

(11.5)

to choose the South half of 4530 as that rendezvous. My interpretation therefor was that no special permission was required to fire on the 28th.

26. Q. What type of ammunition did you fire on the 28th?

A. Target was ordered to be fired, and I believe that target ammunition was fired.

27. Q. What allowance of target ammunition do you have for your 3"/50?

A. We have 4 rounds.

28. Q. Were those 4 rounds remnants from previous practices or were they rounds for unspecified practices?

A. I believe they were rounds for unspecified practices. I believe we were supposed to fire common on the following day. These rounds were fired as a test of the guns and crew preliminary to serious target practice and spotting.

29. Q. Had you already fired your structural test?

A. The gun had never been structurally fired under the supervision of an ordnance officer, but had been fired during illumination practice.

30. Q. What was your position when you fired the 3"/50 caliber?

A. Northeast of South Coronados Island. I did not have sufficient navigation information to accurately fix this position.

31. Q. Could you see the South Coronados Island at the time of firing?

A. Yes, sir.

32. Q. What was your estimated distance?

A. Beyond 3 miles.

33. Q. What was the point of aim?

A. There was a floating target which aircraft had been bombing throughout the day.

34. Q. What was the position of the float?

A. I do not have it fixed on the chart. I believe it was about 260° true from us at the time we fired.

35. Q. At what range did you open fire?

A. I do not know the range. It was given by my fire control officer.

36. Q. How high out of the water was the float?

A. About 10 feet, the remains of a pyramid target.

37. Q. How close to the target did you pass?

A. Between 1,000 and 2,000 yards, but I could not swear to it.

38. Q. Was the target and any part of the South Coronados Island in your line of sight?

A. To the best of my knowledge and belief, no.

39. Q. Did the line of sight include the Middle Coronados Island?

A. To the best of my knowledge and belief, no.

40. Q. Were you at any time during the afternoon or evening of 28 June near the Middle Coronados Island?

A. No, sir. We were never to the westward of South Coronados during that day's operation. On the following day, 29th of June, we passed close to South of Middle Coronados Island, outside the kelp area assisting in a search for a crashed plane and a pilot who was reported to have bailed out in that area. On this date we observed, as we had the day before, a large amount of aerial bombing close to Middle Coronados Island and South Coronados Island.

Reexamined by the Recorder:

41. Q. Did you at any time observe any buildings or signs of habitation on the Island in the vicinity of your anchorage?

A. On Sunday, the 27th, bearing between 320° and 330° true from the anchorage I observed a lighthouse and 2 small houses which appeared to me at that time to be deserted. Upon anchoring on the 28th I again observed these houses and saw two or more people on the ridge near the lighthouse. The light was at all times extinguished.

42. Q. Did you notice any other U.S. Naval vessels at the anchorage?

A. No, I did not, but I have been informed that this was their customary anchorage.

43. Q. Did you anchor in the same place on the 27th as you did the 28th?

A. Yes, on the same advice, and for the same reason. I was very conscious of fog, on coming out of the gate that morning I had almost been run down by an ACV.

44. Q. At any time did you see a building resembling a hotel?

A. At no time.

Neither the Board nor the Recorder desired further to examine the Interested Party at this time.

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

Examined by the recorder:

1. Q. State your name, rank, and present station.

A. Lewis Joseph Navarro, Ensign D-V(G), U.S. Naval Reserve, U.S.S. PC 815.

2. Q. How long have you been attached to the PC 815.

A. Since June 2, 1943.

3. Q. What are your present duties?

A. Navigator, Assistant Communication Officer, and Assistant Gunnery Officer.

4. Q. Were you on board the PC 815 on 28 June 1943? What were your duties?

A. Yes, sir, I was. My duties were as navigator and taking various sights.

5. Q. Do you have any information which would be helpful to this board in fixing the position of this ship at approximately 1600, 28 June 1943?

A. Yes, sir.

6. Q. What is that information?

A. We were in the vicinity of the rendezvous which was point 'Charlie'.

7. Q. Did you fix the position of the ship at 1600?

A. No, sir.

8. Q. Are you the custodian of the Bearing Book and Navigation Work Book?

A. Yes, but I have no Bearing Book.

9. Q. Will you produce the Navigation Work Book?

A. I have the Navigation Work Book, here it is.

I offer in evidence extracts from the Navigation Work Book of the PC 815, dated 28-29 June 1943, for the hours applicable to the investigation, and ask that a copy be made, admitted in evidence and marked Exhibit "E".

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It was submitted to the Board and Interested Party. No objection was made and the document was admitted in evidence and permission given to append certified copy of extracts from it.

Examined by the Board:

10. Q. Have you a record of the track of the ship for the 28th of June?

A. I have no track except for the Quartermaster's Notebook.

The board then directed the witness to reproduce the ship's track from 1400 to the time of anchoring.

The witness was warned and withdrew.

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

Examined by the recorder:

1. Q. State your name, rank, and present station.

A. Darrell Walker, Ensign D-V(G), U.S. Naval Reserve, U.S.S. PC 815.

2. Q. How long have you been attached to this ship?

A. Since January 20, 1943.

3. Q. Were you on board on 28 June 1943, What are your duties?

A. Yes, I was. My duties are Gunnery Officer, Commissary Officer and Communication Officer.

4. Q. Were you the officer directly in charge of the firing of the 3"/50 caliber gun on that day?

A. No, the Assistant Gunnery Officer had charge particularly of that gun. I was observing the crew.

5. Q. Did you observe the firing on that date?

A. I was on the flying bridge and particularly watching the functioning of the gun crew.

6. Q. In that position were you able to observe the burst of the shell?

A. I was not watching the burst of the shell.

7. Q. Were you able to observe how far the ship was from the Coronados Island?

A. I did not at all, but believe we were North of the Island.

8. Q. Are you able to give the Board an estimate of the distance from the Island?

A. No, sir.

9. Q. Do you recall small arms firing by the crew on the evening of June 28?

A. We did some small arm firing, instructing the men in the handling of .45 and .30 caliber rifles.

10. Q. Did you observe the firing?

A. Yes, sir.

11. Q. Did you supervise any of it?

A. Yes, sir.

12. Q. What was the target, if any, for that small arms firing?

A. We were taking small milk cans and breakfast food boxes.

13. Q. Were any of those targets floating toward the shore at the time of firing?

A. No, sir. We fired at them only from the outboard side of the Island.

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14. Q. Is it your testimony that all the shots were fired toward the open sea?
A. Yes, sir.
15. Q. Is that Eastward?
A. It was away from the Island.
16. Q. Could you give the Board an estimate of how far the ship was anchored from the shore on June 28?
A. About 1,000 yards or more.
17. Q. Did you observe any buildings on the shore?
A. Above our starboard bow there were a couple of buildings and a lighthouse.
18. Q. How many buildings were there?
A. I remember 2 buildings.
19. Q. Did either of those 2 buildings resemble a hotel?
A. Not like any I had ever seen.

Examined by the board:

20. Q. Who ordered you to prepare the battery for firing?
A. The Commanding Officer.
21. Q. What was the target?
A. We spotted those floating rafts the aircraft were flying over for bombing practice.
22. Q. How far were those targets from the nearest land?
A. I don't know. The approximate distance was 5 miles.
23. Q. What was the range and deflection set on your sight scale?
A. I was not doing the spotting.
24. Q. Who was doing the spotting.
A. Ensign Navarro. He had charge of that exercise.
25. Q. Could you clearly see the targets with your naked eye?
A. Yes, sir.
26. Q. Could you see any land?
A. No, sir.
27. Q. How many rounds did you fire?
A. Four rounds in all.
28. Q. What type of ammunition was fired?
A. Target ammunition.
29. Q. Describe the projectile in your 3"/50 target ammunition.
A. I can't describe it.
30. Q. Does it have a time fuze?
A. No, sir.
31. Q. Does it have a bursting charge?
A. I don't know.
32. Q. Is it blind loaded?
A. I don't know.
33. Q. What was the rate of fire for the 4 shots?
A. I don't know exactly, the time was in rapid fire.

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34. Q. Did you observe any splashes?
A. No, sir.
35. Q. Were you interested in how near the shots came to the target?
A. As I mentioned before I was primarily interested in the function of the gun crew.
36. Q. Are you the Gunnery Officer.
A. Yes, sir.
37. Q. What did the crew do between shots?
A. Stand by.
38. Q. Have you any record of times and ranges used during the firing in question?
A. I have a record that we fired the 4 shots.
39. Q. Is there a record of the spotting officer's estimate of the fall of shot?
A. No, sir.
40. Q. At what time did you conduct the firing?
A. After we had finished our operation for that afternoon.
41. Q. What was the range and visibility at that time?
A. Very good.
42. Q. Could you see the natural horizon clearly?
A. Yes, sir.
43. Q. Were there other ships in the same vicinity?
A. There were not any in the direction of firing, and not close.
44. Q. Did you observe any ships firing at the same time you were firing or shortly before or after?
A. No, sir.
45. Q. How many rounds of small arms ammunition were expended on the exercise that you conducted on the 28th?
A. About 80 rounds of .30 and about 40 rounds of .45.
46. Q. Did you collect unexpended ammunition upon the completion of that firing?
A. No, sir.
47. Q. Did live ammunition remain in the custody of the crew?
A. No, sir.
48. Q. At what time do you estimate you anchored on the 28th?
A. Shortly after 1700, about 1730.
49. Q. Was the firing in the general direction of the Coronados Islands?
A. No, sir, because there was no land visible in the direction we were firing.
50. Q. Did you fire to port or starboard?
A. On the starboard bow.
51. Q. How many men participated in the firing off the Coronados Islands?
A. About 6.
52. Q. At all times under the observation of the officer?
A. Yes, sir.
53. Q. So that in your opinion it would have been impossible to fire at the Island without the knowledge of the officer?
A. Yes, sir.

Neither the board, the recorder nor 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 made the following statement: One thing I might say is that the small arms firing was at very close range.

The witness was duly warned and withdrew.

The board recalled Ensign Navarro as a witness, and warned that the oath previously taken by him was still binding.

Re-examined by the board:

11. Q. From the record of the Bearing Book of courses and speeds of the ship, what did you determine the position of the ship to be?

A. Records of navigational bearings, courses, and speeds of the ship are not in record in sufficient quantities, nor is there a track of the ship showing the 1600 position.

12. Q. Were you on the bridge during the greater part of the day on the 28th?

A. Yes, sir.

13. Q. How many times did you anchor on the 28th?

A. Once.

14. Q. Did you anchor in the vicinity of the Middle Coronados Island?

A. No, sir.

15. Q. Are you the Assistant Gunery Officer?

A. Yes, sir.

16. Q. You fired at a target on the 28th with a 3"/50 caliber gun. What was the range to the target?

A. Estimated range to the target was between 4,000 and 6,000 yards.

17. Q. How far was the target from land?

A. I did not see land behind the target.

18. Q. What course were you on at the time the firing was conducted?

A. I don't know.

19. Q. How far was the ship from land when the firing was conducted?

A. Land was off the starboard bow.

20. Q. What was the distance to the land?

A. Quite distant.

21. Q. Did you observe the fall of shot of the 3"/50 caliber firing?

A. I did not observe the fall of shot.

22. Q. Did you see any splashes?

A. No, sir.

23. Q. Did you make any spots?

A. No spotting, just original setting of the gun.

24. Q. What was the object of the practice?

A. To have the opportunity to fire.

25. Q. How rapid was the firing?

A. Firing was very slow.

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26. Q. Did you see land behind the target?
A. No land was seen behind the target.
27. Q. At any distance?
A. No distance.
28. Q. Did you observe the gun as it was firing?
A. No, Commander.
29. Q. What were you doing during this firing?
A. Directing fire control.
30. Q. Had you planned to conduct this firing on the 28th?
A. No, Mr. President.
31. Q. Why had you not planned to conduct it?
A. As fire control officer I thought it was beyond my jurisdiction.
32. Q. Had you any information concerning other practices to be fired during the period 27 June to 3 July, 1943?
A. Yes, by reading the operation plan.
33. Q. From reading the operation order did you get the idea to fire on the 28th?
A. No, I did not get any information at all.
34. Q. In reading the operation order did you expect to anchor on the night of 28 June?
A. We were to remain at sea and not to return to the base.
35. Q. What is your interpretation of the phraseology 'to remain at sea'?
A. To stay at sea.
36. Q. Do you call anchoring remaining at sea?
A. Yes, Mr. President.
37. Q. How many times have you anchored off Coronados Island for the night?
A. This was the second time.
38. Q. Were there any other Navy ships off Coronados Island?
A. No, sir.
39. Q. Did you think that the Coronados Islands belonged to the United States?
A. In admitting my ignorance, I thought that they did.
40. Q. Did you consult the Coast Pilot of the Pacific Coast in connection with anchoring off Coronado Island?
A. No, Commander.
41. Q. Did you observe any shells fired from the PC 815 to fall on land?
A. No, sir.
42. Q. Have you any information or know about any person on board the PC 815 who did hear of any shots land that had been fired from this ship?
A. No, sir.
43. Q. Were you watching for the fall of shot?
A. I was watching for the first one, after that I did not watch.
44. Q. Why?
A. That was the first time I had done any actual spotting and I didn't observe.

45. Q. Did you notice at the time of firing the position of land with respect to the line of sight to the target?

A. Land slightly on the starboard bow, target slightly on the port bow.

46. Q. Did you fire to port or starboard?

A. Fired to port.

Examined by the Interested Party:

47. Q. In view of the proximity of known land, did you consider it necessary during that afternoon of the 28th to take bearings and sights to guarantee the position of this vessel?

A. No.

Reexamined by the Board:

48. Q. In answer to the last question, what known land were you referring to?

A. The Coronados Islands.

49. Q. In your previous testimony you stated that you did not know what land you sighted at the time of the 3" gun firing. Do you wish to change that testimony or is that correct?

A. That is correct.

The Board then at 1800, took a recess until 1910, at which time it reassembled.

Present: All members, the recorder and the Interested Party.

The witness resumed his seat, and warned that the oath previously taken by him was still binding.

50. Q. What was the bearing that the ship anchored on, the night of 28 June?

A. Approximately 186° true from South point of the Island, 336° true from line on North point.

51. Q. On point of what Island?

A. South Coronados.

52. Q. How did you know it was the South Coronados Island?

A. I assumed it was the South Coronados.

53. Q. What was the visibility at the time of anchoring?

A. It was fair.

54. Q. Was it in yards or miles?

A. About 8,000 yards.

55. Q. Did the Captain tell you it was the South Coronados?

A. The Captain told me nothing.

56. Q. How did you know it was not the Middle Coronados?

A. I would have seen the others.

57. Q. Did you at any time during the day see North Coronados?

A. Yes, sir.

58. Q. Did you at any time during the day see Middle Coronados?

A. Yes, sir.

59. Q. How long did you keep it in sight?

A. I made no attempt to keep them in sight.

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60. Q. What was the last bearing on the Middle Coronados?
A. We took no bearings.
61. Q. Did you see the Middle Coronados any time subsequent to 28 June?
A. I don't think so.
62. Q. Did you anchor near the middle of Middle Coronados on June 28?
A. No, sir.
63. Q. What was the state of visibility at approximately 1619 when the 3"/50 was fired?
A. I judge it to be about 4,000 to 5,000 yards.
64. Q. Would it have been possible to spot the splashes if you had been looking in the direction toward which you were firing?
A. As I said before I noted no splashes.

Re-examined by the Interested Party:

65. Q. Had this ship been anchored near the Middle Coronados would it have been possible for you to have taken a bearing on the light structure?
A. No, there is no light tower on Middle Coronados.

Neither the board, the recorder nor 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 informed of the subject matter of the investigation.

Examined by the recorder:

1. Q. State your name, rate, and present station.
A. George Arthur Moran, gunner's mate third class, U.S. Navy, U.S.S. PC 815.
2. Q. How long have you been attached to the PC 815?
A. I joined the crew in January, 1943.
3. Q. Have you been on board since January, 1943?
A. Yes, sir.
4. Q. What is your battle station?
A. Gun captain of the 3".

Examined by the board:

5. Q. On June 28, what time of day did you fire?
A. Late in the afternoon.
6. Q. What watches do you stand?
A. Lookout in the third section.
7. Q. Were you on watch on the 1200 to 1600 on 28 June?
A. I had that watch.

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8. Q. Were you on watch at the time the gun was being fired?
A. I was at general quarters.
9. Q. Did you fire to port or starboard?
A. To port.
10. Q. What range and deflection was set on your sights?
A. I don't know, sir.
11. Q. At what degrees was the gun elevated?
A. About 10 degrees elevation.
12. Q. How long was it before you went to general quarters that you knew you were going to fire?
A. We never knew until we were at general quarters.
13. Q. What type of ammunition did you fire?
A. Target ammunition, sir.
14. Q. Describe the projectile and the target that you fired on.
A. Our target projectile was the same as the AA projectile, but it did not have any fuse.
15. Q. Does your projectile have a bursting charge?
A. No, sir.
16. Q. What was your target?
A. To fire at the floating pyramid.
17. Q. Was the target close to land?
A. I could not see what the range was, but the Coronados were in the background.
18. Q. Could you see the land behind the target clearly?
A. It was in the background.
19. Q. Did you see any splashes from the shots that were fired?
A. No, I did not see any.
20. Q. Was land behind the target in the line with your fire?
A. I could not actually tell, I wasn't checking up.
21. Q. Did you see any of the shells fall on this land?
A. No, sir.
22. Q. Did you hear anyone say that shots fell on this land?
A. Not that I recall.
23. Q. How long did it take you to fire the 4 shots?
A. From 20 to 25 seconds.
24. Q. Were there any other ships in the vicinity when the PC 815 was firing?
A. Not that I recall.
25. Q. What was the estimated range to the target when the order to commence firing was given?
A. About 3,000 to 4,000 yards.
26. Q. Have you ever served on a 3" battery before?
A. This is the first time I have ever been detailed to a 3" battery.
27. Q. You have seen them fire?
A. Yes, on the OKLAHOMA.
28. Q. You said you fired the shots in about 25 seconds, was that the total time for each shot?
A. That was the total time.