Letter from the Editor

William Graves, Editor
editor@lvanews.org

Dear Veterans and LVA Members,

What a year it has already been. So many of the norms and routines we took for granted have been challenged in 2020. But how we respond to these obstacles is, I believe, part of what defines us.

Not all change is negative, however. I’m excited to announce that the new board took on their roles, effective June 8th. Their names are likely not new to you, but I hope you will join with me in welcoming the new LVA leadership to their respective roles.

Larry Bowen  
President  
larryb1946@verizon.net

Bob Scarborough  
Vice President & Treasurer  
obascarborough@gmail.com  
706-593-1898

Ron Kukal  
Chaplin  
vasec39@gmail.com  
307-752-6693

Frank O’Classen  
Secretary  
oclassen@vermontel.net

Terry McFarland  
Member at Large

May the rest of this year bring you and your family health and happiness!

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Sincerely,  
William Graves  
Editor

SUBMIT INFORMATION TO:  
William Graves, Editor  
editor@lvanews.org
Letter from the President

By now you are probably fed up with all the COVID-19 virus news and are ready to get your lives back to some semblance of normal. Having said that, let me wish you all a very safe and healthy return to that normal state whatever it may be. I know for many of us “normal” may never be what we remember it to be but hopefully if we have our health and a good grasp of what is important to us we will make it through whatever is thrown our way.

I know Ernie Gallo mentioned several folks in our last newsletter when he was thanking them for their service, but he failed to put his name out there. Without his steady hands at the helm for the past six years I am not sure where the Liberty Veterans Association might have floundered to. All organizations need to have firm commitments from their members to survive and the same is true of the leadership of those organizations. Ernie like several before him served for more than one term and did an outstanding job under some incredibly stressful times. Our heartfelt thanks to you and Patricia for guiding us through some rough waters Shipmate.

Many of you may know that TRUNEWS has been developing a four-part documentary which tells the real story of the June 8th, 1967 attack on the USS Liberty and the aftermath. A preliminary screening of that documentary was scheduled for the week of August 19-22 in Vero Beach, Florida. We tried to get the word out to everyone we could so you could make arrangements to get down there if at all possible. I believe parts 1 & 2 were to be shown on August 20th and parts 3 & 4 were to be shown on August 21st. TRUNEWS put an awful lot of time and energy into this film and I’m sure this will be better than anything we have seen to date.

I want to take this opportunity to welcome my new Board members to the Board. I think in every case each member has been on a previous board in one capacity or another so they should be able to hit the ground running. We look forward to working for you to accomplish the goal the LVA set way back in 1980. May God bless you and keep you safe.

-Larry Bowen
IN JUNE 1967 jet aircraft and motor torpedo boats of the Defense Forces of the State of Israel brutally assaulted the American naval intelligence-gathering ship, USS Liberty, while in international waters off the coast of the Sinai Peninsula in the Mediterranean Sea. The attack was preceded by more than six hours of intense low-level surveillance by Israeli photo reconnaissance aircraft, which buzzed the ship as low as 200 feet directly overhead. The carefully orchestrated assault that followed was initiated by high performance jet aircraft. This was followed by slower and more maneuverable jets carrying napalm, and was finally turned over to lethal torpedo boats, which blasted a forty-foot hole in the ship's side. The attack lasted more than two hours, deliberately killing 34 Americans and wounding at least 171 others. Over 821 rocket, cannon and machine gun holes were inflicted. When the Liberty stubbornly remained afloat despite her damage, Israeli forces machine-gunned her life rafts, firefighters, stretcher bearers, and sent helicopters carrying troops to finish the job, no survivors were to be taken.

At this point, with Sixth Fleet rescue aircraft supposedly en route, the government of Israel apologized and the identity of the assailants became known.

Details of the attack were hushed up in both countries. Israel claimed that her forces mistook the Liberty for an Egyptian ship, and our government quietly accepted that excuse despite evidence to the contrary. No ship in our history has ever received such damage and casualties by accident. Then our government downplayed the intensity of the surveillance and the severity of the attack, and imposed a news blackout on the crew to keep the story under control. The official version is that the Liberty was reconnoitered only three times and only from a great distance. The American people were told that the air attack lasted only five minutes and that it was followed by a single torpedo and an immediate apology and offer of assistance. Nothing could be further from the truth. In June 1982, fifteen years after the assault, crewmembers reunited for the first time in Washington, D.C. It was a tearful, joyful reunion in which the men not only released their pent up emotions and decided that the USS Liberty Veterans Association would be formed with the firm goals of finding all crew members, holding reunions, proper recognition of Captain and crew (in particular those who lost their lives), obtaining a Congressional investigation into the attack, and...

TO BRING THE TRUE STORY OF THE ATTACK ON THE U.S.S. LIBERTY AND HER HEROIC CREW TO THE AWARENESS OF THE AMERICAN PEOPLE.
Brooklyn for Peace Town Hall Meeting

On June 18th, the group Brooklyn for Peace held a Zoom Town Hall meeting with their main topic the USS Liberty True Story. Leading off the discussion that evening was none other than three-time President and multiple Liberty Book author Shipmate Phillip F. Tourney. Phil was asked to focus his discussion on the actions and activities topside prior to and during the attack. Next up was current President Larry L. Bowen who was to focus his discussion on the actions and activities below decks primarily in the Communications Spaces and multiple triage areas internal to the ship. Finally, the past two-time President Mr. Ernest A. Gallo talked about the various actions by the Liberty Veterans Association to get Congress to Investigate the deliberate attack on our ship. He also pointed out how three major Veteran organizations passed resolutions asking Congress for similar actions to no avail. Then Ernie told of our submitting the War Crimes Report back in 2005 which also generated no action on the part of our government. You would think that the with all the negative reaction we have gotten over the years that we would stop trying, but one of our primary goals was to obtain “Honor and Recognition” for our shipmates “especially” for those who paid the ultimate sacrifice that day. We will NOT quiet until we have done ALL within our power to make that goal a reality. Next up is a formal complaint to the United Nations.

Spreading the Word in Greenville

“This gentleman from New York was at one of my presentations up there and has been on contact with me about what he can do to help out. He put this article in his local paper this June to help spread the word around Greenville. We are getting our voices heard.”

Submitted by Larry Bowen
Middle East in Focus, KPFK ZOOM Interview

On June 7th, Mr. Ernie Gallo and Mr. Larry Bowen had the pleasure of telling the true story of the USS Liberty attack to the audience of the KPFK radio broadcast network out of Southern California. The show was very structured and ran for approximately 30 minutes which isn’t much time when you are trying to tell 53 years of history without repeating yourself. To help you understand what Ernie and I tried to convey I will list the questions and “very briefly” supply an answer.

1. Considering the threat of “court-martial, Imprisonment or worse” if anyone exposed the truth about the assault of the Liberty, when, why and how did you and other survivors start talking about it? Reply: James Ennes book “ASSAULT ON THE LIBERTY”. 1979

2. In 2003, almost forty years after the fact, the independent “Moorer Commission,” chaired by retired Admiral Thomas H. Moorer United States Navy, was established in order to investigate the attack. How did that commission finally come about, were the findings consistent with your experience, and were any actions taken as a result? Reply: Admiral Moorer assigned the commission, results were consistent, recommendations to Congress were ignored.

3. On June 8, 2005 the USS Liberty Veterans Association submitted A Report of War Crimes Committed Against the USS Liberty, June 8, 1967 to the Department of Defense in accordance with the DoD Law of War Program. What if anything was the response to that submission? Reply: The Navy Court of Inquiry was sufficient. No Action Taken

4. Every June 8th the LVA veterans meet in DC to honor their fallen shipmates. Do military officers or dignitaries attend these ceremonies also? Reply: Very seldom especially more recently.

5. In the spring each year, the National Commander of all the military veteran organizations come to Washington, DC to brief Congress on their top priority issues. I know you have several resolutions moving around the country so do these get briefed as well and have any passed? Reply: Not briefed by the National Commanders. Mr. Bowen has been our representative briefing members of Congress for the past several years. New York state has a resolution about to be passed.

6. In August of 2017 the American Legion, the nation’s largest wartime veterans service organization, passed a resolution calling for the U.S. government to conduct a full investigation of Israel’s attack on the USS Liberty – joining the Veterans of Foreign Wars, which, had adopted a similar resolution calling for an investigation in 2013. Have those resolutions led to any movement? Reply: NO

7. Can you tell us what resources are available on your website, and how people can help you get justice? Reply: We provided a link to the website and a list of books available.

The responses were not that curt when we were on the radio and each of us had an opportunity to respond to each question if we felt we had something of value to add. I think we both felt that the interview went very well and is probably available out there on YouTube somewhere.
Obituary, CT2 Melvin Pete Johnson

Melvin P. Johnson, age 75 of Cary, passed away June 13, 2020 at his home. He was born December 21, 1944 in Fairbanks, Alaska, the son of Louis and Nadine Johnson.

Mel is survived by his wife Peggy (Radke) Johnson, his two sons: Maxwell (Lindsey) Johnson and Christopher Johnson as well as his siblings: Raymond (Sandy) Johnson, Melanie (Ron) Rainey, Karen (Randy) Stopnik, and Janice Johnson. Besides his parents he is preceded in death by his brother Ernest (Patty) Johnson.

Mel served in the Navy on the USS Liberty and was a purple heart recipient. He received the President’s Unit Citation Award and was a member Disabled American Veterans as well as the VFW.

Mel will be laid to rest at Abraham Lincoln National Cemetery in Elwood, IL. Due to the Covid pandemic, a Memorial Service will be planned at a later date.

Larry Bowen Interview with Global Network Show

I received an email from a young lady over in Hawaii asking me if I would be willing to do an on-line zoom conference on her radio program. The program was called “The Global Report” and she felt that our USS Liberty story would qualify. I asked her if she had prepared questions or if this would be a spontaneous type thing and she felt that the spontaneous talks were much better plus with listeners calling in she wouldn’t have time to prep me before we aired. I have to say that 30 minutes goes by very quickly when you are just talking extemporaneously. I think I was able to answer all the questions she had, but she did ask if I would be willing to do that again in the future. I told her I would but that I would like to maybe have one or two other crew members join me so that her listeners could get a different perspective on the attack.

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The link below is the interview if you have any interest in seeing what we actually talked about.
Hello Ernie -

This article was posted in the "Natural Order of the United States" Summer 2020 Edition. Thought you might like it - hope you're keeping well.

R/Chris Zirps

John Deaderick Scott passed away on 5 December 2017 and is buried at Arlington National Cemetery. On his father’s birthday, James recounted the event that changed his life forever.

“My father would have been 77 today (8 June 2020). He shared his birthday with the anniversary of the worst day of his life - the day his ship, USS Liberty, was attacked by the Israelis, killing 34 Americans and wounding more than 170 others.

For his actions on the afternoon of his 24th birthday, Dad received the Silver Star, the nation’s third highest award for heroism. While researching my book on the attack, I found this photo in the archives of the Charlotte Observer.”

James Scott’s Father

James Scott is a member of the Charleston Commandery and a noted author. He was a finalist for a Pulitzer Prize for his book “Target Tokyo” on the Doolittle raiders. James and his father, John Deaderick Scott, were both charter members of the Charleston Commandery. His father had been medically retired from the U.S. Navy.

James recounted to me that he had grown up listening to his father’s sea stories. One event in particular inspired James enough to give up his day job and begin a career as an author.
John Deaderick Scott and the USS Liberty (2 of 2)

The text of his citation follows.

The President of the United States of America takes pleasure in presenting the Silver Star to Ensign John Deaderick Scott (NSN: 0-700158/1105), United States Naval Reserve, for conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity in action in connection with the unprovoked and unexpected armed attack on USS Liberty (AGTR-5), in the Eastern Mediterranean, on 8 June 1967.

During the early afternoon hours, USS Liberty, while engaged in peaceful operations in international waters, was attacked without warning by a single jet fighter aircraft and three motor torpedo boats. The Liberty was subjected to intense incendiary, machine gun, and rocket fire and was placed in extreme jeopardy by a torpedo hit below the waterline on the starboard side in the vicinity of the research compartment. Severe structural damage and extensive personnel casualties were incurred.

Ensign Scott, serving as Damage Control Assistant, was in Damage Control Central during the attack, coordinating the setting of material conditions, actions of fire parties and other damage control teams. He remained in Damage Control Central on the starboard side of the ship when notified to "Standby for torpedo attack starboard side."

Without hesitation and with complete disregard for his own personal safety immediately following the torpedo attack, he courageously remained in his fume and smoke filled General Quarters station to direct and coordinate the emergency measures taken by the repair parties to extinguish fires, minimize and control flooding of spaces.

He personally directed and supervised the emergency plugging and shoring of the ruptured deck in the compartment just aft of his General Quarters station immediately above where the torpedo had exploded. This prompt action prevented progressive flooding and spread of fuel oil on the second deck, thus preserving the watertight integrity of the ship's second deck.

His aggressiveness and coolness under fire was exceptional, and his leadership and initiative throughout the next few days on shoring and damage control was an inspiration to all personnel aboard.

Ensign Scott’s initiative and courageous actions were in keeping with the highest traditions of the United States Naval Service."

John Deaderick Scott received his commission through Officer Candidate School shortly after graduating from the University of North Carolina at Charlotte. The Liberty was his first ship. After recovering from his wounds he was assigned to the USS Monmouth County (LST-1032) during its deployments to Vietnam. He was medically retired after being injured during a shipboard explosion.

The Liberty was attacked during the six-day war in June 1967. The ship was obviously United States Navy. To this day, nobody can satisfactorily explain why the attack took place. For political reasons, the truth may never be told.
Donald W. Pageler was born in Wamego, Kansas, on Feb. 1, 1946. He joined the U.S. Navy in June 1966 and was trained as a communications technician in Pensacola, Florida. After his training, he was assigned to the USS Liberty, a converted World War II transport ship. On June 8, 1967, while on a mission in the Eastern Mediterranean, 15 miles from the shore off the Gaza Strip, the ship was attacked by the Israeli Air Force and Navy. The unprovoked attack by an allied nation killed 34 U.S. sailors and wounded 174. Pageler was on the mess deck at the time of the initial attack and immediately went to the bridge to help transport the injured to safety. While trying to save his fellow sailors, Pageler was also injured. Despite the devastating attack, which included damage from machine guns, torpedoes, cannons and napalm, the USS Liberty was able to sail 1,000 miles to Malta, where the injured and the dead were transported ashore and the ship underwent repairs. It was later discovered that top U.S. officials called off rescue efforts to help the crew of the Liberty because they did not want to embarrass a U.S. ally. The Israeli government stated that the attack was simply a case of mistaken identity. After returning to the U.S., Pageler was told to never speak about the incident to anyone.

As a result of his experience, Pageler suffered from health problems as well as post-traumatic stress. He has spent his life trying to raise awareness about the attack on the USS Liberty and the government’s attempt to cover up the incident. After leaving the Navy in March 1970 as an E-5, Pageler returned to Kansas, where he earned a bachelor’s degree in business administration at the University of Kansas. After a long career with Boeing, Pageler is now retired and lives in Westminster. His wife Eva passed away on May 30, 2012.

View original article online at
https://ocfair.com/heroes-hall/exhibitions/virtual-museum/vietnam-war/
I was assigned to Helicopter Combat Squadron 2 (HC-2), NAS Lakehurst, New Jersey in April 1966. I completed two short detachments aboard the USS America (CVA-66) in November and December of that year for shakedown and air group carrier landing qualifications. In January I was a member of the HC-2 detachment assigned to the America for an extended Mediterranean deployment.

On the afternoon or evening of June 8, 1967 the Officer in Charge (OIC) called a detachment meeting. He advised that someone from ship’s company had contacted him to ask about our helicopter’s range and load capacity. He further stated that an American ship in the eastern Mediterranean had been attacked and severely damaged and a rescue effort was being planned. Our helicopter, the UH-2, did not have enough range to reach what I later learned was the USS Liberty. It was decided that we would launch the next morning when it was certain we could get to the ship, conduct the rescue and return safely.

Lt. Dave Hubbs and I, along with two crewmen, were the first to launch for the Liberty at the crack of dawn the next day (June 9th). Upon arrival, we overflew the vessel looking for an open landing spot on the ship’s deck. Due to the extensive battle damage, we were forced to hover over an open space and bring the wounded up via the helicopter’s hoist. The damage we observed was beyond anything I’d ever seen or imagined in my brief career as a Navy pilot. The destruction was total and devastating.

We set up our hover into the wind for greater lift. This was at about 25 feet and at an angle to the bow. We sent down a crewman to organize the raising of wounded, with the second crewman to receive and situate those survivors aboard the helo. Dave Hubbs, aircraft commander, flew the helicopter, keeping us in a constant relationship to the Liberty, providing a stable platform for the transfer. My job was to monitor the helicopter’s instruments and power settings and to advise Hubbs, who could not look away from his reference points on the ship.

During the rescue I could occasionally glance around and noted huge holes in the Liberty’s superstructure. The vessel’s bridge had been almost entirely shot away. We hovered near a .50 caliber gun tub situated in the ship’s bow. I was shocked to notice blood in the gun tub, deep enough that it sloshed back and forth as the ship rolled. I later learned that the blood was from multiple crews that had been killed defending the Liberty during the attack. I will not forget that sight for as long as I live.

As wounded sailors were brought up to the helo, the engine reached maximum power (topped out). The UH-2 had only one turbine engine at that time (later increased to two engines) and was notoriously under powered. I called out these numbers to Lt. Hubbs as the mission continued. With engine power topped out, the rotor speed steadily decayed. I kept up a steady reporting of the power situation. The rotor speed eventually got down to 92 percent which was in the danger zone. Our tail rotor would only function if the rotor speed was over 89 percent. One wounded sailor was half-way up the hoist and was then sent back down due to the power situation.

We slowly and deliberately moved away from the Liberty, preserving what rotor speed we had so as not to end up in the ocean with crew and wounded. Through expert piloting skill, Hubbs was able to coax the rotor speed back up. This was assisted greatly by his ability to get the helo back into the wind. We were able to slowly build up airspeed and altitude as we flew back to the America. Hubbs looked over at me with his characteristic grin and would only say that he was glad we had gotten out of there intact. We later found out the Liberty’s rudder had been disabled during the attack and that the ship was in a slight 5 degree turn the entire time we were over her. We had been slowly taken out of the wind by staying in the same relative position to the ship, a situation which had almost caused us to crash.

We landed and the wounded were taken to sick bay. This would be our only trip to the Liberty as the ship’s detachment of anti-submarine helicopters then took up the rescue mission. These were H-3 helicopters, with a much larger capacity and more power than the UH-2 could muster. It was an exciting and worth-while mission which I will never forget.
Jewish Support for the LVA

To view the complete 5-page letter from William A. Albert, please visit the link below:

https://bit.ly/2EqUbcY

Submitted by Moe Shafer

Address Corrections Needed!

These crew members letters were returned as “Unable to Forward”. If you know a new address for any of them, please email donnashafer@bellsouth.net. We’d like to know where you are.

Joe Denny ANDERSON (old address) PO Box 207, Jamestown, KS 66948
Harvey L. PURCELL (old address) 115 Diamond City Dr., Harkers Island, NC 28531
Richard J. REGER (old address) 132 Capt. Vill Lane, Brester, MA 02631
Mike SIMPSON (old address) 209 Henry Haynes Road, Knoxville, TN 37920
Dan WARWAS (old address) 8812 Opportunity Drive, Albuquerque, NM 87109
George W. WILSON (old address) 2829 Lakeshore Drive, Saint Joseph, MI 49805

Lastly, I have 2 addresses for Wayne L. SMITH – not sure if either is correct:
5523 Aurora Drive, Crestview, FL 32539 - letter was returned
861 Hyde Park Road, Leechburg, PA 15656 - ???

If anyone has any information on any of these guys, please let me know

Donna Shafer
USS Liberty Veterans
PO Box 680275
Marietta, GA 30068
On February 22, Don Pageler addressed a Middle school class at the Ensign Middle School in Newport Beach.

CDR Lewi’s uniform on display in Bldg. H-g, the Hampton Roads Naval Museum Annex, Naval Station Norfolk
**LVA Memorabilia Store - Order Form**

### READING MATERIALS

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<th>Title</th>
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<td>Assault on the Liberty: The True Story of the Israeli Attack on an American Intelligence Ship</td>
<td>By Survivor and LVS Historian</td>
<td>$30.00</td>
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<td>Mr. James Ennes, Jr. SEND ORDER TO: Jim Ennes, PO Box 789, Woodinville, WA 98072</td>
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<tr>
<td>The Attack on the Liberty - The Untold Story of Israel's Deadly 1967 Assault on a U.S. Spy Ship, By James Scott, son of crew</td>
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<td>REMEMBER THE LIBERTY Almost Sunk by Treason on the High Seas</td>
<td>By Phillip F. Nelson with Ernie A. Gallo, Ronald G. KuKal and Phillip F. Tourney</td>
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<td>Liberty Injustices: A Survivor’s Account of American Bigotry</td>
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<td>LIBERTY’S WOUNDS - By Jeremy P. Amick: A biography of Bryce Lockwood, USMC Survivor</td>
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### VIDEO

- **25th Anniversary Memorial at Arlington National Cemetery (DVD Video)**        $15.00
- **USS Liberty Survivors: Our Story - Patrick King Documentary (DVD Video)** $15.00
- **Loss of Liberty - New Detailed Film of Attack and Cover-Up (DVD Video)**     $20.00
- **Dead in the Water - Documentary: Find out how a nuclear war in the Middle East was averted at the last minute (DVD)** $20.00
- **Justice for the Liberty - An All American Documentary by Break of Dawn Productions** $20.00
- **A USS LIBERTY REMEMBERANCE of 50 Years of US Government Cover-Up of the Attack** $15.00
- **History Channel DVD** $15.00

### LIBERTY WEAR

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**SHIPPING CHARGE (See below)** **GRAND TOTAL:**

**$5.00 SHIPPING CHARGE FOR DOMESTIC ORDERS OVER $10. $15.00 SHIPPING CHARGE FOR INTERNATIONAL ORDERS.**

**MAKE CHECKS PAYABLE TO:** USS LIBERTY VETERANS ASSOCIATION

**For a one year membership in the USS LIBERTY Veterans Association and Newsletter Subscription, send $20 to Moe Shafer. Contributions are tax deductible! So please give and give generously!**

www.USSLibertyVeterans.org | www.USSLiberty.com
Liberty News is the official journal of the USS LIBERTY Veterans Association - a California nonprofit, tax-exempt corporation representing the USS LIBERTY Survivors and former Crew Members, their families, and other patriotic Americans.

The yearly subscription rate is $20.00 for an associate member (former and non-crew member). Due to our small size, however, we cannot survive solely on subscriptions. We are grateful to, and rely heavily upon our many members who voluntarily donate more generously with each passing year.

*Make your tax-deductible check payable to:*
LVA, C/O Moe Shafer, PO Box 680275, Marietta, GA 30068

**BOARD MEMBERS**
Larry Bowen  Bob Scarborough
Ron Kukal  Frank O’Classen
Terry McFarland

**LIBERTY NEWS**
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Marietta, GA 30068

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