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29. Q. Did you participate in the small arms firing at the Coronados?
A. No, sir.

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 he had nothing further to say.

The witness was duly warned and withdrew.

A witness called by the recorder entered, was duly sworn.

Examined by the recorder:

1. Q. State your name, rate, and present station.
A. Billie Joe West, seaman second class, U.S. Navy, U.S.S. PG 815.
2. Q. What is your battle station?
A. Trainer on gun 1.
3. Q. Were you on board June 28, 1943?
A. I was, sir.

Examined by the Board:

4. Q. Tell us about the matter in discussion.
A. At the time of the firing I was trainer on the AA gun. I was told to train on a floating tripod target in the water. We fired 4 rounds of target ammunition then trained in and secured.
5. Q. What did you see when you looked through your sight?
A. A wooden pyramid target.
6. Q. Did you see any water?
A. Yes, cause the target was in the water.
7. Q. Did you see any land in your sight?
A. I could not see any land in my sight.
8. Q. How did you know what the subject under investigation is?
A. Nearly everyone of the crew knows about it.
9. Q. What does the crew know about it?
A. I was told when we were firing one of the shells hit the Island.
10. Q. When did you find this out?
A. About this noon.
11. Q. Did you see any of the splashes or shots fired from this ship?
A. Yes, sir, in the water near the target.
12. Q. How many splashes did you see?
A. Almost 4 direct hits and 4 splashes in the water.
13. Q. Were they all close to the target?
A. All were about in the target.

- 14. Q. How long did it take your gun to shoot the shots?
A. I do not know sir, as fast as the crew could mark on the target.
- 15. Q. Did you train your gun around very much during general quarters?
A. No, not until they said, "action port!"
- 16. Q. Did you see land any where around?
A. Yes, there was land in the distance beyond the target.
- 17. Q. How far beyond the target was land?
A. About 2,000 to 3,000 yards.
- 18. Q. What was the distance to the target?
A. About 500 to 800 yards.
- 19. Q. Could you see the shore line of the land closer at any time that you were at general quarters?
A. Not while we were firing at the target.
- 20. Q. Was this land you saw behind the target the same land at which you anchored that night?
A. Yes, sir.

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 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. Q. State your name, rate, and present station.
A. Robert Joseph McConchie, Jr., seaman second class, U.S. Navy, U.S.S. PC 815.
- 2. Q. Were you on board the PC 815 on 28 June?
A. Yes, sir.

Examined by the board:

- 3. Q. Did you participate in the firing of the gun on that date?
A. Yes, sir.
- 4. Q. What range was set in the sight of the gun?
A. I remember one range was 3,000.
- 5. Q. Did you see any splashes?
A. No, sir.
- 6. Q. Did you see land behind the target?
A. No, sir. I never saw what we were firing at.
- 7. Q. Where was the sun during the time you were firing?
A. Late in the afternoon.
- 8. Q. Was it over your left shoulder, right shoulder, or behind?
A. I don't know.

- 9. Q. Which side did you fire to?
A. To port.
- 10. Q. Was the ship underway at the time of the firing?
A. Sir, the engines were stopped.
- 11. Q. Why do you say the engines were stopped?
A. The engines are always stopped when we are having practice or one-third at the most.
- 12. Q. How many previous practices have you fired from this gun?
A. Four times, sir.
- 13. Q. This was the fifth time?
A. Yes, sir, the fifth time.
- 14. Q. Did you notice whether it was 10 minutes before or 10 minutes after you fired the gun that you saw land?
A. I noticed the Coronados in the distance.
- 15. Q. Where were you on watch when you sighted the Coronados?
A. I was quartermaster on watch.
- 16. Q. Was this before or after the gun was fired?
A. Before, sir.
- 17. Q. What were you doing when you last saw the Coronados before the gun was fired, and what was the bearing to the ship?
A. The Coronados were bearing about 285 relative when I was putting my earphones on.
- 18. Q. How long was it after this that the first shot was fired?
A. About 45 minutes.
- 19. Q. During that time did you see which course you were on?
A. The ship was changing course very much.

Re-examined by the recorder:

- 20. Q. Is it your testimony, that at the time you fired, the engines were stopped?
A. Yes, sir.
- 21. Q. Can you tell the board how much time elapsed between the stopping of the engines and the starting again?
A. I can't say.

Examined by the interested party:

- 22. Q. Can you feel the vibration from the engines on the forecastle when they are started?
A. Yes, sir.

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

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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. Q. State your name, rank, and station.
A. George Milton Asmann, Lieutenant (jg), U.S. Naval Reserve, Executive Officer and Engineering Officer, U.S.S. PC 815.
2. Q. Were you on board the PC 815 on June 28?
A. Yes, sir.
3. Q. What was your battle station at the time?
A. Chemical recorder, located in the pilot house.

Examined by the board:

4. Q. At about 1600 on June 28 the PC 815 exercised at general quarters and fired their 3rd/50 caliber. State all that you know about the circumstances concerning the firing of the 3rd/50 caliber on that occasion.

A. Shortly after the Sound School exercises had terminated general quarters were sounded and I proceeded to my general quarters station as chemical recorder in the pilot house, and the usual routine of checking up was carried out. Not much longer after that I had ordered the word to be passed to pick up the target. Shortly after I saw the gun trained to port and I was in the pilot house when they fired and did not notice in particular what they were firing at.

5. Q. Did you see what they were firing at?
A. The guns were pointing at the target.
6. Q. Did you see land in line with the tripod in the water?
A. No, sir.
7. Q. Who gave the orders to train on the target to port?
A. The Commanding Officer gave the orders from the flying bridge.
8. Q. Did you sign the log on the 1600 to 2000 watch on 28 June?
A. Yes, sir.
9. Q. You were the OOD during the firing, is that correct?
A. I was OOD, the Captain had the conn of the ship.
10. Q. Is the Captain of this ship expected to perform the duties of the OOD with respect to routine and keeping the log?
A. He isn't expected to keep the log.
11. Q. What course were you on?
A. I could not say, sir.
12. Q. Can you refer to the Quartermaster's log and tell me?
A. Yes, sir.

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13. Q. Did you see any land before or after the order to commence firing was given?
A. The bearing was Southwest.
14. Q. Are you sure they were the Coronados Islands to the Southwest?
A. I know they were the only Islands out there.
15. Q. What was the range to them at the time of firing?
A. They were about 5 to 7 miles.
16. Q. Do you recall having seen the sun at the time of firing?
A. No, sir.
17. Q. What was the relative bearing of the Islands at the time?
A. I could not say. At the time of the firing I was not looking at them. We were in sight of the Coronados all day.
18. Q. Did the Commanding Officer inform you that the gun practice would be fired on the 28th?
A. No, sir.
19. Q. Did the Commanding Officer, ask your advice for the practice?
A. No, he didn't. The Commanding Officer is much more qualified than I am and did not ask my advice.
20. Q. How long have you been Executive Officer?
A. Twenty eight days.
21. Q. I show you Exhibit "D", do you recognize it?
A. It is our plan for actual operations. It is a copy of the Operation plan.
22. Q. Then you recognize Exhibit "D"?
A. Yes, sir.
23. Q. Do you prepare the daily schedule for the ship's training activities?
A. I have been trying to assume this particular phase of the ship's working organization.
24. Q. What is your station in coming to anchor?
A. On the bridge.
25. Q. What authority did the ship use in anchoring off the Coronados Islands on the night of 28 June?
A. Our operations order called for remaining at sea. The weather was closing in and wind was picking up, and had I been the Commanding Officer of the ship I would have done likewise to take the ship to that shelter.
26. Q. Did your orders state that you were to anchor at discretion?
A. No, they did not, and neither did they say we could not.
27. Q. I quote from Exhibit "D" under the schedule for the PC 815 on 28 June, 1943, "Exercise 54-2. Vessels schedule for Sound School the following day will remain at sea. Operating in Sound School areas plus 4626, 4726, 4826, 4825, 4725, 4625 unless given other areas for night steaming and exercises. Other vessels, unless scheduled for other exercises, upon completion of Sound School work will return to port prior dark". Did you consider these orders to include authority to anchor if desired?
A. No, sir, I did not.

28. Q. Did you read the orders?

A. Yes, sir.

Re-examined by the recorder:

29. Q. When the PC 815 anchored off the Coronados, did you realize they were Mexican waters?

A. It did not particularly come to my mind that they were Mexican Islands.

30. Q. Did you know they were Mexican Islands?

A. Yes, sir.

31. Q. Did you presume that you had the right to anchor there?

A. I presumed that we should have that right.

32. Q. Did you know of any specific authority which gave you permission to anchor there?

A. I did not know of any specific authority, other than that it appeared to me that it was the intelligent thing considering that the weather was closing and wind was picking up.

Re-examined by the board:

33. Q. Do you recall the small arms firing?

A. Yes, I do.

34. Q. At what time?

A. Shortly before dark, about 30 to 45 minutes after anchoring.

35. Q. Did anything occur during the night of 28 June that you consider of interest?

A. One thing, a fisherman came over to get gas that he needed to get back in the morning.

36. Q. What time did this occur?

A. About 0115.

37. Q. What was the nationality of the fisherman?

A. A white man - presumed to be an American.

38. Q. Did he approach your ship without being hailed?

A. I was in the pilot house and presumed he was, but do not know. The man didn't come back again.

39. Q. What was the condition of the weather on Sunday, 27 June at the time you anchored?

A. It was rather dark.

40. Q. What or who called your attention to the anchoring Sunday afternoon?

A. As I remember the enlisted soundman saying that other ships undergoing operations had taken anchorage near there too.

41. Q. Was it your understanding that the JAN GRID chart includes the Coronados Islands as Sound School operating areas?

A. Yes.

Examined by the interested party:

42. Q. Did you observe during the 27, 28, 29 June, any aircraft bombing operations in these waters?

A. Yes, I said I knew of aircraft bombing targets.

43. Q. Did you see any aircraft on 29 June bombing in the Middle Coronados area?

A. Yes, I saw several Grumman wildcat fighters.

44. Q. How close to the Middle Coronados would you estimate these aircraft were dropping bombs?

A. About middle way between the two points of land.

45. Q. Did this substantiate your belief that these waters close to the Coronados were in the operating area?

A. I have always assumed that was an operating area.

46. Q. Have you ever seen an order of any kind designating the waters immediately adjacent to the Coronados as out of bounds for shakedown vessels?

A. No, and I have been in this area for over a year and a half, and never saw an order prohibiting operations around the Coronados.

Re-examined by the board:

47. Q. You stated that the Sound Instructor gave you to understand that it was the practice for vessels receiving shakedown training to anchor in the vicinity off Los Coronados?

A. I got the impression that it was nothing unusual to do.

Re-examined by the recorder:

48. Q. Did you ever hear of the 3 mile limit?

A. I heard of it yes, but thought it applied to peace time only and not war time.

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 record in connection therewith, which had not been fully brought out by the previous questioning.

The witness made the following statement: I think the whole picture has been told very clearly and have nothing to add.

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. Q. State your name, rate, and station.

A. George Turner Price, signalman first class, U.S. Navy, U.S.S. PC 815.

2. Q. Were you aboard the PC 815 on June 28?

A. Yes, sir.

3. Q. Where was your battle station?

A. On the wheel.

4. Q. Do you recall the 3"/50 caliber firing at approximately 1600, 29 June?
A. Yes, sir.

Examined by the board:

5. Q. What was the course you were steering at the time of the firing?
A. On course 120.

6. Q. Did you fire to port or starboard?
A. To port, sir.

7. Q. Did you see the target that was being fired at?
A. Yes, on the approaching course. I did not see the splash of the projectile.

8. Q. What was the relative bearing of the target as you were approaching it?
A. It was on the port bow, changed course to starboard then came back to left.

9. Q. At what range was the target when it was no longer in your sight?
A. 2,500 to 3,000 yards.

10. Q. Was there land behind the target?
A. Yes, on the approaching course.

11. Q. How far was the land from the ship?
A. About seven or eight miles.

12. Q. Did the firing take place in the general direction of this land?
A. I would say it did, sir.

13. Q. Was the line of fire in the general direction of land?
A. Yes, it was.

14. Q. Do you know what land you had in sight?
A. Yes, it was the Coronados Islands.

Examined by the interested party:

15. Q. At general quarters who was in the pilot house?
A. Peers was on the sound machine, Dexter was quartermaster, Lt. (jg) Assmann and Welch were on the chemical recorder.

16. Q. Could you observe anything from the bridge?
A. As far as the operations on the bow, yes. I could not see the splashes due to the fact that the pilot house door blocks out the view on one side and the chemical recorder on the other.

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 record in connection therewith, which had not been fully brought out by the previous questioning.

The witness stated he had nothing further to say.

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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 station.
A. Clair Carl Coats, ship's cook first class, U.S. Navy, U.S.S. PC 815.
2. Q. Were you on board the PC 815 on June 28?
A. Yes, sir.
3. Q. What is your battle station?
A. Gun captain of the 20 millimeter gun.
4. Q. Where is that located?
A. It is located on the port side of the machine deck.

Examined by the board:

5. Q. Did you observe the 3" at about 1619 on 28 June?
A. The 3" is obscured from my view.
6. Q. Did you hear the firing?
A. Yes, sir.
7. Q. Did you see the target they were firing at?
A. There were two floating targets separated about $\frac{1}{2}$ mile.
8. Q. Did you see splashes from the shots fired by the 3" gun?
A. I was not looking at that target at the time.
9. Q. What was the range at the time?
A. About 2,000 yards.
10. Q. Was there land behind the target that you could see?
A. Yes, about three or four miles.
11. Q. Did you see any shots hit the land?
A. The land was merely in view in the background.
12. Q. Did you see the gun point towards the land?
A. I could not see as it was obstructed from view.
13. Q. Had you fired your 20 millimeter at this time, would you have been firing towards the land?
A. No, sir, about $\frac{1}{2}$ to $\frac{1}{3}$ miles to the East of the Island as far as I could figure.

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 record in connection therewith, which had not been fully brought out by the previous questioning.

The witness stated he had nothing further to say.

The witness was duly warned and withdrew.

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

Examined by the recorder:

1. Q. State your name, rate, and station.
A. Adam Peter Sobczynski, motor machinist second class, U.S. Navy, U.S.S. PC 815.

2. Q. Were you aboard the PC 815 June 28?
A. Yes, sir.

3. Q. What was your battle station?
A. Depth charges, this is aft.

Examined by the board:

4. Q. On the afternoon of 28 June, about 1619 did you observe the fall of shot from the 3"/50 caliber?

A. After I heard the sound of the shot I followed the direction of the projectile.

5. Q. Did you observe any splashes in the vicinity of the target?
A. Yes, sir.

6. Q. Did you see a splash for each shell fired?
A. I did, sir.

7. Q. Were any shots fired that you didn't see any splashes for?
A. No, sir.

8. Q. Was the gun fired to port or starboard?
A. To port, sir.

9. Q. Did you see any land behind the target?
A. No, sir.

10. Q. Did you see land at all on the port side during the firing?
A. No, sir.

11. Q. In observing the splashes did you observe any ricochets?
A. Yes, sir, on the second third, and fourth shots. The first shot hit the target.

12. Q. Where did the second, third, and fourth shots hit the water with respect to the target?

A. Over the target and to the left.

13. Q. Did you see any land at the time?

A. No, sir. There was no land between my view and the target.

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 record in connection therewith, which had not been fully brought out by the previous questioning.

The witness stated he had nothing further to say.

The witness was duly warned and withdrew.

Ensign Navarro was recalled by the recorder as a witness, and duly warned the oath previously taken was still binding.

Examined by the recorder:

66. Q. I show you a chart of the Coronados Island. Do you testify that you fixed the position marked "A", at which place the PC 815 anchored on June 28, 1943?