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## Assault on the Liberty

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receives much more cursory treatment. Technological changes associated with the development of the dreadnought and battle cruiser must have challenged all parties involved in a variety of ways. Conceivably, this would warrant treatment in a separate volume. This, however, does not diminish the overall value of the study in terms of what it reveals concerning the growth and changing nature of naval-industrial relationships. The book belongs in every naval library.

RICHARD W. TURK  
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Ennes, James M., Jr. *Assault on the Liberty*. New York: Random House, 1979. 299pp.

This is thus far the most complete attempt to explain the complex incident on 7 June 1968 that brought the U.S.S. *Liberty* (AGTR-5) to center stage of world affairs. The assault, the events preceding and the aftermath have been shrouded in secrecy stemming from military necessity and political and diplomatic sensitivity. The complete and accurate story may never be told, but Mr. Ennes' account has successfully peeled away another layer of misinformation and provided a foundation for further investigation.

The events leading up to *Liberty's* short notice assignment to the Mediterranean are thoroughly discussed as is the bureaucratic infighting that led to the message ordering the ship to withdraw from the area prior to the attack. The details of how this crucial message was misrouted are sobering.

The author takes great pains to provide background on the ship's leaders and the prevailing atmosphere on board. *Liberty* must be judged as having been a loosely run ship. The author describes extensive officer and enlisted drinking on board, a callous disregard for liquor storage regulations and high-level evasion of a federal investigator probing into the matter.

Further descriptions of a liberty incident in Rota, Spain suggest that the ship exercised some very unusual management practices. Mr. Ennes has done a great service by telling it like it was, but by quoting an Admiral Renker as saying "but no ship could perform any better than *Liberty* did, violations or not. Maybe we should put liquor back on all ships," he puts in words the implication in the book that the unorthodox conditions in *Liberty* contributed to the ship's effectiveness.

Ennes clearly aligns himself with the ship's company and many others who cannot accept that the Israeli attack was accidental. Citing repeated early Israeli reconnaissance flights, the unique characteristics of the ship and the clear presence of the national ensign, he is convinced that there was no mistake. As a firsthand witness on the morning of 8 June and a participant in the subsequent salvage effort, I agree with his conclusions. The author also proposes a possible motive that the Israelis desperately desired to keep their preemptive attack into Syria under wraps and attacked *Liberty* because the ship's presence threatened that effort.

Ennes contends that the Court of Inquiry headed by (then) RADM Isaac Kidd supported an interpretation of the facts that was politically acceptable. Reports not supporting the view of accidental assault were said to have been filed separately. Captain McGonagle, *Liberty's* Commanding Officer, presented testimony in conflict with several of the other reports. Ennes states, "Admiral Kidd handled conflicting preattack reconnaissance reports by acting as though McGonagle was the only reliable witness." In summary, the Court is implicated as being part of a plan to minimize disruption of U.S./Israeli relations and to drive the entire story off the front pages as quickly as possible. Ennes further suggests that the presentation of Captain McGonagle's Medal of

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Honor at the Navy Yard rather than the White House was another effort to keep the matter low key.

The author develops a strong case with many examples to support his contention of a coverup. This portion of the book makes interesting reading and provides many insights into how the government responds to complex crisis situations.

The account and photographs of the attack and its aftermath are chilling and filled with examples of individual heroism. As a witness to the damage 18 hours later, I can attest to the accuracy of the descriptions, but even this fine effort does not do justice to the brutality inflicted by the attackers on the almost defenseless ship.

The only noticeable flaw in the book is an overstatement of the organizational effectiveness of the *Liberty* crew. As individuals many of these brave men distinguished themselves by their heroism, but the thorough and effective teamwork that comes from intensive training and discipline was lacking. The condition of the ship and the crew on the morning of 8 June did not suggest *Liberty's* unorthodox management policies contributed to the ship's survival. Competence and assistance from other units were needed and played a larger role than Mr. Ennes describes.

A sticking point in this reviewer's mind (and evident in the review of the book by CDR L.M. Bucher in the *Washington Post*) was the failure of U.S. forces to respond promptly. As Bucher ironically points out, there were many similarities in this incident and the *Pueblo* incident, but in this case, help was much nearer at hand. Ennes covers this area well, and the wisdom of the decision to call off a retaliatory strike is debatable, but the decision not at least to fly over the stricken ship is inexplicable. This lapse contributed to the state of shock the *Liberty* crew was in after the attack. With apparent low

risk, a flyover operation would have tallied the brave and exhausted crew who were well aware of how close the carriers were.

*Assault on the Liberty*, like many recent books on the failure of government, is a painful but instructive reading experience. Although there are some cases of personal speculation, the author has assembled a compelling case that a great deal of information has been withheld from the public. I am not convinced that we yet have all the facts, but the doors opened by Ennes' book should lead to further study. As naval officers, government professionals and as citizens, it is in our best interest to know the full story.

P.E. TOBIN

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Harkavy, Robert and Kolodziej, Edward A., eds. *American Security Policy and Policy-Making*. Lexington, Mass.: Lexington Books, 1980. 268pp.

The dilemmas of using and controlling force have confounded and confused American policymakers and students of security policy alike—especially since World War II. This collection of essays attempts to clarify some of the complexities inherent in the role that force and its control must play in protecting national security interests. Based on a symposium sponsored by the Policy Studies Organization, the book contains 15 individual contributions arranged into three parts dealing with historical and contemporary conditions for the role of force, selected problems in American security policymaking, and theoretical approaches to the use and control of force.

Two of the three sections that make up part I, essays by George Modelski and Edward Kolodziej, examine the historical cycles that appear to characterize changes and alternations of power in international relations. While