

The witness stated that he had nothing further to say.

The witness was duly warned and withdrew.

Adam P. Sobczynski, MoMM2c, was recalled by the board and warned that the oath previously taken was still binding.

Examined by the board:

1. Q. In your previous testimony you stated that you saw some of the shots that were fired by the PC 815 hit. Will you relate everything that you know about the fall of shot as to location, range, and number of shots that you saw hit. Do you understand the question?

A. Yes, sir. Well, I actually didn't see the 3" fired from my position; I couldn't actually see, but I heard the noise of the gun as shots were fired and I am pretty sure the first shot hit the target and the other shots, I don't think they hit the target. Why, I don't know. But it's just my own opinion that it didn't hit the target.

As far as distances goes I would be afraid to make any estimate. The target was one of these aviation targets. That's what I think it was. A lot of pieces of wood, four cornered pointing to a peak. Four shots were fired. That's about all I can say.

2. Q. Could you see where the other three shots fell?

A. Well, I'd say they were over the target and a little to the left of it. That's my own judgement. I couldn't say for sure.

3. Q. Upon what visible signs do you base that estimate?

A. The target, sir.

4. Q. And you saw what else?

A. I didn't notice anything else. A lot of water.

5. Q. Did you see splashes?

A. Well, I noticed one or two splashes. There might have been more but I didn't pay any attention to the others.

6. Q. Did you see McGuire, soundman second class, on board the PC 815?

A. I don't even know if we have a man like that aboard ship, sir.

7. Q. Did you hear anybody say whether or not the shooting was considered to have been good shooting?

A. No, sir, not back where I was, sir.

8. Q. Well, at any time since the firing was conducted?

A. No, sir.

9. Q. How far from land would you estimate that the ship was at the time the firing was conducted?

A. I wouldn't know, sir. I never even stopped to notice land.

Cross examined by the counsel for the interested party:

10. Q. Either before or after the ship was secured from general quarters did you hear anyone among the crew or officers say that some of the shells had struck some rocks?

A. No, sir.

Re-examined by the board.

11. When the 3" gun was fired at the time in question would you say it was fired rapidly or slowly?

A. I wouldn't know, sir. I think it stands to reason it would take time to reload your gun. At any rate, I wouldn't have stopped to notice it.

12. Q. Did you think there was sufficient time between shots so that they waited or did they just load and fire again.

A. I thought that they just loaded and when they came on the target they fired.

13. Q. It wasn't what you would call rapid firing, then?

A. No, sir.

Neither the board, the recorder nor the counsel for the interested party desired further to examine this witness.

The board informed the witness that he was privileged to make any further statement covering anything relating to the subject matter of the investigation which he thought should be a matter of record in connection therewith, which had not been fully brought out by the previous questioning.

The witness stated that he had nothing further to say.

The witness was duly warned and withdrew.

A witness called by the recorder entered, was duly sworn, and was informed of the subject matter of the investigation.

Examined by the recorder.

1. State to the board your name.

A. Ralph Riesing.

2. Q. Your rate?

A. Motor machinist first class, V-6, U. S. Naval Reserve.

3. Q. Present station.

A. PG 815.

4. Q. Were you aboard the PG 815 on 28 June, 1943?

A. Yes, sir, I was.

5. Q. What was your battle station?

A. Engine room. All my watches are in the engine room.

Examined by the board.

6. Q. When you are in the engine room when the engine is operating can you feel the vibration of the guns?

A. Yes, sir, but we never know which one it is.

7. Q. When you are on duty in the engine room with the engines operating, can you tell if the gun on forward part of the ship is fired?

A. I can tell when a gun is fired, but I don't know which one it is.

8. Q. On the afternoon of June 28, did you feel a gun fired on the PG 815?

A. Yes, I did.

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9. Q. Do you know at approximately what time that occurred?
A. No, I don't know the exact time. I know it was in the afternoon sometime.
10. Q. Can you get it down within an hour?
A. Sometime between 3:30 and 5:00.
11. Q. How many times was the gun fired?
A. That I am not sure.
12. Q. At the time the gun was fired, do you know what speed the ship was making.
A. No, I don't.
13. Q. I show you the engineer's bell book of the PC 815, Exhibit "B". At what time during the afternoon of June 28 was the ship stopped, or the engines stopped, rather?
A. We went through several stops. We went through one at 1652.
14. Q. Referring to the bell book, how many times was number one engine stopped?
A. 1601, 1652, 1705, 1708, stopped.
15. Q. What was doing on number two engine?
A. 1546, 1604, 1652, 1703.
16. Q. Assuming that the firing occurred at about 1619, what speed was shown on the bell book?
A. 1/3 on shaft 2, 305 revolutions. 1/3 shaft 1, 305 revolutions.
17. Q. At 1600 which engines were stopped?
A. Revolutions were zero on shaft one. Shaft two stop was 1604.
18. Q. How long did the engines remain stopped?
A. Shaft one started in the same minute. 305 revolutions. Shaft two wasn't started until three minutes later at 305 revolutions.
19. Q. What time was the next stop on number one shaft?
A. 1652.
20. Q. And on shaft two?
A. 1652.
21. Q. Did you hear any discussions among members of the crew as to the accuracy of the firing which was conducted at about the time mentioned?
A. No, I didn't have any conversation with anybody.
22. Q. Did you ask anybody what they were firing at?
A. No, sir.

Neither the board, the recorder nor the counsel for the interested party desired further to examine this witness.

The board informed the witness that he was privileged to make any further statement covering anything relating to the subject matter of the investigation which he thought should be a matter of record in connection therewith, which had not been fully brought out by the previous questioning.

witness stated that he had nothing further to say.

witness was duly warned and withdrew.

Ensign Darrell Walker was recalled by the board and warned that the oath previously taken was still binding.

Examined by the board:

1. Q. During the afternoon of the 28th of June, did you fire the 20 millimeter gun?

A. No, sir.

2. Q. Did you fire any 20 millimeter gun?

A. No, sir.

3. Q. The 3" gun was the only gun fired? What about the small arms fire on the fantail after you anchored?

A. We did small arms firing after we anchored.

4. Q. Who designated the target for the 3"/50 to fire on?

A. The captain.

5. Q. By what means of communication did you receive this information?

A. By word of mouth from the captain on the flying bridge.

6. Q. Was the captain on the flying bridge also?

A. Yes, sir.

7. Q. What do you term as the flying bridge?

A. The part above the pilot house in the flying bridge.

8. Q. The captain was there beside you?

A. He could have been on the signal bridge.

9. Q. Later when the target was designated where were you?

A. I was upon either the flying bridge or the signal bridge.

10. Q. And where was the captain?

A. He was close enough so that I could hear what he had to say.

11. Q. Was he either on the flying bridge or the signal bridge also?

A. Yes, sir.

12. Q. What was the target that was designated?

A. A wooden floating raft.

13. Q. After the firing was there any discussion that you heard or took part in as to the accuracy of the firing or the location of the fall of shot? Did you either take part in any discussion or remember any discussion as to the accuracy of the fall of shot?

A. I don't recall.

14. Q. Did you ask anybody where the shots fell?

A. I don't remember asking anyone else, sir.

15. Q. Did the commanding officer discuss the firing with you? Did he discuss any phase of the firing with you?

A. I don't remember that he did.

16. Q. Did the commanding officer discuss with you any phase of fire control activities at all?

A. I can't remember.

17. Q. Did you try to determine through questioning of any member of the crew or officers attached to the ship what the results of the firing were?

A. No, sir.

18. Q. Did you make any comment to anybody concerning the conduct of the 3" firing?

A. I don't remember saying anything to anyone.

19. Q. What instructions did you give Mr. Navarro concerning the firing?

A. He was just to take charge of fire control.

20. Q. That he was to take charge of fire control of what?

A. Of the 3" gun.

21. Q. What reports did Mr. Navarro make to you upon the conclusion of the firing?

A. I don't remember his making any report to me.

22. Q. Did you inquire of Mr. Navarro concerning the conduct of the practice?

A. No, sir.

23. Q. Did you see any of the shots hit the land?

A. No, sir.

24. Q. Did you see any of the shots hit the water?

A. No, sir.

25. A. Did you see the target at which they were firing?

A. Yes, sir.

26. Q. What was the target?

A. It was a floating wooden raft.

27. Q. How far were you from the raft?

A. I think we were probably three to four thousand yards.

28. Q. What report did you make to the Commanding Officer upon conclusion of the practice?

A. I don't think I made any report.

29. Q. Did you make a report that the ammunition was expended?

A. That report came up.

30. Q. I said, "Did you make a report that the ammunition was expended?"

A. No, sir.

31. Q. Did you make a report that the recoil cylinders were filled and had been inspected?

A. No, sir.

32. Q. Did you make a report that the crew had been instructed in safety precautions?

A. No, sir.

34. Q. Did you see any splashes around the target?

A. No, sir.

35. Q. Did you hear any comments concerning any splashes that were observed?

A. I don't remember any comments.

Cross-examined by the interested party:

36. Q. Do you think the government values the brass cases, the empties, of a 3rd/50 gun?

A. Yes, sir.

37. Q. Have you had any trouble training the hot shellman to keep places aboard all clear?

A. Yes, sir.

38. Q. What happened on the occasion of this firing?

A. We lost all four of our empty cartridges.

39. Q. In what way did we lose them?

A. The hot shellman seemed to be just a little afraid.

Neither the board, the recorder nor the counsel for the interested party desired further to examine this witness.

The board informed the witness that he was privileged to make any further statement covering anything relating to the subject matter of the investigation which he thought should be a matter of record in connection therewith, which had not been fully brought out by the previous questioning.

The witness stated that he had nothing further to say.

The witness was duly warned and withdrew.

The interested party was called as a witness by his counsel. The oath previously taken by him was still binding.

Examined by the counsel for the interested party:

1. Q. Did you at any time on the 28th of June direct fire from the 3rd/50 caliber gun to be placed on any rock or island associated with the Coronados Islands as a target?

A. No, sir.

2. Q. Would you know whether or not the fire was directed at such a target?

A. In view of the fact that I saw a film of spray angling over the water beyond the target which appeared to me to be the shell splash, it is my belief that the gun crew had obeyed orders and used the aircraft bombing target as a target for the shell fire.

3. Q. Subsequent to the firing did you hear any remarks made about hits on any rocks?

A. I did not.

4. Q. Will you state to the best of your recollection whether or not the rocks described as being off the northern tip of the South Coronados Island was in line of firing with the target raft during the firing of either of the four shots?

A. Such rocks were not in the line of fire for the first shot. Of that I am certain. They may have been in the line of the last shot. The ship at that time was going forward at a speed, ahead 1/3, all engines, nine knots.

Examined by the board.

5. Q. Calling your attention to the morning of June 30, 1943, do you recall having a conversation with the chief of staff COTC PAC in connection with the firing in question?

A. Yes.

6. Q. Did you during that conversation state to the chief of staff that some one had made the remark that one or more of the shells fired had hit a rock or land?

A. As I spoke to the chief of staff in my pilot house discussing our chart of the area I was under great stress and terribly concerned, as I still am. I cannot distinctly recall my conversation at that time, but I was so worried about the incident that I may have told him that it was entirely possible that shell firing had reached that end of the island inadvertently. That to the best of my knowledge and belief is all I remember.

7. Q. Is your answer that you did not make such a statement to him or that you do not recall whether or not you did make such a statement? Which do you mean?

A. I don't recall whether or not I made such a statement.

8. Q. What was the elapsed time from the first to the last shot fired?

A. My best estimate would be less than three minutes.

Neither the board, the recorder nor the counsel for the interested party desired further to examine this witness.

The board informed the witness that he was privileged to make any further statement covering anything relating to the subject matter of the investigation which he thought should be a matter of record in connection therewith, which had not been fully brought out by the previous questioning.

The witness stated that he had nothing further to say and resumed his seat.

Neither the board, the recorder nor the counsel for the interested party desired to call any more witnesses.

The recorder desired to make no argument.

Counsel for the interested party desired to make no argument.

withdrawing.

After full and mature deliberation the board finds as follows:

FINDING OF FACTS

1. That the U.S.S. PC-815 fired 4 rounds of 3"/50 caliber target ammunition at about 1619 on 28 June, 1943, from the one 3"/50 caliber gun mounted on board.
2. That no navigational data was available to determine the position or course of the PC-815 at the time the shots were fired at about 1619 on 28 June, 1943.
3. That the position of the ship was in general, Northeast of South Coronados Island at an undetermined distance.
4. That land was in the line of sight at the time of firing and this land was somepart of the Coronados Island.
5. That neither a safety officer nor a check-sight observer stationed at the gun.
6. That all the fall of shot of the 4 shots fired from the 3"/50 caliber gun were not observed by any officer on the ship.
7. That an undetermined number of splashes were observed in the water in the direction of land during the firing.
8. That evidences of shells hitting land or rocks on the Northern end of South Coronados Island was observed on two separate instances during the conduct of the firing.
9. That evidence of a shell hitting land or rocks on the Northern end of South Coronados Island or on land behind the Northeastern end of South Coronados Island in the line of fire was observed on a third instance during the conduct of the firing.
10. That the ship was underway at the time of firing making one-third engine speed, about 9 knots.
11. That there was no U.S. Naval directive prescribing that the PC-815 fire guns of any caliber in any area on 28 June, 1943.
12. That upon completion of firing of the 3"/50 caliber gun the PC-815 proceeded on various courses and speeds and at about 1706 on 28 June, 1943, anchored about 500 yards off the Eastern shore of South Coronados Islands in 7 fathoms of water with 65 fathoms of chain to the starboard anchor with the lighthouse structure on the Northeast sector of South Coronados Island bearing about 326° true and the left tangent of South Coronados Island bearing about 185° true.
13. That after anchoring on the afternoon of 28 June, 1943, firing of .30 caliber and .45 caliber weapons was conducted from the port and starboard quarters of the PC-815 by certain officers and members of the crew during the period from about 1730 until sometime after sunset.
14. That approximately 80 rounds of .30 caliber and 40 rounds of .45 caliber ammunition was expended, some of which were fired into the water in the direction of South Coronados Island.
15. That shots from the small arms firing were not observed from the South Coronados Island.

The ship remained at anchor throughout the night.

The ship did not at any time on 28 June, 1943, fire at South Coronados Island.

18. That the PC-815 anchored in the vicinity of South Coronados Island on the afternoon of 27 June and remained overnight in approximately the same position as the ship anchored on 28 June, 1943.

19. That there was no U.S. Naval directive authorizing the PC-815 to anchor in the vicinity of the Coronados Islands on 27 and 28 June, 1943.

Jacob E. Cooper,
Commander, U. S. Navy, Senior Member.

Gene M. Harris,
Lieutenant, D-V(S), U. S. Naval Reserve.

Frank G. Morris, jr.,
Lieutenant, D-V(G), U. S. Naval Reserve.

The record of proceedings of the investigation was read and the board having finished the investigation, then, at 12:37 p.m. on 3 July, 1943, adjourned to await the action of the convening authority.

Jacob E. Cooper,
Commander, U. S. Navy, Senior Member.

Neel J. Dyer,
Ensign, D-V(S), U. S. Naval Reserve, recorder.