

# Exhibit 12

## **A SURVIVOR SPEAKS**

**Jim Ennes**

I find it very strange that some Americans can argue endlessly that the attack on the USS Liberty was a tragic accident and not the deliberate attack on a known American ship that survivors know it to have been.

A point that baffles me (and my shipmates) about that view is that the Israelis did NOT stop firing when they drew close enough to positively identify us as American.

I was lying in a stretcher in a starboard passageway just inboard of the wardroom and almost directly over the torpedo that exploded. I remember very clearly the warning that torpedo boats were approaching followed by the explosion, the ship lifting away from the blast, then settling back to starboard and the very real fear that it would continue to settle until it rolled over and sank. Moments later the torpedo boats approached within fifty feet of the ship. One boat stopped alongside and trained a heavy machinegun on a man who was standing alone on a hatch on the main deck, but did not fire even though the man gave the boatmen the finger. Then a boat moved to within fifty feet of the fantail where the ship displayed her name in large letters in English painted on the hull and her GTR5 numbers in even larger letters. The boatmen clearly examined those markings and can hardly have failed to see other very distinctive American markings and the American flag that flew from the mast. Yet, even though the Israeli government claims it was at that point that they offered help, never firing at us again after the torpedo explosion, this is not so. Almost every man on that ship recalls -- as I personally recall very clearly from my position outside the wardroom -- that the torpedo boats then circled the ship for a long time firing at close range at anything that moved. Men trying to aid their wounded shipmates on deck were fired upon. Men fighting fires were fired upon and recall seeing their fire hoses punctured by machinegun fire. This went on for several minutes. At one point the boatmen concentrated their fire near the waterline amidships, presumably hoping to blow up the boilers to hasten our demise. Finally they pulled a distance back from the ship. We figured they were waiting for us to sink. And then at 3:15, forty minutes after the torpedo explosion and in response to orders from the bridge to prepare to abandon ship, men launched the only three life rafts that seemed still usable. The boats quickly drew closer, machinegunned the liferafts and then took one aboard after the machine gun fire severed a line that had tethered it to the ship. At this point, apparently in response to messages in the air from the Sixth Fleet promising (falsely) that aircraft were en route to our aid, the boats left the area. It was another 75 minutes later, about 4:30, that they finally returned to signal, "Do you need help?"

Now that is not my recollection alone, but is the recollection of nearly every man in the ship. It is one of several reasons that we reject the Israeli claim that it was a "tragic accident" in which they identified us as American even while the torpedos were in the water, never fired again, and immediately offered help.

Our Congress, much to our dismay, has from the beginning accepted "at face value" the Israeli claim that they never fired again after the torpedo explosion. Survivors have never been allowed to testify to the contrary, either to Congress or to the Court of Inquiry.

Of course there are many other reasons for us to disbelieve the Israeli version of events. Among them, for instance, their contrived claim that the aircraft were called in by the torpedomen after we were picked up on radar from over 30 miles away (well beyond their maximum radar range) and mistakenly plotted to be moving 32 knots when in fact we were moving at only 5 knots. Or their claim that the numerous Israeli reconnaissance aircraft that we saw circling us all morning at very low level were actually high in the sky carrying troops to the front and were unaware of our presence below. Or their claim that they mistakenly identified us as the Egyptian cavalry's 40-year-old horse carrier El Quseir, when in fact El Quseir had been out of service for years which must have been well known to the Israeli Navy. All those and other things convince us that the Israeli account is not true. Yet I think most convincing of their deliberate intent is that they continued to fire for forty minutes after examining our markings from as close as fifty feet away, did not offer help until nearly two hours after the torpedo explosion, and then lied about it.

So we are convinced that they are lying about virtually the entire prelude to, conduct of, and aftermath of the attack. Together, these things have convinced every man on that ship including her commanding officer that the attack was deliberate.

Yet despite these things a few Americans seem to accept the preposterous claim that the attack was a mistake and that firing stopped with the torpedo explosion. One can accept and understand this attitude from an Israeli, as he would have a natural tendency to believe his country's version of events and to disbelieve contrary versions -- especially since he has no personal experience to draw upon. But how can an American disbelieve the virtually identical eyewitness reports of scores of surviving fellow Americans and accept instead the undocumented claims of the foreign power that tried to kill them? That is very difficult to understand or to accept.

The typical Israeli reaction is that we are liars or antiSemites, which of course we are not. We are American sailors honestly reporting an act of treachery at sea. At the very least we deserve your courtesy and understanding.

Jim Ennes,  
Survivor