quartermaster Seaman?
A. Yes, sir. He is the one who handed me my life jacket.

Q. And from where was he securing the life jackets that he was handing out?
A. Sir?

Q. Where did he get them, the life jackets that he gave you?
A. I don't know, sir, from a repair locker, I imagine.

Q. After you went to the fantail how were you removed from FRANK E. EVANS?
A. Well, they told us to go up to the ECM deck and cross over. I started down the port side and someone from the MELBOURNE threw a rope ladder down. We secured it to our ship and I climbed up.

Q. Were you able to secure your postal funds prior to leaving FRANK E. EVANS?
A. No, sir. I couldn't find my keys.

Q. When were you able to do that? Were you ever subsequently able to take care of your responsibilities as to the postal funds?

A. The LARSON, the salvage party off the LARSON, the postal clerk and the postal officer went over and tore down the door and took all the accountable things I needed and gave them to me later.

Q. Have your books been balanced out?
A. Yes, sir.

Q. Were there any discrepancies in the funds or stamps or anything else delivered to you by LARSON?
A. Do you mean were any of the stamps damaged?

Q. No. Discrepancies as to numbers or amounts, did your books balance?
A. Yes, everything was all right.

Q. Did you observe the conduct of personnel on the fantail of EVANS when you were there?
A. Yes, sir. Everyone seemed to be doing whatever they were told or whatever they could to help anyone else.

Q. Did you notice any particularly outstanding performance by any personnel?
A. I don't know of anything really outstanding, but when I saw that the back of the ship was going to sink I thought a life jacket was pretty important to me and the guys that were handing them out seemed to be doing a real good job because most everyone had one.

Q. Who were the people that were handing them out?
A. All I saw was Kilian and Jones. There might have been more, but I didn't notice anyone else.

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

Senior Member: The board has no questions for Postal Clerk Smith.

Counsel for the board: Petty Officer Smith, you are informed at this time that you have the privilege 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 the previous questions. Do you have anything to add?

PC3 Smith: No, sir.

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

Damage Controlman Third Class Casey P. Kilian, U. S. Navy, was called as a witness by counsel for the board, was sworn, and examined as follows:

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

DC3 Kilian: Yes, sir.

EXAMINATION BY COUNSEL FOR THE BOARD

Questions by counsel for the board:

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Q. Would you state your full name, your grade and your present assignment?
A. Kilian, Casey Patrick, DC3, 871 87 56

Q. To what ship were you assigned on the 3rd of June?
A. USS FRANK E. EVANS (DD-754).

Q. How long have you been in the Navy, Kilian?
A. Two years and one month.

Q. How long have you been assigned to FRANK E. EVANS?
A. Since January 18th, 1968, sir.

Q. And what were your duties on board, in a general way?
A. To maintain watertight integrity and maintain damage control things throughout the ship.

Q. Inviting your attention to the early morning hours of the 3rd of June was the first indication you received that something might be wrong?
A. I was sleeping in my....

Q. Where was that located?

A. "R" Division compartment, C203L, after part of the ship. As the collision took place I was thrown out of my rack and as I was falling I stuck my hand into a fan, it was right above my rack. That woke me up pretty good and I landed on my feet and upon landing upon my feet, I went straight up the ladder to the passageway. As soon as I got in the passageway the first thing I saw was four battle lanterns, they were lit and it was dusty and all from the impact of the collision

Q. Was there any other illumination than the battle lanterns?
A. No, sir, there wasn't

Q. Were they the type of battle lanterns that automatically actuate upon power failure?
A. Yes, sir, they were.

Q. And where were they located?
A. They were located on the port bulkhead.

Q. Of the passageway?
A. Yes, sir.

Q. What about the ones in your compartment, did you notice any there?
A. I did not notice any.

Q. Are there any such battle lanterns located in the compartment?
A. Not to my knowledge.

Q. I interrupted you, you may proceed.

A. Well, anyway upon arriving in the passageway, I opened up the port hatch and as I started to go out someone came down the passageway and said we were rammed and upon hearing that, I dogged the hatch back up and went down to the compartment and told everyone that we had been rammed and to get out of the compartment because they were putting their clothes on and just moving slowly because I guess they didn't realize what had happened really.

Q. And did those people respond to your directives to get out of the compartment?
A. Yes, sir. They stopped dressing and starting moving up the ladder.

Q. What did you do following that?

A. Following that I came back up the ladder and everybody was setting ZEBRA, and I went and checked the heads to make sure that ZEBRA was set in the heads. Then I went onto the fantail and they had a few injured people walking back on the fantail. A few people had life jackets on so I went to Repair 3 passageway which is right aft of after officers staterooms and opened up Repair 3 locker and broke out life jackets.

Q. How many did you find in there?
A. We counted between 12 and 15 for repair 3 party only.

Q. What did you do with those that you found?

A. I brought them to the fantail and started giving them out to the injured first, then whoever wanted one after that.

Q. Was anyone else passing out life jackets at this time?

A. Someone had grabbed some that I had and was passing out too, I'm not too sure who it was.

Q. Were you satisfied that Condition ZEBRA was set in the space for which you were responsible.
A. Yes, sir, I was.

Q. When you arrived on the fantail, did you note the situation as to the calmness or other status of personnel there?

A. I feel that everybody was exceptionally calm, but I feel that they just didn't realize what had happened. It took place so fast that no one had reason to be anything but calm really. They didn't know what happened.

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Q. Upon the completion of handing out the life jackets could you tell if everyone had a life jacket eventually.

A. No, sir. They didn't.

Q. Could you estimate how many did not?

A. Well, taking into account that we had 199 people on board, the most life jacket I could see that we could get anywhere on the ship would be fifteen from Repair 3 and the most they had in Repair 5, at the most, was 30 and to my knowledge unless they had some on the torpedo deck, which would be very few, that would probably be all we had.

Q. What was the practice of the ship as to storage of life jackets?

A. To have life jackets in Repair 3 which were for the repair party and that was 15, that was kept up. Repair 5 was also kept up. On the starboard side past the bridge there was a life jacket locker there, but I don't whether they had any life jackets in there or not or whether it was knocked over the side or not.

Q. Wasn't there a life jacket for each man at his General Quarters Station?

A. Yes, sir.

Q. And would there have been life jackets at the General Quarters Stations of all personnel stationed in the after section of the ship?

A. Would you repeat that again?

Q. Would not there have been life jackets at every station in the after part of the ship where the men were stationed at General Quarters?

A. The life jackets were sufficient for people who were in General Quarters in that section of the ship which were broken up into different repair parties. We had sufficient amounts of life jackets for Repair 3, which our General Quarters station would be Repair 3 and we had the sufficient amount there. As far as having life jackets for everyone in the after part of the ship, no, sir, we did not have enough.

Q. How about the after engine room and after fireroom?

A. They are broken up into different repair parties for General Quarters. Now like I say we only have 15 life jackets in Repair 3.

Q. Are you aware of what the practice would be in the firerooms and engine rooms?

A. No, I am not, sir.

Q. To your knowledge was the emergency illumination adequate in the spaces which you visited in setting Condition ZEBRA?

A. Yes, it was.

Q. Did it appear to function normally when the normal lighting went out?

A. I would say it did, sir.

Q. Did you notice any flooding in any of the spaces into which you went?

A. When I first arrived up the ladder they had water in the passageway leading to Repair 3 and after officers. I am not sure how it got there but I understand it was from open hatches or port holes.

Q. Did you go into the shaft alleys?

A. No, sir, I didn't.

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

EXAMINATION BY THE BOARD

Questions by the senior member:

Q. Kilian, at General Quarters, when you proceed to your General Quarters Station, do your duties include the setting of Condition ZEBRA?

A. Yes, sir, it does.

Q. In what area?

A. In the after section of the ship, sir. That would include "R" Division compartment, CO23L, it would include the head and shower, Supply compartment, OC, 3rd Division. My duties for setting ZEBRA were the showers and the head and other people had other duties.

Q. Did you do that?

A. Yes, sir, I did.

Q. Did anyone do the other areas in that part of the ship as to setting ZEBRA?

A. Yes, sir, they did.

Q. Who?

A. Robinson had gone and checked "R" Division and also he went aft to the shipfitter shop to check, plus a few other people.

Q. Did you know that at the time?

A. No, sir.

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Q. When did you find that out?

A. Afterwards.

Q. How long afterwards?

A. When we were on the MELBOURNE.

Q. Do you have any comment on the damage control equipment with which you are familiar as to how it operated in this emergency?

A. No, sir, I don't. Except I believe life jackets were non-sufficient.

Q. I want to make sure that I understand clearly what you are saying here. You believe that the distribution and location of the life jackets, if I understand you correctly, did not meet the emergency with which you were faced and in which the ship was cut in two?

A. Yes, sir.

Q. Are you saying that, is there any doubt in your mind that there were enough life jackets on board the ship for all hands?

A. Yes, sir.

Q. There is doubt?

A. Yes, sir.

Q. You think that when the ship was in one piece there were not enough?

A. Yes, sir, I do.

Q. What may lead you to that conclusion?

A. Well, from taking inventory from what we have in our repair lockers and what is on the starboard side of the ship, I just don't believe they had enough life jackets.

Q. When the ship went to General Quarters prior to the collision, at any time, drill purposes, is it your belief that there was not a life jacket for each man?

A. Yes, sir.

Q. Yet you are not familiar with the practice as to stowage of life jackets in engineering spaces?

A. No, sir.

Q. So that you don't know anything about that?

A. No, sir.

Q. But you still think there weren't enough for each man?

A. Yes, sir.

Q. Does that seem a reasonable conclusion to you?

A. I just don't believe there were enough on board the ship.

Q. Kilian, what I am trying to get at is what is the basis for your belief; you have an area of ignorance which is fairly large by your statement, namely, you don't know anything about the practices as regard to stowage of engineering department and engineering spaces life jackets. Therefore, how can you make a general conclusion to the whole of the ship if there is a large area of the ship in which you don't have information?

A. I believe that when we go to General Quarters, I don't believe everyone had a life jacket. Not everyone brings a life jacket with them.

Q. Is it possible that some life jackets are stowed at the General Quarters Station of the individual?

A. Yes, sir.

Q. Therefore, they wouldn't have to bring them with them would they?

A. No, sir, they wouldn't.

Q. Can you give me any factual basis for your assertion that you believe there were not enough life jackets on board the ship?

A. No, sir, I can't.

Q. Did you ever participate in the inventory of the life jackets on board the ship?

A. No, sir, I haven't.

Senior Member: The board has no further questions for Damage Controlman Third Class Kilian.

Counsel for the board: Petty Officer Kilian, you are informed that you are privileged to make any further statement covering anything related to the subject of the inquiry that have not been brought out by prior questions. Do you have any additional statements?

DC3 Kilian: No, sir.

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

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Seaman Major A. Boettcher, 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. Seaman Boettcher, 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 which may tend to incriminate him and you may refuse to answer any such questions. Do you understand that?

A. Yes, sir.

Q. Would you state your full name?

A. Boettcher, Major Allen.

Q. And your rate?

A. Seaman.

Q. And to what ship are you assigned?

A. USS FRANK E. EVANS, sir.

Q. And to what division are you assigned on EVANS?

A. First Division, sir.

Q. And how long have you served on board EVANS?

A. About fourteen months, sir.

Q. How long have you been on active duty in the Navy?

A. A little over fourteen months, sir.

Q. On the early morning of three June, could you state where you were at the time of the collision?

A. I was in the First Division Sleeping Compartment, sleeping, sir.

Q. And where is that sleeping compartment located?

A. It's forward of the mess decks. In between the OI and the Chief's quarters.

Q. And at what level is that compartment?

A. Third deck, sir.

Q. And do you know the designation of the compartment?

A. No, sir.

Q. And what was the first notice you had of the collision?

A. It just woke me up, sir.

Q. How did it wake you up?

A. Well, the noise - and I could feel myself falling.

Q. Did you feel the ship rolling over?

A. Yes, sir. You could feel like you were falling right through the air.

Q. And were you thrown from your bunk?

A. Not far, because I slept on the starboard side.

Q. Did it throw you against the bulkhead?

A. Yes, sir. About two feet.

Q. And what did you do at that time?

A. Well, it woke me up and everything from the port side, racks, mattresses and other things - people - just went to the starboard side. I was buried a little bit. I got up as best I could and just stood up.

Q. And what was the status of the lighting in the compartment?

A. I didn't see any light at all, sir.

Q. Did you see any emergency lighting of any sort?

A. No, sir.

Q. Is the compartment equipped with any emergency lighting?

A. There is a battle lantern on the port side, sir.

Q. And did it light to your knowledge?

A. Well, sir, I didn't see it if it did.

Q. And what did you do then after you stood up?

A. Well, I started praying, sir.

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Q. After you had done that what did you do?

A. Well, there was panic pretty well in the division, you could tell there was a lot of people still there, most everybody, there could have been a few knocked out or something like that, but I would say most everybody was alive in the division. There was panic and then someone said to keep quiet, stay together and we will get out of here. At that time I started to climb the overhead to the hatch.

Q. Did that statement by someone seem to calm the people?

A. Yes, sir.

Q. And at that time, did the panic end?

A. Well, it subsided a little bit, but there were still people talking.

Q. And you said you started to climb the overhead, by that what do you mean?

A. Well, the ship stayed on its starboard side, so that the overhead became the bulkhead, the starboard bulkhead, and since I sleep directly across from the hatch, I remembered this and I just went in that direction, sir.

Q. And what did you crawl over to get there?

A. I just crawled up the overhead, there was nothing in my way.

Q. And had any lockers or any permanently installed equipment come loose in the impact?

A. Well, sir, we have foot lockers, most everybody has foot lockers and there is a few upright lockers, but I didn't see if there was.

Q. They stayed in place as far as you know?

A. They could have been thrown, but I couldn't tell. It was dark, sir.

Q. Were you able to reach the hatch?

A. Yes, sir. I went to the hatch and I went through the hatch.

Q. Was the hatch open at that time?

A. Yes, sir.

Q. Could you see any lights through the hatch?

A. Yes, sir. This is where I seen the dim light. So I went in the direction towards the light and I stuck my head through the mess decks. I knew it was the mess decks because of the red tile on the floor.

Q. The hatch you are talking about, does it lead directly into the mess decks from your compartment?

A. Directly into the forward head's passageway. I knew I was in the forward head's passageway. I wanted to get to the fastest way out, so I knew this wouldn't be it. The fastest way would be to go straight up to the forward fan room. So I turned around and went back, back into the forward head's passageway. There were about six or seven guys gathering in there coming out of the division. We were trying to find the hatch to the forward fan room. We couldn't find it, so I said, "Well, I'm going this way."

Q. By "this way," you meant which way?

A. Through the mess decks. There were two battle lanterns on in the mess decks, sir. So I started to climb in the mess decks.

Q. Was anybody else with you?

A. Well, there were people behind me.

Q. Were you in the lead?

A. Yes, sir. When I first started to go through, I noticed people starting to come out of OI Division. That's the division right under the mess decks. I started to climb through, and you had to climb over the tables with the position of the ship and hold on to the overhead which would have been the bulkhead. I seen Lehman fall, this is a first class. This is when I noticed the water in the mess decks 'cause Lehman hit the water and went completely under and came back up. The water was coming in fast. You could see this, too.

Q. Where was it coming from, could you tell?

A. At the time, no I couldn't. But after I found out the position of the ship, it had to be coming from the scullery door.

Q. And is that on the starboard side?

A. Yes, sir. So I went on. I noticed he came back up. He started to climb back up, so I went on and this is where I found Anthony, picked him up, in other words I followed his trail.

Q. Where did the trail lead you?

A. Well, he went through the "steam line," sir.

Q. Is that on the port side just aft of the mess deck?

A. Yes, sir. He was about 10 to 15 seconds ahead of me, so I followed him through there and right there was a dim light in the "steam line," very dim though. So he went up through the hatch and by the time I got there I went through the hatch and I was lost again. I felt like I was trapped.

Q. Where did you think that hatch led you to?

A. Well, actually I knew where it led me to.

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Q. And where was that?

A. To the wardroom door, in other words to the hatch by the wardroom door.

Q. Main deck hatch by the wardroom door?

A. Yes, sir. When I got there Anthony was gone and I couldn't find the door. So I went back down in the "steam line" and then I started to think. Anthony just went out that way so I turned around and went back and I found the door. The door was closed and it was on the overhead, directly on the overhead. I opened it up a little then I went back down in the "steam line" and I yelled to Vargo - this is a buddy of mine in first division - he was the only one I recognized, really, 'cause I knew him by his voice. His voice was changing. Then I told him that this was the way out, and so I went back up and out and I was standing on deck and they started to come out of the hatch.

Q. And how many others came out behind you, do you know?

A. I noticed four.

Q. And who were they?

A. Myself, Vargo, Dewey, and Salisbury, and Crowson and Wimsett got out, but I didn't see them come out of the hatch 'cause I was on deck possibly 35, 45 seconds and I heard someone shout, "She's going under," so everybody started to dive in the water. So I went into the water and swam away.

Q. And what was the inclination of the deck at this time, was it 90 degrees on its side or some further angle or some less angle?

A. Well, the foc'sle was higher, it was in a position about like that (indicating). See, when I got up there and looked around, you couldn't see the break. I didn't see the break and I thought the whole fantail was under water.

Q. But when it was rolled over on its starboard side, how far over was it rolled? Was it 90 degrees by this time?

A. I don't know, sir.

Q. Was there any light up on the main deck when you arrived up there?

A. No, sir. When I went into the water, I started to swim as fast as I could and I had gotten about 30 yards away and I turned over and started doing side strokes and the ship was still floating. But in about three seconds, she just went up and then she went down.

Q. And which part went up before it went down?

A. The foc'sle sir.

Q. And then it went in stern first?

A. Yes, sir.

Q. How long were you in the water then, do you know?

A. Not to long, sir. I was swimming towards the carrier, and I noticed that a life boat was in the water and coming up by the spot light and I just kept swimming towards that, sir.

Q. And were you picked up by the boat?

A. Yes, sir.

Q. And eventually returned to the MELBOURNE?

A. Yes, sir.

Q. You've related your experiences in getting out of the compartment to which you were assigned. Were there any problems that you met that you feel could be improved by changes in design such as lighting or anything of that nature?

A. Yes, sir. I made a suggestion to Mr. Boylan that, if possible, you could put battle lanterns so that they would shine through the hatch. This is what took so long - to find the hatches.

Q. And where were the battle lanterns that you saw directed towards?

A. They were on the lower part of both doors of the mess decks leading to the scullery and to the steam line.

Q. Did they shine on the hatches at all?

A. No, sir. They shine from the door they were on, the lower hand of the doors, shining towards forward, shining forward.

Q. I'm not quite clear what you mean, where were they actually located?

A. On the lower part of the door, in other words on the side of the door but on the bottom, up 2 or 3 feet from the bottom of the deck. They didn't shine through the door, they shined away from the door.

Q. Away from the door?

A. In other words it would light up the mess decks.

Q. Were they mounted just beside the door?

A. Yes, sir.

Q. And your suggestion would be that they be directed toward the door or hatch is that correct?

A. Well, mainly in berthing compartments, where you could have a battle lantern on the overhead that would shine down into the berthing compartment.

Q. From the adjacent or adjacent compartment above or below?

A. Yes, sir.

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Q. And did you have any problems in getting through the mess deck?

A. Quite a bit, sir. I noticed one thing in which I almost fell in the mess decks. The mess deck tables they have the rims you know, when you are in rough seas it keeps the food on the table. Well, the mess cooks clean them about twice a week, and they don't secure them down after that and when I reached for the table, it came loose and I lost my grip on that, but I had my other hand on the overhead and that held me up.

Q. Do you have any other remarks along that line?

A. Well, sir, I think things could have been secured better, the mess decks, other things were in disorder, the trays, they were all over the place in the "steam line."

Q. That was at the time the ship was rolled over 90 degrees?

A. Yes, sir, it was on its starboard side.

Q. The mess trays had been in their proper storage prior to that time as far as you know?

A. Sir, there is a cabinet for the trays, sometimes I think I remember where they close the doors on them, but a lot of times I know they don't and I guess when the ship took the roll these trays just came out everywhere.

Q. And how long do you estimate it was from the time of collision and the time the bow went down?

A. Could I state how long it took me from the time it woke me up till the time I got on the deck?

Q. Yes.

A. I would say about six minutes.

Q. And the bow section sank how long after that?

A. A minute, sir.

Q. Do you know who it was that called out to calm the people after the initial moment of disorder?

A. No, sir, I know it was one of two people. It was either Crowson, Second Class Boatswain Mate or Sage, Second Class Boatswain Mate.

Q. And did that help in getting the people organized to get out?

A. Yes, sir, everybody did calm down after that. There were a few people talking, they were saying, "What happened?" I said, "What happened," you know. Then I heard someone say they dropped anchor, and I knew that was wrong. Unless it was two miles up, or something like that.

Q. Did you see the bow section roll over before it sank?

A. No, sir. When I turned around it was just a few seconds and she went up and then went down, sir.

Q. You were swimming away prior to that time?

A. Yes, sir, but I can tell you what I've heard.

Q. No, I would just prefer to hear what you saw?

A. Yes, sir, but these people are gone, they could tell you because Wimsett was coming out of the hatch, and he said the water was coming into it, so I would say the ship took the roll then 'cause it was dry when I come through it.

Q. The same hatch you came through, water was coming in?

A. Yes, sir.

Counsel for the board: Counsel has no further questions.

EXAMINATION BY MEMBERS OF THE BOARD

Questions by the Senior Member:

Q. Boettcher, what is your battle station?

A. Mount 51, sir.

Q. When you go to general quarters and man your battle station, are you required to put on a life jacket?

A. No, sir.

Q. When you go to abandon ship stations, are you required to put on a life jacket?

A. Yes, sir.

Q. Where would you get a life jacket in that case?

A. They have them in the gun mount sir. I'm in the handling room, projectileman, and they throw them down to us.

Q. Are there enough for each man in the crew?

A. Yes, sir.

Q. Did you ever hear anybody in FRANK E. EVANS say that at abandon ship stations, he didn't have a life jacket?

A. No, sir.

Senior Member: The board has no further questions for Seaman Boettcher.

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Counsel for the board: Seaman Boettcher you are at this time privileged to make any further statement covering anything related 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 questions which 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.

Senior Member: The board will adjourn.

The board adjourned at 1734 hours, 25 June 1969.

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