

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

DOCKET NO: Collision of the Japanese Fisheries
Training Vessel EHIME MARU and the U.S.
Navy Nuclear Attack Submarine USS
GREENVILLE (DCA01MM022)

NTSB NO: 51701

INTERVIEW OF: LCDR Tyler Meador, USN

DATE: February 17, 2001

INTERVIEWERS: Ted White and Rob Henry, NTSB

P R O C E E D I N G

(1:05 p.m.)

MR. WHITE: It is approximately 1305. Present is Ted White and Rob Henry and Tyler Meador. We're interviewing with regard to the accident involving the collision between the Greenville and the fishing vessel named Ehime Maru. Let's go ahead and start. If you would, just give us a real brief rundown on your background.

LCDR MEADOR: Once again, my name is Lieutenant Commander Tyler Meador. I've been the Greenville Engineer Officer for thirty-nine months. Prior to the Greenville, my sea experience included two years on the basic missile submarine, the Will Rogers. After the decommissioning of that submarine, I transferred to the USS Miami, SSM 755 and did just over fifteen months on the Miami.

MR. WHITE: Okay, so that was thirty-nine months?

LCDR MEADOR: Thirty-nine months, yes, sir. On the Greenville, yes, sir and detaching this week.

MR. WHITE: Where are you going?

LCDR MEADOR: I'm transferring up to the -- Fleet, Nuclear Propulsion Examining Board.

MR. WHITE: -- Basically it is shore duty without a physical move of the family?

LCDR MEADOR: That's it.

MR. WHITE: Can you give me a real quick rundown, and I'm talking just a couple of minutes, what you're duty is as Engineering Officer?

LCDR MEADOR: As Engineer Officer, I am responsible for the operation, maintenance and the training of personnel associated with nuclear propulsion plant.

MR. WHITE: What would your day-in and day-out activities be?

LCDR MEADOR: Day-in and day-out activities include training qualification in nuclear propulsion plant operators, supervision of engineering plant operation, supervision of engineering plant maintenance. I exercise oversight on all those aspects. I currently have thirty-five personnel that work for me on the submarine. I'm one of four department heads on board the Greenville.

MR. WHITE: Is yours the largest department?

LCDR MEADOR: It is. Yes, sir.

MR. WHITE: Give us a narrative, if you will, of what occurred on the 9th of February and what -- some of this has been covered by the groups --

LCDR MEADOR: Uh-huh.

MR. WHITE: -- just to make sure we're working with -- one, your understanding what the purpose of the cruise was --

1 LCDR MEADOR: Uh-huh.

2 MR. WHITE: -- and then a general outline of
3 how the cruise went and then, as we approach the time
4 of the collision, you can get as specific as you can?

5 LCDR MEADOR: Yes, sir. The Greeneville was
6 set up to connect a one day VIP cruise; a very standard
7 practice we've done this type of routine for VIPs; we
8 did over the previous summer for midshipman training
9 out of San Diego and in my, just over three years on
10 board, it is something that is kind of routine. I
11 would call it definitely routine within the submarine
12 force.

13 We're talking about February 9th -- the plan
14 was to get underway at eight o'clock. I was designated
15 as a tour guide, along with Lt. Pritchett, so we each
16 had a group of the VIPs, which we escorted throughout
17 the ship and then to lunch and then after lunch, was a
18 planned period where there was going to be angles and
19 dangles including that, the Captain usually connects
20 large rudder angle turns, which is kind of a dynamic
21 event in itself and -- the other day, the ship was
22 scheduled to connect an emergency blow, that's part of
23 the surfacing procedure, and we're turning to Pearl
24 Harbor with an assigned a papa hotel at 1400 for that
25 day.

26 At about 1320, I took the group of about
27 eight people that I was escorting, we completed lunch
28 and I took them to torpedo at 1300 and, at 1320, I took
29 them up to the control room for the planned angles and
30 dangles.

31 At the conclusion of that -- well, not at the
32 conclusion of that -- but after taking them to control,
33 I went back down to my state room where I laid down for
34 approximately the next fifteen minutes or twenty
35 minutes until the emergency blow occurred. The -- I
36 never actually went to sleep. I was just laying,
37 laying in my rack laying and I heard an abnormal
38 shudder that followed the emergency blow. So, at that
39 point, I went up to the control room. The Captain was
40 turning over the number two periscope to the Chief of
41 Staff and I could tell by the look on both of their
42 faces that something had gone very wrong and I took the
43 periscope from the Chief of Staff after and I looked
44 and I could see the ship, the Ehime Maru, sinking
45 slowly by the stern.

46 Somebody had asked for the ship's name so I
47 was calling out the name, what turned out to be -- the
48 name on the stern was already under water. I didn't
49 realize it at the time, so what I was reading was the
50 Iwo Jima Fishery High School off of the port side of
51 the vessel and I watched it slowly sink.

52 I saw one person, only one person, proceeding
53 up the starboard side of the vessel and then disappear

1 on the starboard side. I didn't see whether he jumped
2 or what happened to him, but he went out of my view on
3 the starboard side of the vessel. That was the only
4 person I saw.

5 The ship, as I said, was slowly sinking by
6 the stern. Just as the bow was starting to come up out
7 of the water, the Captain said, man the bridge and so I
8 took a harness, a safety harness, and at that point, I
9 went and got my safety harness, came back, Petty
10 Officer Darby had already opened the bridge access
11 lower hatch and I told them I was manning the bridge
12 and made sure he had -- I think we were looking for the
13 bridge suitcase and I went straight to the bridge. I
14 opened the bridge access upper hatch, checked airflow,
15 and it was out and I opened the hatch, went straight
16 up, opened the two clam shells and then it was Petty
17 Officer Darby and I and I -- around the bridge and
18 installed the bridge suitcase and, as you -- procedure
19 I tested the one at sea from the bridge suitcase and
20 then called back for the officer deck, which was Lt.
21 Coen..I took the -- I asked him if he -- I knew the
22 Captain had taken a -- at that point, so I asked him if
23 and the Captain were ready to be relieved as officer
24 deck and shift to watch the bridge. He replied, yes,
25 and I relieved him as officer deck on the bridge.

26 Prior to that, we had the -- I'll call it
27 pilot's ladder for lack of a better word, but it's the
28 long ladder that goes down from the sail -- the jacob's
29 ladder normally goes over the side, top side, then we
30 have a long, kind of pilot's ladder and that was coming
31 up right behind Petty Officer Darby, so he and I were
32 rigging that out.

33 It really surprised me when I got to the
34 bridge because, as I said, I was on the scope seeing
35 the vessel go down, I didn't see any life rafts, but
36 the first thing I noticed when I was coming up to the
37 bridge, in addition to the intense smell of diesel fuel
38 was the fact that there were so many life rafts up
39 there. I didn't actually count them, but Petty Officer
40 told me there were eight life rafts and the vessel was
41 no longer in sight, floating debris from the vessel was
42 scattered throughout the area we were in. Petty
43 Officer Darby counted; he told me had ten people in the
44 rafts.

45 We connected an aggressive -- search for
46 anybody in the water. We did not observe anybody in
47 the water. I directed the control room Supervisor
48 Chief of Watch, to commence an air pressure blow on all
49 main ballast tanks when ready because we hadn't done
50 that at this point. Because of the urgency that I felt
51 to get to the bridge and the fact that we had already
52 done an emergency blow, I manned the bridge with out --
53 ordinarily, after we do an emergency blow like that

1 we'll do an air pressure blow for about twenty minutes,
2 but in this case, the ship was holding and I thought it
3 was more important to get to the bridge and rapidly
4 assist in any rescue efforts.

5 We then, probably within five minutes of Petty
6 Officer Darby and I arriving on the bridge, Master
7 Chief Swanson and Petty Officer Rivas arrived on the
8 bridge with full gear -- they had the dive shirts, dive
9 shorts and they both had -- I think they had masks,
10 fins and snorkels they were carrying with them. And so
11 they were ready to go to the side to assist in the
12 rescue. But we didn't see anybody that was not in a
13 raft and then shortly after that the Captain came to
14 the bridge with the bridge radio. So this was all
15 within about ten minutes. Things were moving pretty
16 fast.

17 MR. WHITE: Excuse me -- just a minute.

18 LCDR MEADOR: Sure.

19 MR. WHITE: Ten minutes of what?

20 LCDR MEADOR: Ten minutes of me -- when I got
21 up there.

22 MR. WHITE: Okay.

23 LCDR MEADOR: So, in the first ten minutes of
24 opening the hatch, all this was --

25 MR. WHITE: Okay.

26 LCDR MEADOR: -- happening.

27 MR. WHITE: -- when the Captain came up to
28 the bridge?

29 LCDR MEADOR: It was probably within ten
30 minutes that the Captain was on the bridge, on Channel
31 16, reporting the accident. One of the things we did
32 was call down and request from the navigator the ship's
33 position or the quartermaster actually.

34 Also at this point, I lowered the outboard,
35 or actually it was being lowered as I was going to the
36 bridge, but I had the helm test the outboard because,
37 usually, in this type of situation, we would all stop
38 and they would move the outboard to try and position
39 the ship.

40 We were trying to determine if there was
41 anybody still in the water. We couldn't see anybody.
42 I directed the contact coordinator on the periscope to
43 search for people in the water and also to start
44 plotting the positions of the all the life rafts
45 because I worried they would start to drift and we
46 wouldn't stay in a tight group like we were. It turned
47 out not to be the case, but the group stayed fairly
48 close for several hours after that to leave the life
49 rafts.

50 So, at that point, the Coast Guard had been
51 contacted and we heard the report that they had a
52 helicopter inbound, the ETA was about fourteen minutes
53 from that point in time, and one of their vessels.

1 They didn't call in a cutter, but they said, I can't
2 remember the number of the ship, but it was that ship
3 was down in about forty-five minutes.

4 We discussed that it was too hazardous to
5 send the swimmers in the water for no reason. There
6 wasn't anybody in the water to rescue so we discussed
7 that they were safer on their rafts. What we decided
8 to do was take the ship closer to the rafts to see if
9 we could bring personnel on board and as we approached
10 the first raft off the bow, the ship was heaving up and
11 down so much that the wash from the ship or submarine
12 was swamping the raft and the two individuals in it
13 were scared -- I mean -- the looks on their faces.

14 It was too loud to try and shout to them, but
15 you could clearly see that they were uncomfortable with
16 the fact that the submarine was approaching them. And
17 the way a submarine is on the surface and the seas were
18 so -- there wasn't any particular direction of the
19 seas. As I moved the position of the ship or the
20 outboard, usually you can establish a calm lee on one
21 side of the ship and then bring people on that side.
22 In this case, no matter which way I drove the ship, we
23 continued to have water wash over the deck and that
24 makes it almost impossible to have personnel lay top
25 side out of the escape trunk. Not just small waves; we
26 were taking large waves over the deck.

27 We could have Master Chief Swanson and Petty
28 Officer Rivas down onto the deck from the ladder, but,
29 at that point, the way the ship was rolling, to have
30 gotten close to any of the life rafts, my concern was
31 that we would flip the life raft over.

32 The one on the bow, I was concerned that, as
33 the ship came down, it would wash up on the bow and
34 raise up and then flip it over. So I backed down on
35 that life raft. I backed down to move away and that's
36 when I had a report that the shaft, we were having
37 excessive vibration from the ship's shaft and the
38 shaft's seals had shifted.

39 There are two sets of shaft seals. In a
40 failure situation, the second set will pick up to
41 prevent flooding from coming in around the shaft. And
42 I had a report that the shaft seals had shifted from
43 the forward to the after shaft seals and there is an
44 excessive vibration of the shaft at that point. So,
45 after that, I tried to minimize my use of main
46 propulsion and use only the outboard.

47 So, moving away from the one raft that was
48 off the port bow, I moved towards another raft that was
49 deep in my port quarter and tried to back down towards
50 it and, essentially, the same thing happened. We got
51 close enough to see that everybody in the raft was
52 okay. Actually, that one I only remember there being
53 one person in. The person in the raft was okay, but

1 there was no way to get close to him.

2 So there's a group, I can do a sketch for
3 you, if you like. (Drawing sketch.) There's one raft
4 off the bow and there's another raft off the stern and
5 then there's a group of three rafts tied together. It
6 looked like the group had -- you know -- fastened here
7 and I don't remember all the details on the other
8 rafts. I know there was another empty raft over here
9 and there was one upside down over here because you
10 could only see the gray. The other ones all had the
11 tent structure all raised on them and there was one
12 that was upside down, and just a lot of debris and
13 diesel oil all through the area we were in.

14 So this is the raft I initially approached
15 and then I tried to approach this one. I didn't see
16 anybody that -- we were trying to communicate because
17 our goal was to find out if there were missing people,
18 so we wanted to find out if everybody was accounted
19 for. We were shouting to the person in this raft. He
20 couldn't hear us. We didn't know if he could
21 understand us.

22 At this point, we weren't sure whether he
23 could speak English or not, but even if he could speak
24 English, it was so noisy out there. With the waves on
25 the ship, I don't think there's any way they would have
26 heard us.

27 So the Captain then wanted us to work our way
28 around towards the group of three life rafts. As we
29 were working our way around there -- well, long before
30 we got over here, the helicopter had come in and
31 circled a couple times. As we were trying to work our
32 way around here, the Coast Guard, the rigid hull
33 inflatable arrived, and the rigid hull inflatable
34 started going from raft to raft. Basically, it looked
35 like they were checking on people and, from them, we
36 were trying to find out if they had all personnel
37 accounted for.

38 I think the Captain of the Ehime Maru was
39 over in this group is what we suspect. And then
40 shortly after the RHI arrived, the smaller patrol boat
41 arrived too.

42 MR. WHITE: They're called forty-one footers.

43 LCDR MEADOR: Forty-one, okay. The Forty-
44 one arrived and between the two vessels, they went
45 around and they would unload the people and then they'd
46 take down the tent structure. I don't whether they
47 deflated the raft or what, but, basically, after they
48 had gone to each one, they'd deflate in the water and
49 that's how they were for several hours after that.

50 It wasn't until later that afternoon that the
51 Navy ships, Hawthorne five and Hawthorne eight arrived
52 and they actually went back and started pulling the
53 rafts and they investigated this one that was upside

1 down and the Coast Guard C-130 was in the area
2 conducting the search at that point.

3 So what we did is we, essentially, circled
4 the accident area and I was looking for anybody we
5 could find. At that point, we still had no idea
6 whether there people missing or not.

7 The one thing I felt very confident of right
8 from the start was, based on the close grouping of the
9 rafts and all the material that came off the boat, I
10 felt that we had a very narrow search area. That's why
11 -- the truth of it was I was very pessimistic about the
12 ongoing search after that because after that we
13 thoroughly covered -- you know -- and I had good
14 visibility in the accident of area that, if anybody was
15 out there, we would have found them.

16 And so I felt, like I said, I was kind of
17 pessimistic about the continued search just because we
18 knew that if anybody didn't make it in that initial
19 group, probably didn't make it.

20 MR. WHITE: Okay. Let me back up and just
21 get a couple things -- when you first -- you say the
22 Captain had the periscope?

23 LCDR MEADOR: Yes, sir.

24 MR. WHITE: Okay, you only had one scope up
25 at that time?

26 LCDR MEADOR: By the time -- in the amount of
27 time it took for me to get up and take the scope from
28 the Chief of Staff, I think, the Captain was raising
29 the number one scope in that period of time. So, just
30 the eight feet it took me to get from the back of
31 control to the scope --

32 MR. WHITE: Okay, when you got on the number
33 two scope and got up and saw the Ehime Maru, what was
34 the aspect?

35 LCDR MEADOR: It was about a Port 150 angle
36 on the bow, it was down a little bit by the stern, from
37 what I could tell, and I saw no physical damage to the
38 ship, but I could see that the stern was sinking
39 slowly.

40 MR. WHITE: You could perceivably see it
41 going?

42 LCDR MEADOR: Yes, sir. And, at one point, I
43 watched all the -- balls -- nets around it on the stern
44 in the -- the way it was set up, it kind of had an open
45 deck area for looking at the stern -- kind of like
46 this. This is the upper deck. It kind of had an open
47 deck area here, but extended all around the perimeter
48 and I could see all those balls float out from this
49 back area.

50 And then, just as it was sinking enough in
51 the stern that the bow was starting to come out of the
52 water and I could tell she had a bulbous bow. That's
53 the point I left the scope and went to the bridge so I

1 did not actually see --
2 MR. WHITE: By the time you got to the
3 bridge, it was gone.
4 LCDR MEADOR: She was gone, sure.
5 MR. WHITE: So, for clarification, just to
6 make sure I understand, port 150 means you were
7 basically looking at it from -- if this is the vessel,
8 you were looking at it from this direction?
9 LCDR MEADOR: Yes, sir. That's it exactly.
10 MR. WHITE: So, looking at it from the stern
11 port quarter
12 LCDR MEADOR: Yes, sir.
13 MR. WHITE: -- had the vessel starting making
14 the turn? Had the boat started making a turn back
15 towards it?
16 LCDR MEADOR: No, sir, we were all stopped.
17 We were all stopped. I don't know -- I didn't even
18 look at our rudder. I was just focused on the ship and
19 that's all I was looking at.
20 MR. WHITE: You mentioned a bridge suitcase.
21 Could you describe that to me just a little bit?
22 LCDR MEADOR: It's a box -- you can see --
23 it's the same box that the top side watch uses.
24 MR. WHITE: Uh-huh.
25 LCDR MEADOR: It's a gray box, about this big
26 and it's about four inches deep. It has all your
27 communications and has your rudder angle indicator, has
28 your gyro repeater in it, has the engine order
29 telegraph repeater in it and it has a collision alarm
30 in it. And so it's got to be removed when we submerge,
31 we keep a water tight cover over the electrical fitting
32 for it and so the first thing you do, as officer deck,
33 is you remove that cover and then mount the suitcase
34 into that.
35 MR. WHITE: What kind of communications
36 capability does it have --
37 LCDR MEADOR: Only internal. It's got the
38 announcing circuit, so it's got the 1MC, 7MC and 27MC.
39 MR. WHITE: Okay, and then no radios?
40 LCDR MEADOR: No radios. No, sir. The Captain
41 brought up the bridge-to-bridge radio.
42 MR. WHITE: Which is just a hand-held?
43 LCDR MEADOR: Hand-held. I thought he was
44 talking to the Coast Guard. I got indications later
45 that he might have had trouble. From my appearance, as
46 officer deck, I thought he was in full communication
47 with the Coast Guard and I thought he was reporting --
48 I thought he had reported the accident. It think -- I
49 don't know if that they received his report. I think
50 it might have gone out in parallel because when I saw
51 it on the news, the Coast Guard received the report
52 from COMSUBPAC pack.
53 Because we were doing two things in parallel.

1 We were communicating via SAT ICOM, which is a UHF
2 frequency and we were also in parallel with that,
3 making the bridge-to-bridge report on Channel 16.
4 MR. WHITE: And the bridge-to-bridge would
5 have had to wait until the Captain came up with the
6 hand-held?
7 LCDR MEADOR: Yes, sir. And within the first
8 ten minutes, it was very quick. The amount of time it
9 took me to get the ladder over the side, the bridge
10 suitcase and then the two divers up there, the Captain
11 was right behind them.
12 MR. WHITE: So, at one point then -- so it's
13 a count of five people?
14 LCDR MEADOR: Yes, sir.
15 MR. WHITE: Where did you fit?
16 LCDR MEADOR: The lookout Petty Officer
17 Darby, he's in what we call the look-out puka
18 MR. WHITE: That's the compartment behind --
19 LCDR MEADOR: Yes, sir. It's on the port
20 side. It's just a little compartment like that. If
21 here's the main one, there's a little look out here.
22 And Petty Officer Darby, I think, brought the life ring
23 with him, because I know I was kind of sitting on the
24 life ring. So I was sitting over here on the side,
25 Darby was here, the Captain was here.
26 MR. WHITE: And this is forward.
27 LCDR MEADOR: -- yes, sir. That's forward
28 and then Master Chief Swanson and Petty Officer Rivas
29 were both in there with the Captain.
30 MR. WHITE: Okay, so what you described, just
31 for purposes of the tape, is lookout in a separate
32 compartment --
33 LCDR MEADOR: Uh-huh.
34 MR. WHITE: -- yourself on the Starboard rear
35 corner
36 LCDR MEADOR: -- sitting actually on the sail
37 as opposed to down in --
38 MR. WHITE: Okay, and the two divers inside
39 the sail and Captain -- on the port side inside the --
40 LCDR MEADOR: Inside the cockpit.
41 MR. WHITE: -- inside the cockpit?
42 LCDR MEADOR: Yes, sir.
43 MR. WHITE: Were both divers -- was one a
44 tender and one a diver or were they both swimmers?
45 LCDR MEADOR: They were both suited up, but I
46 don't know --
47 MR. WHITE: But they were both capable of
48 going into the water?
49 LCDR MEADOR: Yes, sir.
50 MR. WHITE: Any idea of what they would --
51 did they have tag lines with them?
52 LCDR MEADOR: They had -- and I don't recall
53 what it was, but we discussed if we saw anybody in the

1 water, we said we're going to send them in, but it was
2 too -- we discussed the fact that it was too hazardous
3 to try and pull one of the rafts over and then, on top
4 of pulling the raft over, the ship trying to have those
5 people climb up to the sail. Because at that point, we
6 still couldn't get access to the escape trunk so we
7 just -- tremendous waves were breaking over the escape
8 trunks.

9 MR. WHITE: Who was that discussion among?
10 LCDR MEADOR: It was among myself, the two
11 divers and the Captain.

12 MR. WHITE: Okay.

13 MR. HENRY: I'll have my questions when
14 you're done, but this is one that I don't want to
15 forget to ask. When you got up to the bridge --

16 MR. WHITE: This is Mr. Henry asking the
17 question.

18 LCDR MEADOR: Yes.

19 MR. HENRY: You had to ballast it to a
20 certain point?

21 LCDR MEADOR: The ten second emergency blow
22 is in effect, yes, -- amount of air in it.

23 MR. HENRY: But you didn't have to do any
24 additional back --

25 LCDR MEADOR: I did. As soon as I got up
26 there and established communications, the first thing I
27 said was "control bridge, commence low pressure blow
28 and all main ballast tanks when ready." Because I felt
29 -- I wanted to make sure that we were riding safely on
30 the surface.

31 MR. HENRY: Okay, but you didn't -- that was
32 initiated after you had already gone to the top --

33 LCDR MEADOR: Yes, sir, and I knew that was
34 contrary to surfacing procedure, but I felt, based on
35 the sudden need to provide the rescue for personnel and
36 the fact that the ship had done an emergency blow,
37 which does, in effect, do the same thing -- add into
38 that the fact that the Captain said man the bridge.

39 MR. HENRY: And that was going to my next
40 question, follow-up for that was, who initiated you
41 going to the bridge.

42 LCDR MEADOR: The Captain.

43 MR. WHITE: -- after you felt this impact,
44 you went to the bridge?

45 LCDR MEADOR: I went to the control room.

46 MR. WHITE: Excuse me, you went to the
47 control room.

48 LCDR MEADOR: And the Captain, I believe, was
49 on the number one scope.

50 MR. WHITE: Uh-huh.

51 LCDR MEADOR: I was on number two scope and
52 the Captain said, man the bridge.

53 MR. WHITE: Is that your assigned duty to --

1 LCDR MEADOR: No, sir. Well, actually --
2 MR. WHITE: -- you specifically?
3 LCDR MEADOR: No, sir. He just said, man the
4 bridge and I was in control and the senior person -- we
5 didn't have -- it just kind of seemed like the thing to
6 do. I mean, nobody else was beating me to the hatch
7 so I was the right person. I said, "I'll do it. I'll
8 get a harness." And Petty Officer was already making
9 the preparation as the look-out.
10 MR. WHITE: Is he assigned with that?
11 LCDR MEADOR: I don't know that.
12 MR. WHITE: What would have been the normal
13 sequence --
14 LCDR MEADOR: A watch quarter station bill
15 was already promulgated for that day. I was to be the
16 bridge officer of the deck on the transit in after the
17 ship surfaced, so that's why I was sitting down in the
18 state room, I was waiting for the emergency blow and as
19 soon as -- I was waiting for them to announce the
20 surface and once he did that, I was going to go up to
21 control and go through the relief procedure, which
22 consists of chart review and start a relief procedure
23 before going up to the bridge --
24 MR. WHITE: You were programmed to be the
25 person going to the bridge?
26 LCDR MEADOR: Yes, sir. Yes, sir. So I was
27 already, as I said, I already had the harness out in my
28 state room, staged for this and so I was already
29 thinking in that direction so it was a natural thing
30 for me to just grab that harness and go to the bridge
31 at that point and I don't know who was the assigned
32 look-out. Petty Officer was probably the best person
33 we could have chosen.
34 MR. WHITE: What makes you say that?
35 LCDR MEADOR: He's the First Lieutenant so
36 he's familiar with all the gear and the locations of
37 the gear. He's able to -- the pilot ladder. I don't
38 know who actually got the pilot ladder, whether it was
39 him or somebody else, but he just had all the right
40 gear going on up there before I headed that way.
41 MR. WHITE: What you're describing,
42 obviously, is a very abbreviated and brief relief as
43 far as shifting the cons?
44 LCDR MEADOR: Right, very abbreviated.
45 MR. WHITE: Was it instinct?
46 LCDR MEADOR: Well, no, I called down to make
47 sure they were ready to be relieved because I wasn't
48 sure whether the Captain wanted a shift to watch the
49 bridge. I said, "I understand you're all stop,
50 lowering the outboard, preparing to conduct a low
51 pressure blow" and I don't know too many other major
52 details and I said, "I relieve you of the deck and I
53 relieve the Captain of the con" and then find out later

1 if I made the 7MC, which I announced that I had the
2 deck and the conn and also announced the officer of the
3 deck had shifted his watch to the bridge at that point.

4 MR. WHITE: And the first command after that
5 was to commence the low pressure blow?

6 LCDR MEADOR: No, actually, I announced that
7 -- as soon as I did the 1MC test, I said, "control
8 bridge, commence low pressure blow when ready." I
9 didn't have the deck or the con at that point. So,
10 technically, I didn't have the authority, but I felt as
11 the person on the bridge, that was -- I just wanted to
12 convey the importance of getting that.

13 MR. WHITE: What gave you the confidence,
14 after the emergency blow, that there was enough
15 buoyancy?

16 LCDR MEADOR: Because we were all stop, the
17 position of the ship in the water, when I was looking
18 through the periscope, and I could tell we were
19 physically high out of the water and just my experience
20 knowing what a ten second emergency blow will do for
21 you.

22 MR. WHITE: Okay, you knew it was scheduled
23 to be a ten second blow?

24 LCDR MEADOR: We traditionally do a ten
25 second blow. Otherwise, the air bank pressure gets too
26 low. We don't like to go below about three thousand
27 pounds in our air banks.

28 MR. WHITE: -- from four to three?

29 LCDR MEADOR: Forty-five hundred.

30 MR. WHITE: Forty-five hundred to three

31 LCDR MEADOR: Yes, sir. I don't know what
32 the final pressures were. They would probably be
33 recorded in the log somewhere -- right after the
34 emergency blow.

35 MR. WHITE: When you were at the bridge, do
36 you have binoculars?

37 LCDR MEADOR: Petty Officer Darby did. I did
38 not initially have binoculars; I had a pair of
39 binoculars sent up.

40 MR. WHITE: What's the normal procedure if
41 you want a piece of gear sent up? Someone climbs up
42 with it?

43 LCDR MEADOR: Right. We have a watch called
44 the messenger of the watch in control who is kind of
45 free to do a lot of different things like that. Then
46 there's also -- especially in this type of situation,
47 there's a lot of people who want to help and are
48 available so I would just call down to the Chief of
49 Watch, send a whatever to the bridge. I had that and I
50 wanted the bridge book up there as well.

51 MR. WHITE: How long did you stay up on the
52 bridge?

53 LCDR MEADOR: I got relieved about 1630, so I

1 was up there most of the afternoon.
2 MR. WHITE: You mentioned that it was a very
3 loud environment. Is that because of the snorkeling
4 that was going on?
5 LCDR MEADOR: No, there was no -- the low
6 pressure blow -- really -- you can barely hear it from
7 the bridge. The sea state against the ship -- it was
8 just the wave action. Not to a point where I couldn't
9 talk to the guys right next me, but to a point where
10 there was no way I could have communicated -- actually,
11 there was a bit of wind, but there was no way I could
12 have communicated to anyone in the rafts. That's based
13 on the noise.
14 MR. WHITE: Okay. Did you ever have any
15 comms with the helo?
16 LCDR MEADOR: Yes, the Captain established
17 communications with him and then later on, in the
18 afternoon, after the Captain had gone down to the
19 bridge and I had his bridge-to-bridge radio, I
20 communicated both the helicopter and the C-130, which
21 was 1470, 1714 -- I can't remember the number
22 MR. WHITE: 1795.
23 LCDR MEADOR: Okay, I communicated with the
24 C-130 and we also had communications with the RHI from
25 the 31. At one point, just to kind of give you a feel,
26 as we came around towards the three rafts and they had
27 already gotten the people out, they asked us to stay
28 clear, because of -- because just the -- even within a
29 hundred yards or so, just the effects that the seas
30 were having coming across our ship, was enough to --
31 you know -- we weren't really moving through the water
32 creating a wake--it was enough to cause disruption of
33 the transfer they were doing; people from the RHI and
34 the forty-one.
35 MR. WHITE: How long did the CO stay up in
36 the bridge?
37 LCDR MEADOR: At least an hour. At least an
38 hour.
39 MR. WHITE: Did you have the con the whole
40 time you were up there?
41 LCDR MEADOR: I had the deck and the con.
42 MR. WHITE: Could you give me a -- what we
43 didn't do was get the complete tour and we went on
44 board looking at the survival aspects aspects, but from
45 -- looking for people in the water --
46 LCDR MEADOR: Uh-huh.
47 MR. WHITE: -- which you described a couple
48 of times. What were all the different mechanisms you
49 were using on the boat looking for people in the water?
50 LCDR MEADOR: I had the periscope up -
51 MR. WHITE: -- the ship first off?
52 LCDR MEADOR: Both.
53 MR. WHITE: The -- commission -- the boat was

1 using in regard to looking for people in the water?
2 LCDR MEADOR: Right. I had a periscope
3 operator dedicated to that. I think there was somebody
4 on the second periscope as well looking for people.
5 One of the first things you do -- we do pretty frequent
6 man-overboard drills to gain that proficiency -- I
7 didn't verify it, but one of the first things I do is
8 generally, you hit the man-overboard function on your
9 GPS or you note the posit and can get a bearing in
10 range from that initial posit.

11 I know they established a geo plot where they
12 constantly plot out the rafts. I had them -- I told
13 them specifically to observe every raft to determine if
14 they could see injured personnel in the rafts so if we
15 needed to provide assistance there, we could decide
16 whether or not that was going to be a possibility. He
17 reported no -- he reported one person laying down in
18 one of the rafts, but he did not see any injured people
19 from the periscope observations.

20 He, at one point, asked to use the radar and
21 I told him that I didn't want to use the radar and the
22 reasons I didn't want to use the radar was it -- the
23 way it all works, it comes up right in front of the
24 bridge here and it goes right at your eye level and
25 just rotates right in front of your head and it's -- I
26 had good visibility. Like I said, I could clearly see
27 the accident area. So all the radar, at that point,
28 would have done for us is just obscure my view of the
29 surrounding area.

30 I had good visibility out to the horizon, so
31 I wasn't worried about interfering contacts. We had
32 the Coast Guard. Obviously, the Coast Guard helicopter
33 was there and our radar, I wouldn't necessarily count
34 on it to try to pick swimmers up in the water. I think
35 maybe a raft we'd be lucky, but as far as a search for
36 additional survivors, it would have only been safety of
37 ship at that point and, frankly, I wasn't very worried
38 about that.

39 MR. WHITE: Who else, besides the periscopes?

40 LCDR MEADOR: The visual searches from the
41 bridge by myself and Petty Officer Darby, the Captain
42 and the two swimmers for the time that they were up
43 there and that's pretty much what we have for
44 resources.

45 MR. WHITE: Was Darby told to look for people
46 in the water?

47 LCDR MEADOR: I don't think I specifically
48 said, keep a look -- no, I don't remember, but he was
49 doing it. It wasn't like --

50 MR. WHITE: Did you physically see him?

51 LCDR MEADOR: Yes. We were constantly
52 scanning all over because there was a lot of debris and
53 there were these floats that, like I told you, with the

1 nets around them. So that kind of -- we had to check
2 those out and make sure there were no people.
3 MR. WHITE: Okay.
4 LCDR MEADOR: And then at night, I had the
5 mid-watch that night, and I had night vision goggles up
6 in the bridge and we use the night vision goggles.
7 MR. WHITE: Are they binoculars or
8 monoculars?
9 LCDR MEADOR: Monoculars.
10 MR. WHITE: So, just one --
11 LCDR MEADOR: Just one, but it worked for a
12 while. I actually never used them before and I had
13 them brought up for that purpose and they're pretty
14 good, but our periscope has a night vision capability
15 that's easier to use. It's just easier on your eyes
16 than wearing those other ones.
17 MR. WHITE: Uh-huh.
18 LCDR MEADOR: I still continued the search
19 throughout the night. Even though we'd been directed
20 to remain outside the search area, we still kept a
21 search up.
22 MR. WHITE: You said you had the mid?
23 LCDR MEADOR: Yes, sir. I had the mid.
24 MR. WHITE: What time is it?
25 LCDR MEADOR: Eleven thirty -- 2330 to 0530
26 is when I was on watch.
27 MR. WHITE: Is that longer than just a steady
28 --
29 LCDR MEADOR: Six hours. Six hours.
30 MR. WHITE: Is that your normal --
31 LCDR MEADOR: That's our normal watch
32 rotation, yes, sir.
33 MR. WHITE: Oh, okay. 2330 -- LCDR
34 MEADOR: At least, I wishing it was only four hours at
35 that point. It had been a long day.
36 MR. WHITE: Had you had any sleep?
37 LCDR MEADOR: I slept from -- I slept for
38 about three hours. Obviously, I tried to get sleep
39 after I got after watch so I slept for about, just over
40 three hours, before the mid-watch. Fatigue wasn't, at
41 that point, a real issue.
42 MR. WHITE: When did it become an issue?
43 LCDR MEADOR: Well, it didn't, but it just --
44 you know what I'm saying -- a crisis like that, -- you
45 don't really --
46 MR. WHITE: But then your adrenaline starts -
47 - down --
48 LCDR MEADOR: I had a pot of coffee sent to
49 the bridge about three thirty so that worked just fine
50 for me.
51 MR. WHITE: How long did the swimmers stay up
52 on the bridge?
53 LCDR MEADOR: I don't remember when they

1 left.

2 MR. WHITE: How about in relationship --

3 LCDR MEADOR: They went down before the
4 Captain. No, they were there until, I believe, at
5 least, the Coast Guard was there. They went down
6 before the Captain, so I would say within a half-hour,
7 forty-five minutes, we shifted them down below. We
8 knew, once we knew that recovery from the ship would be
9 impossible, and the Coast Guard was there, as you've
10 seen up in the bridge there's no point in keeping a lot
11 of extra people up there.

12 MR. WHITE: Did you have any other swimmers
13 standing by?

14 LCDR MEADOR: There were three or four down
15 in the crews' mess standing by, along with others. They
16 rigged a splash protection around the forward escape
17 trunk so that the water that comes down and washes down
18 from the waves with it, we can drain it down to the
19 machine room bilge.

20 If you look around that forward escape trunk
21 area, there's a lot of electrical equipment there and
22 right underneath it is a DC trim pump on the deck below
23 it that gets washed down pretty good if you don't try
24 and hold in some of that water.

25 So we rigged that, we had the EMAT team or a
26 medical assistance team standing by in the ward room if
27 we brought anybody on, and we had a whole variety of DC
28 equipment broke out in crews mess and at one point they
29 reported to me standing by, but I don't remember
30 exactly what all was standing by. But I know we had
31 swimmers standing by down there. -- it's basically
32 like a man overboard bag and -- rescue equipment -- we
33 had that equipment standing by waiting to drop through
34 the escape trunk -- open.

35 MR. WHITE: When was the last time you did a
36 man overboard drill?

37 LCDR MEADOR: I think probably during the
38 summer, during mid-shipman ops. That's usually when
39 you do them is when you have mid-shipman on board.
40 That's when you do the most frequent ones.

41 MR. WHITE: Do you actually put someone in
42 the water?

43 LCDR MEADOR: No, sir. We put what we call
44 an oscar in the water. It's a box -- we put some
45 reflective tape on it and throw it overboard and
46 practice Williamson turns and whatnot. It's tricky.
47 I've done quite a few of them as a -- Instruction Watch
48 for either junior mid-shipman or junior officer of the
49 decks and everybody has trouble estimating how long it
50 takes a ship to slow down. It's a lot of mass moving.

51 MR. WHITE: They think it's going to stop
52 faster?

53 LCDR MEADOR: They think it's going to stop

1 faster than it will and there goes the person back down
2 the side a little too fast. But I definitely feel
3 proficient at ship handling with that respect, based on
4 that I had a lot of experience doing that.

5 MR. WHITE: What's the largest number of
6 people that they typically put on for any type of extra
7 person cruises. Like mid-shipman cruises, how many
8 people do they put on?

9 LCDR MEADOR: I don't recall on mid-shipman,
10 but it was no less than what we had on board that day.

11 MR. WHITE: -- twenty --

12 LCDR MEADOR: Twenty seems very reasonable to
13 me.

14 MR. WHITE: Okay.

15 LCDR MEADOR: Both of our groups, we sat in
16 two seatings in the ward room and it wasn't a problem.
17 I've done a VIP cruise in the past where we had to
18 have three seatings in the ward room. So that time, we
19 had at least thirty percent more people than we had
20 that day.

21 MR. WHITE: Three full seatings in the
22 Wardroom?

23 LCDR MEADOR: Right, so another eight or ten
24 people at least.

25 MR. WHITE: Okay. Do you have any
26 guidelines?

27 LCDR MEADOR: I don't know of any guidelines.
28 We'll generally put out a schedule of events for a
29 given day, whether it's mid-shipman ops or whether it's
30 a VIP cruise. We'll establish our own schedule of
31 events, but that's based on coordination throughout a
32 small ship.

33 MR. WHITE: Uh-huh.

34 LCDR MEADOR: So, that's not based on a
35 CINCPAC fleet instruction providing guidelines --

36 MR. WHITE: No, I meant as far as -- is there
37 any restrictions as far as numbers you can take on
38 board.

39 LCDR MEADOR: I never heard of anything.

40 MR. WHITE: You said, for a lack of a better
41 term, reduced manning?

42 LCDR MEADOR: Yes, sir.

43 MR. WHITE: You didn't have a full crew
44 that's on board?

45 LCDR MEADOR: Yes, sir.

46 MR. WHITE: What criteria, and I assume as an
47 EO, you had a major input into, what criteria did you
48 use as who you brought with you and who you left
49 ashore?

50 LCDR MEADOR: The -- we were doing a couple
51 different things. The ship was still supporting
52 tactical training up at the training center here, so we
53 left some of the officers behind to support that as

1 well. I'm sure we left some sonar and fire control
2 men- I can't give you specific names and as far as the
3 engineering department, we didn't leave a lot of people
4 behind, actually, in the engineering department. We
5 left a few and I don't -- to tell you the truth Master
6 Chief Swanson, he does all that enlisted manning and
7 watch bills. Again, I sign them, but it's not
8 something I have to put a lot of effort into.

9 Really, the only impact though, if you think
10 of it, we stand a six hour watch; we normally man for
11 three section watches -- so we can leave a third of the
12 boat behind on a planned cruise that's going to last
13 less than twelve hours and it really won't even impact
14 us in the watch rotation, you're not standing in a
15 watch.

16 It's a little more difficult in a situation
17 where we have to volunteer because we're stayed out for
18 the twenty-four hours continuing the search. And so,
19 at that point, people like myself that wouldn't
20 normally stand a lot of watch and then standing two
21 watches, the afternoon watch and then the mid-watch,
22 obviously --

23 MR. WHITE: How many other OODs were on
24 board, fully qualified?

25 LCDR MEADOR: Fully qualified, --, myself,
26 Lt. Coen, Lt. Duquet (ph), Lt. Mahoney (ph), Lt.
27 Pritchett (ph). So we had at least six fully qualified
28 OODs and the ward room is only fourteen large.

29 MR. WHITE: You didn't count the XO or CO?

30 LCDR MEADOR: No, I don't -- we don't count
31 them. The only fully qualified OODs we left behind were
32 Lt. Saulter (ph), who's new, who's my relief, and the
33 weapons officer was not there either. They were the
34 only two fully qualified people we left behind. I have
35 two other junior OODs behind that are only qualified
36 Engineering Officer of the watch.

37 MR. WHITE: So there was no problem as far as
38 the engineer department maintaining a standard EOW
39 watch?

40 LCDR MEADOR: No, sir, no problems.

41 MR. WHITE: You mentioned the MAT team?

42 LCDR MEADOR: The EMAT, yes sir.

43 MR. WHITE: --

44 LCDR MEADOR: It's a team -- response to
45 casualties. Most of them are trained, led by the
46 corpsman, but most of them -- the mess specialists,
47 the cooks, that attend the extra training in that area.
48 So that's people who have either --

49 MR. WHITE: Is the corpsman on board?

50 LCDR MEADOR: I'm sure he was. I don't --
51 I'm sure he was. I don't remember specifically seeing
52 him or not seeing him just because we didn't have any
53 on-board medical emergencies. Yeah, he was on board

1 because he gives the initial -- he's required to give
2 the initial brief to all visitors. He gives them an
3 initial --

4 MR. WHITE: So there's just one?

5 LCDR MEADOR: And there's just one because
6 independent duty corpsmen is a first-class petty
7 officer.

8 MR. WHITE: You've described that you're very
9 experienced as far as driving the ship --

10 LCDR MEADOR: Yes, sir.

11 MR. WHITE: -- top side and so on like that -
12 - without a reference to the search tables and all the
13 stuff the Coast Guard gets into --

14 LCDR MEADOR: Uh-huh.

15 MR. WHITE: -- when you first got on scene,
16 when you first got to the bridge, where was your
17 attention focused?

18 LCDR MEADOR: My attention was focused on the
19 people in the water. Well, seeing if there were people
20 in the water.

21 MR. WHITE: Uh-huh.

22 LCDR MEADOR: And the accident. I mean, our
23 whole reason for manning the bridge was not to drive
24 the ship to head back to port, it was to assist in the
25 rescue of anybody that needed it. And so that's why,
26 when we got up there, we were looking to see if anybody
27 was in the water, if there's anybody who needed help
28 and instead, we just saw the people in the rafts.
29 And I thought, frankly, they'd be better off
30 to sit thirty-five minutes in a raft and get picked up
31 by the Coast Guard than it would have been if we'd try
32 to pull them on board the submarine at that point in
33 time. Because those people -- it would have been
34 tragedy upon tragedy because I guarantee that somebody
35 would have been seriously injured or possibly drowned
36 as a result of that.

37 MR. HENRY: Are you familiar with anybody
38 being injured, either as a result of swim calls or just
39 basically trying to get people who are in the water,
40 out of the water, under the sub - in that situation?

41 LCDR MEADOR: Yes, I've heard of people being
42 injured during swim calls.

43 MR. WHITE: Okay.

44 LCDR MEADOR: Some boats won't do them at all
45 because of that.

46 MR. WHITE: Does the Greenville have that?

47 LCDR MEADOR: The Greenville -- we haven't
48 done one in probably about a year, but we have done it.

49 MR. WHITE: During a routine swim call,
50 what's outside access?

51 LCDR MEADOR: The forward escape trunk. We
52 maintain the officer deck up on the bridge during a
53 swim call. The forward escape provides you access. A

1 stationed, a swimmer, a qualified swimmer, diver-type,
2 top side to -- you know -- basically, the rescue
3 swimmer and also the XO. Or there's been once in a
4 while he'd actually have me do it instead of him, he'd
5 say "I need to go get some food. I'll be right back."
6 Basically sits up there with a radio and provides
7 overall supervision.
8 MR. WHITE: Supervision from the --
9 LCDR MEADOR: They have to be ideal. We've
10 been -- we've tried to have them on several occasions
11 where you go into kind of protective waters and it's
12 still too rough. Even the Pearl Harbor area.
13 MR. WHITE: What's too rough?
14 LCDR MEADOR: It's kind of a judgment call.
15 MR. WHITE: As an OOD, if you were making the
16 decision, what criteria would you use as to whether you
17 could open up that forward escape trunk opened up?
18 LCDR MEADOR: Oh, the forward escape trunk?
19 If you're taking water over the forward escape trunk,
20 you shouldn't open it, unless it's an emergency. And
21 I've taken -- I've been in situations where every fifth
22 wave goes across it and you can open it under that
23 situation.
24 The situation we were under There were waves
25 washing across with a foot of water at a time and any
26 of the videos that you've see on the news footage and
27 everything, you can see clearly that the forward escape
28 trunk was inaccessible. We would have taken on
29 thousands of gallons of water and possibly --
30 MR. WHITE: One question that came to my
31 mind, as we were working through that, and then I was
32 thinking about it later last evening, highly
33 appropriate, as I mentioned this morning, while I
34 thought about it in the shower, with the water coming
35 down --
36 LCDR MEADOR: Uh-huh.
37 MR. WHITE: -- it is an escape trunk --
38 LCDR MEADOR: Uh-huh.
39 MR. WHITE: -- it's designed to get fully
40 emersed?
41 LCDR MEADOR: Right.
42 MR. WHITE: Could you have taken a couple of
43 swimmers up in the escape trunk, closed the lower
44 hatch?
45 LCDR MEADOR: And then it would have filled
46 up the cavity of the escape trunk.
47 MR. WHITE: Or at least open the hatch at
48 that point and then --
49 LCDR MEADOR: You can pump the upper hatch
50 open. It's hydraulically operated. You can physically
51 open the upper hatch.
52 MR. WHITE: Okay. Then that recognizing
53 water was going to come in with another hatch secured,

1 I assume that's a --
2 LCDR MEADOR: Right. You just -- then you
3 have to drain the lower hatch. Drain the volume inside
4 the lower cavity. We could have done that and had we
5 sent our swimmers over the side to rescue someone, that
6 would have been one option to bring it back in the
7 escape trunk because I had personnel standing by and it
8 would have already drained -- we were attempting to
9 drain the cavity, but, obviously, the cavity around the
10 upper hatch keeps filling back up.
11 So I had people standing by ready to that,
12 but there was no -- to simply bring a life raft along
13 the side of a submarine is just -- it was dangerous.
14 It was extremely dangerous and then I didn't see the
15 overriding need to do it. The people I saw were --
16 MR. WHITE: -- I'm certainly not saying that
17 would have been and based also on my experience of
18 coming alongside, I understand completely what you're
19 saying.
20 LCDR MEADOR: Yeah.
21 MR. WHITE: I'm just exploring all of the
22 options.
23 LCDR MEADOR: Right. So, yes, I could have -
24 - the system is set up that I could have brought people
25 in there or sent people out through there and shut a
26 hatch after they've gone.
27 MR. WHITE: Uh-huh.
28 LCDR MEADOR: And like I said, we have a
29 spray enclosure on the lower part of the hatch too so,
30 even the incidental water that came down, we would
31 minimize the damage from that. But there was no need.
32 It was just an option available to me -- either bring
33 it up the side of the sail or bringing down the forward
34 escape trunk.
35 MR. WHITE: I would assume in that situation
36 you certainly wouldn't want to close the and dog upper
37 hatch before you open the lower hatch?
38 LCDR MEADOR: Well --
39 MR. WHITE: -- waves coming --
40 LCDR MEADOR: What you do, if you're in that
41 situation and you're closing the upper hatch, and just
42 before you shut it, you take a big wave in there and
43 there's people in there now --
44 MR. WHITE: -- depends on how much water was
45 in there?
46 LCDR MEADOR: Right, right. So that's risky
47 in itself. I probably would have brought the people
48 all the way down to the ship, inside the ship, and then
49 close the lower hatch. I don't know. I've heard of
50 situations where people have been in the trunks and the
51 wave comes in there and that's what would happen. They
52 would be crawling down in the trunk, we would probably
53 have the lower hatch open and I can imagine if pretty

1 big waves --
2 MR. WHITE: Where it actually knocks them off
3 the ladder?
4 LCDR MEADOR: You could easily have something
5 like that happen.
6 MR. WHITE: Okay.
7 LCDR MEADOR: I think, historically, there's
8 problems.
9 MR. WHITE: The last question I've got --
10 it's a little more background information.
11 LCDR MEADOR: Yes, sir.
12 MR. WHITE: Describe the two periscopes as
13 far as what their capabilities are and the differences
14 between them.
15 LCDR MEADOR: Yes, sir. The number two
16 scope is a primary scope we use. It's got a lot of
17 advantages. It's got better optics. It has up to
18 twenty-four times power and it has the electronic
19 search capabilities, the ESM capabilities. It has
20 radio antennas built in. It has an image intensifier
21 built in. It has a video camera built in; 70mm still
22 camera built into it. It's got a gyro stabilized head
23 window so, if you're on the surface and you're rocking
24 and rolling, it actually can gyro stabilize the head
25 window so it can maintain -- if you lock on something
26 in the water, it's not constantly washing -- you know --
27 -- constantly I can do this, trying to keep in field of
28 view stabilize the head window. So that's our best
29 search periscope.
30 The number one scope is a little bit taller.
31 It's about three feet taller for height-of-eye, has a
32 much narrower head window, but all it is, is purely an
33 optical scope. It's just twelve times power, so it's
34 not quite as powerful and it doesn't have any
35 electronic features associated with it. It's pure
36 manual.
37 MR. WHITE: Are they both variable power?
38 LCDR MEADOR: Yes, they go from 1.5 to six
39 times to twelve times. Now that I think about it,
40 number one scope only goes to six times. So there's
41 four times the magnification capability on number two
42 scope.
43 MR. HENRY: Do you know if anybody did any --
44 -- you mentioned both a video and a still camera
45 capability on the number two scope --
46 LCDR MEADOR: Uh-huh.
47 MR. WHITE: -- did anybody use either one of
48 those?
49 LCDR MEADOR: I was told that -- I didn't
50 think of it until after -- you know -- typically, right
51 around with the videotape in the tape recorder, we do
52 on deployment, because you just never know and if
53 something's going to happen that you want to record --

1 so, if it's set up and ready to go, you can just
2 initiate recording from the periscope and you can also
3 initiate photos. I did not think to check until after
4 whether it was set up.

5 MR. WHITE: So, in that situation then, well,
6 what I think I heard you say was there's only go to be,
7 there won't even be a tape in the machine?

8 LCDR MEADOR: Chances are.

9 MR. WHITE: About the camera?

10 LCDR MEADOR: I think there is usually film
11 in the camera, so it may have worked had I pushed the
12 button. You got to turn it on -- there's a little
13 toggle switch on top of the scope -- you turn it on and
14 then there's a photo button on your left thumb. I
15 didn't even think of it until after and I was only on
16 the scope for a minute, thirty seconds to a minute
17 probably, and, frankly, when you're watching a ship
18 sink, the last thing you're thinking about is I need to
19 record this or I need to get photos of this.

20 MR. WHITE: Okay. This is Rob Henry now
21 asking the questions.

22 MR. HENRY: Yeah, that was sort of filling
23 the questions that have been sparked by Ted's
24 questioning. This is what was given to us as the watch
25 quarter and station and can I take it that is developed
26 on a daily basis?

27 LCDR MEADOR: No.

28 MR. HENRY: This is 1 January 2000 --

29 LCDR MEADOR: It's made up of two -- there's
30 really two different watch bills. This tells a person
31 who's part of a man overboard detail, who's part of the
32 reduced visibility detail, based on which watch they
33 stood. Now, there's actually a watch bill approved up
34 through the Captain of physical names that will --
35 which watches are stood. So, somewhere in the
36 documents is a watch bill that says who is designated
37 as the helmsman and who was designated as this, but
38 this is a specific manning for special circumstances.

39 MR. HENRY: Right, so this is like -- I hope
40 the one indicates -- this is the offgoing watch and the
41 ongoing watch individual?

42 LCDR MEADOR: Yes, -- section.

43 MR. HENRY: So, for every watch, there would
44 be a watch quarter station bill --

45 LCDR MEADOR: No.

46 MR. HENRY: -- specifically with the
47 individual's names --

48 LCDR MEADOR: No.

49 MR. HENRY: -- because you'll have --

50 LCDR MEADOR: The offgoing FTOW will always
51 become the scope operator in the event of a man
52 overboard.

53 MR. HENRY: Right, but if you have a three

1 section watch, you'll have three different individuals?
2 LCDR MEADOR: Right, but you'll always have
3 one oncoming and one that's offgoing.
4 MR. HENRY: Right.
5 LCDR MEADOR: If you just got off watch,
6 you'll be offgoing watch, so you know as the offgoing
7 guy it's your job to go man the scope.
8 MR. HENRY: Okay, so I'm a little confused as
9 to what this other watch quarter and station bill --
10 LCDR MEADOR: This is based on -- it has
11 people's names. Section one FTOW will be Petty Officer
12 Seacrest; Section two FTOW --
13 MR. HENRY: Okay. It's the same job
14 descriptions, but just section one, section two,
15 section three?
16 LCDR MEADOR: Yes, sir.
17 MR. HENRY: And you have specific people's
18 names?
19 LCDR MEADOR: Specific people's names.
20 MR. HENRY: On the 9th of February, there
21 would have been one made up based on the reduced
22 manning --
23 LCDR MEADOR: Yes, and it's there because I
24 know I took the document from the bulletin board and
25 gave it to XO
26 MR. HENRY: -- watch man --
27 LCDR MEADOR: Same way with the officer's
28 watch. We have a watch -- like has OOD and it'll have
29 see separate watch bill and the OOD watch bill
30 MR. HENRY: Okay, and so what, for the one
31 that was written up for the 9th, what were your
32 specific watch quarter station duties?
33 LCDR MEADOR: I had no duties at that point
34 because I was designated tour guide for that day.
35 MR. HENRY: And so you were on the bridge --
36 let's see -- did you stand a watch then?
37 LCDR MEADOR: Yes, I stood -- well, I stood a
38 watch after the collision.
39 MR. HENRY: Okay, after it. But you would
40 have stood that watch anyway?
41 LCDR MEADOR: There was a discussion about
42 having me man the bridge and do the landing. It hadn't
43 been resolved at that point. We were still deciding
44 whether or not -- because it was my last chance to
45 drive the ship as an officer of deck before I
46 transferred and so the Captain said, hey, I want you to
47 take the ship in today. And that's as far as the
48 discussion had gotten.
49 MR. HENRY: And you didn't stand a watch
50 prior to that?
51 LCDR MEADOR: No, sir.
52 MR. HENRY: With the people on board?
53 LCDR MEADOR: No, sir.

1 MR. HENRY: So you were -- I imagine you were
2 in the control room because of the visitors?

3 LCDR MEADOR: The reason I was in the control
4 room post-collision was because of the collision.

5 MR. HENRY: Right.

6 LCDR MEADOR: And it's my responsibility as -
7 - ship's leadership to assist, whether it's going to
8 the scene of the casualty or whether it's assisting the
9 control room, whether it's assisting in DC Central,
10 it's part of the ship's leadership.

11 There's some people, especially when it comes
12 to people in the ward room, you don't have to assign
13 them a job in a casualty - just based on their
14 experience and the nature of their job what they're
15 supposed to.

16 MR. HENRY: I guess my question is for a
17 collision, as an Engineering Officer, wouldn't you have
18 gone to wherever the engineers gather?

19 LCDR MEADOR: We don't really gather. We
20 have a casualty assistance team go for the -- we go
21 assist in the engine room, but, in this case, I was
22 best served to go to the control room as senior
23 qualified officer deck on board, as a captain and the
24 XO don't stand watch.

25 MR. HENRY: Okay, and you said you had
26 practiced man overboards, specifically yourself, being
27 part of the drill?

28 LCDR MEADOR: Uh-huh. Being Officer of Deck
29 for man overboard, I did it as a junior officer and on
30 my last ship extensively and I've done it a few times
31 on Greenville as Officer of Deck.

32 MR. HENRY: Just so I understand the
33 difference in your terminology of the deck and the con,
34 how do you differentiate the two?

35 LCDR MEADOR: The deck is -- the person who
36 has the deck is responsible for the overall safety of
37 the ship. The person who has the con is essentially
38 the conning officer providing steering and rudder
39 orders to drive the ship.

40 MR. HENRY: Okay.

41 LCDR MEADOR: Most frequently you'll have the
42 deck and the con as Officer of the Deck. There are
43 times, for example, if I were training a new Officer of
44 Deck, I could give him the deck -- correction -- the
45 con, which would give him the ability to give out
46 orders and say, left, fifteen -- course three two zero
47 and he give out orders, he could change speed, he could
48 do all that, but it doesn't relieve me of the
49 responsibility for the safe operation of the ship as
50 Officer of the Deck, even though he has the con.

51 MR. HENRY: Okay. I understand the vessel
52 has a maneuvering pod that can drop down, rotatable --

53 LCDR MEADOR: We have that, yes. It's

1 officially called the outboard, but, in terminology,
2 it's a secondary propulsion motor. It's all the way
3 aft, comes out of main ballast tank five so it provides
4 the ability for about three knots worth of speed and
5 it's three hundred and sixty degree rotatable.
6 MR. HENRY: I'm sorry. I missed where it
7 comes out of.
8 LCDR MEADOR: Main ballast tank five so it's
9 all the way aft.
10 MR. HENRY: And what do you typically use
11 that for?
12 LCDR MEADOR: Maneuvering next to the pier,
13 only when we're getting underway and then return to
14 port.
15 MR. HENRY: Did you use it after the
16 accident?
17 LCDR MEADOR: And we use it for situations
18 that really require special maneuvering such as that.
19 At sea, like I said, we'll use it for a swim call.
20 Anytime you're not moving, it's got a ten knot speed
21 limit, you can't have it down to that ten knots or
22 above ten knots, so anytime you're in a situation where
23 you're essentially stopped, but you need to keep the
24 ship, either heading in a certain way or a certain
25 position, you would use that.
26 MR. HENRY: Okay, and this suitcase?
27 LCDR MEADOR: Bridge suitcase.
28 MR. HENRY: Does that allow you to control
29 that --
30 LCDR MEADOR: No, sir. All the -- really the
31 bridge suitcase only provides communication functions.
32 It doesn't allow you to physically steer the ship or
33 anything.
34 MR. HENRY: Okay, but you said you had some -
35 LCDR MEADOR: Yeah, what I'd do, on a 7MC,
36 which is our maneuvering, basically our control
37 circuit, I'd give orders to the helm down in control
38 and he controls the outboard, he controls the rudder,
39 he orders up the different bells through the engine
40 order telegraph
41 MR. HENRY: There are no indicators up at all
42 on this thing? It's strictly communications?
43 LCDR MEADOR: Strictly communications.
44 That's one thing we got to keep track of up on the
45 bridge is whether it's running or not and where it's
46 pointed. So, it's just something --
47 MR. HENRY: You have no indicator?
48 LCDR MEADOR: No, sir.
49 MR. HENRY: You don't know what rpms you're
50 turning, you don't know where the rudder is, you don't
51 know whether the thruster is running and which
52 direction its pointing?
53 LCDR MEADOR: Well, I have an engine order

1 telegraph that tells me what bell is ordered for the
2 main compartment, but I don't have anything for the
3 outboard to tell me where it's pointing or whether it's
4 on or off.

5 MR. HENRY: And you don't have any device for
6 telling you what the ship is doing in the way of
7 speeding through the water?

8 LCDR MEADOR: I have -- no. I have the gyro
9 repeater up there, but I have no knot reader.

10 MR. HENRY: Okay, so the gyro is part of the
11 bridge suitcase?

12 LCDR MEADOR: It is. It can pull out so you
13 can rest it flat for a better viewing, but it's part of
14 the suitcase.

15 MR. HENRY: Okay. You talked about the
16 emergency blow --

17 LCDR MEADOR: Uh-huh.

18 MR. HENRY: -- your coming up to the surface
19 and then quickly manning the bridge?

20 LCDR MEADOR: Yes, sir.

21 MR. HENRY: And then you requested a low
22 pressure blow?

23 LCDR MEADOR: Yes.

24 MR. HENRY: For the emergency blow, if you
25 were in calm water, what would be the height from the
26 water line up to the top of the deck?

27 LCDR MEADOR: Let's see, keel depth would be
28 about thirty-two feet, it's fifty feet to the top of
29 the sail, the water line up to the forward escape hatch
30 -- that's got to be about eight or nine feet at least
31 and then throw in the additional difficulty of the
32 curvature. It's probably about eight feet in terms of
33 just vertical heights.

34 MR. HENRY: From the water line up to the
35 main --

36 LCDR MEADOR: To the lip of the hatch.

37 MR. HENRY: Okay, and that's just a ball park
38 figure, okay. And that's based on just the emergency
39 blow. Now, you can do the low pressure blow and --

40 LCDR MEADOR: Well, the low pressure blow I
41 did at this point in time did not produce a significant
42 improvement in my draft because the emergency blow put
43 enough air in the tanks. In the ballast tanks, the low
44 pressure blow isn't going to do anything else for me.

45 MR. HENRY: Okay. Where I want to go with
46 this is if there was some reason to get that forward
47 escape trunk as high out of the water as you could,
48 what could you have done?

49 LCDR MEADOR: I could have thrown the depth
50 control tanks overboard and try to deballast the ship,
51 some of the variable ballast tanks on board. It might
52 have got me another foot or two.

53 MR. HENRY: Height and trim?

1 LCDR MEADOR: We'd start removing
2 significant quantities of water, but we weren't -- we
3 were essentially in pretty neutral condition. It would
4 be kind of foreign for us. It's not something we
5 practice, so it's something I didn't consider is
6 deballasting all the variable ballast tanks on board
7 and basically pumping them dry.

8 MR. HENRY: And how long would that have
9 taken if you had tried it?

10 LCDR MEADOR: Probably about thirty minutes.
11 That -- if -- wouldn't have eliminated the basic
12 problem was getting a raft over to approach the hull.
13 That's where that wash was occurring that was so
14 dramatic and then it would have also made the job worse
15 because that's just another foot or two that the people
16 would have try and get up to the deck.

17 MR. HENRY: Let me see if I understand
18 correctly. You said you didn't really -- a low
19 pressure blow is not a big deal because you were pretty
20 much as high as you were going to get anyway?

21 LCDR MEADOR: It didn't have as much effect
22 as I was hoping. I got up there, we're taking so much
23 water over the deck, I wanted to commence low pressure
24 blow, even the low pressure blow of running for an
25 extended period of time, which I did, I didn't see the
26 improvement I was hoping for.

27 MR. HENRY: How long -- if you, then the
28 emergency blow you would drop from forty-five down to--

29 LCDR MEADOR: Four thousand five hundred. I
30 don't recall the low end of the band though. I would
31 say about three thousand.

32 MR. HENRY: How long would it have taken you
33 to run the pressure back up?

34 LCDR MEADOR: It's about four or five hours
35 for an air charge.

36 MR. HENRY: So emergency blows are not
37 something you do on a regular basis?

38 LCDR MEADOR: No, and not only that, it's a
39 tremendous surge on some of the valves operating that
40 system and so you can -- there's a potential every time
41 you do it, that it will damage those valves to the
42 point where they won't reseal or they leak. Granted
43 Greenville is a new ship and I haven't had that problem
44 here a lot, but on my last boat that was problem every
45 time you did an air pressure blow, it was a concern
46 that you were going to break something.

47 MR. HENRY: Do you keep a record of how many
48 you do?

49 LCDR MEADOR: It's not something -- we have a
50 program in the submarine force called the URO program.

51 It stands for Unrestricted Operations. As part of
52 that program, you test a lot of different systems on
53 the ship and so the emergency blow system is one of the

1 items tested under the Unrestricted Operations program.
2 And so that is kept -- that record of satisfactory
3 emergency blows is kept, but it's only kept on the ones
4 that you do specifically for that. For example, if it
5 says, do this every year, then I would be able to show
6 you records, all the way back to when the ship was
7 built, that we'd satisfactory performed at every year.
8 It doesn't account for other ones that occur in
9 between. It would do for our own sake.
10 MR. HENRY: Okay.
11 LCDR MEADOR: And the emergency blow system,
12 if I did maintenance on it, I also would have to test
13 it after that too and it wouldn't show that.
14 MR. HENRY: When you go the VHF, the hand-
15 held VHF up
16 LCDR MEADOR: Uh-huh.
17 MR. HENRY: -- who were you communicating
18 with?
19 LCDR MEADOR: The Captain was communicating
20 with the Coast Guard.
21 MR. HENRY: Do you know who in the Coast
22 Guard?
23 LCDR MEADOR: I think he was saying, either
24 Coast Guard Group Honolulu or Coast Guard -- I don't -
25 I wasn't paying attention of who he was talking to
26 because I was positioning the ship and I was doing a
27 lot of work with the outboard to try and find the best
28 position of the ship to recover the raft and he was
29 doing a lot of the communicating at that point.
30 MR. HENRY: At that point, you still have the
31 con and the deck?
32 LCDR MEADOR: Yes, sir. Yes, sir. I
33 retained both the deck and the con from the time I took
34 the watch until I got relieved about 1630.
35 MR. HENRY: At any time, while you were up on
36 the bridge, did anything come in VHF directing you all
37 for specific actions for a search?
38 LCDR MEADOR: Nothing, specifically, for a
39 search. At one point, one of the Coast Guard units
40 called Greenville was leaving the area and I had
41 reported back that negative Greenville is not leaving
42 the area, we're continuing the search, and that was
43 about it.
44 MR. HENRY: Okay, your comment about
45 requesting that you stay out of the search area --
46 LCDR MEADOR: Uh-huh. Uh-huh.
47 MR. HENRY: What was that in respect to?
48 LCDR MEADOR: Well, it wasn't stay out of
49 search area, but it was request that you stand off
50 because the forty-one and the RHI were transferring
51 people and I think the wash coming from us was
52 disrupting the seas enough that it was upsetting that
53 personnel transfer.

1 MR. HENRY: So, they're the ones that made
2 the request?

3 LCDR MEADOR: Right, it was the forty-one or
4 the RHI. I don't know which it was, but they requested
5 that we stand off. And it was stand off from them, not
6 stand off from the search area.

7 MR. HENRY: And you were in communication
8 with both of those, the Captain is talking to them?

9 LCDR MEADOR: Yes. I don't know which was
10 which, but very much our concern was to find out
11 whether they had contact with the captain of the vessel
12 and whether or not all personnel were accounted for.

13 MR. HENRY: Was anybody injured in the raft
14 that required special medical assistance?

15 LCDR MEADOR: You couldn't tell. That's why
16 I asked my scope operator to take a look because he
17 could see better into the rafts. He had better, just
18 based on the periscope, he has a lot better
19 magnification and ability to do that.

20 But there was nobody immediately that
21 appeared -- most of the people in the rafts were up
22 looking, you know, resting on the sides, basically,
23 laying on the side of the raft, against the side of the
24 raft. The tent structure that was over most of the
25 rafts prevented from seeing a lot of the internals of
26 the raft.

27 MR. HENRY: I think we've heard from several
28 different sources that had there been somebody in the
29 water --

30 LCDR MEADOR: We would have sent swimmers in
31 there unquestionably. I wouldn't have -- I probably
32 would have sent them in with the direction to take this
33 person to the raft and remain in that raft. I don't
34 know that I would have tried to recover the swimmer.

35 MR. HENRY: Could your swimmers have got --
36 could they have deployed with any sort of medical kits
37 or anything to help the people injured?

38 LCDR MEADOR: We're set up for a lot of the
39 medical care on board the ship. Everything is done
40 with the intent of bringing somebody back to the ship.
41 So I could have probably come up with a kit to send
42 out, but I don't know if they carry -- I don't have any
43 specific details on it, but I don't suspect that they
44 carry medical equipment, but we could easily find that
45 out.

46 MR. HENRY: So, would there have been a need
47 to have launched swimmers if there would have been
48 people injured in the raft, in your opinion, were not
49 getting appropriate medical care?

50 LCDR MEADOR: The only issue with that is I
51 have -- by the time the scene had developed, I had
52 Coast Guard inbound in less than forty minutes. I
53 already had a Coast Guard helo in the area. I could

1 have sent somebody over there to do first aid, if I had
2 known there was someone -- it was an option, but, you
3 know, if given the opportunity to analyze it very
4 carefully.

5 I think, realistically, the best thing for
6 these people was to let the Coast Guard show up and
7 provide that attention. If there's a life threatening
8 injury that we knew about, we could have come up with a
9 way to either get that person on board or get medical
10 assistance from the submarine over there. The problem
11 is you do have a known quantity of how hard it's going
12 to be to get somebody on board and that's a life
13 risking event versus the medical condition and at that
14 point, you'd -- but I didn't have that.

15 MR. HENRY: Did any of your four swimmers
16 have medical training?

17 LCDR MEADOR: I don't recall. As part of the
18 diver qualification program, they go through some basic
19 physiology and medical -- they learn to treat dive-
20 related problems, I know that, but I don't know what
21 additional medical qualifications they have.

22 MR. HENRY: Did you have comms with the
23 aircraft that were flying?

24 LCDR MEADOR: Yes.

25 MR. HENRY: Both the C-130 and the
26 helicopter?

27 LCDR MEADOR: Uh-huh. -- what's --

28 MR. HENRY: Bridge-to-bridge?

29 LCDR MEADOR: VHF.

30 MR. HENRY: VHF?

31 LCDR MEADOR: Yes, sir.

32 MR. HENRY: Did you have a discussion with
33 the Captain as far as making the assessment in light of
34 the risks of opening the hatch, the forward escape
35 hatch or deploying people down the sail?

36 LCDR MEADOR: Yes, and I don't remember who
37 initiated what part of the conversation, but overall
38 the group of the four of us and we're all pretty
39 experienced up there, agreed that, unless we saw people
40 in the water or people in need of medical assistance,
41 we were holding the swimmers. Because, at one point,
42 there was a discussion of should they go down to the
43 main deck. We said, no, let's wait here until we see
44 somebody and we never did.

45 MR. HENRY: Okay. We talked about getting
46 search directions from the Coast Guard and I think your
47 response was you never got anything specific --

48 LCDR MEADOR: No.

49 MR. HENRY: -- in the way of search planning
50 or directions from the Coast Guard on anything to do
51 with a SAR plan?

52 LCDR MEADOR: No. We didn't receive a SAR
53 plan, but the search that continued on later that

1 night, we were asked to actually move out of the
2 immediate search area because -- I don't know the
3 details of it. We were already out of there by my mid
4 watch, but we searched the fringe of the designated
5 search area.

6 MR. HENRY: The forward escape hatch is
7 located fifteen, twenty feet aft of the sail?
8 LCDR MEADOR: Yes, sir.

9 MR. HENRY: What other accesses forward of
10 the sail are there?
11 LCDR MEADOR: There's the weapons shipping
12 hatch and it's not designed for -- as you observed, the
13 forward escape hatch is designed that it can be opened
14 and drained and have a lot of features associated being
15 able to be submerged. The weapons shipping hatch is
16 not. It's not a bi-level hatch at all. It's simply --
17 it's the hatch that you would normally go into in port
18 because it provides easy access to the ship, but it
19 doesn't have any protection around it. Right underneath
20 it is sonar equipment and everything else. So it's not
21 a hatch we would use when at sea.

22 Now, that shows the forward weapons hatch.
23 That's the one we use -- if you just came down a little
24 ladder right in front of the cabin and the access to
25 the state room, that's the weapons shipping hatch.

26 MR. HENRY: What weapons do you ship?
27 LCDR MEADOR: The torpedoes get lighted
28 through there.

29 MR. HENRY: Through there?
30 LCDR MEADOR: Yeah, they go down three decks.
31 They come in at an angle and go through there and go
32 down.

33 MR. HENRY: But there are no procedures or
34 you have never observed that hatch ever being opened
35 underway?
36 LCDR MEADOR: We've opened it at anchor
37 before, but, if the weather started picking up, we
38 usually shut it and shift access to the forward escape
39 trunk.

40 MR. HENRY: We talked about the last man
41 overboard drills, sometime last year before you went
42 into the yard.
43 LCDR MEADOR: It was the summer of, yes, the
44 summer of 2000. So probably July of 2000 is, I think,
45 was our last drill.

46 MR. HENRY: Do you know how often they do
47 that a year, that drill?
48 LCDR MEADOR: No, maybe -- it's done in
49 groups. They do it -- you know -- we'll do it five or
50 ten times, like in July and it probably won't get done
51 for another six months after that. So it's not exactly
52 something that is done weekly.

53 MR. HENRY: There's no requirement that it be

1 done monthly and logged or anything like that?
2 LCDR MEADOR: No, sir.
3 MR. HENRY: You told me about the use of the
4 thruster.
5 LCDR MEADOR: I'm sorry. There might be --
6 the joint training manual provides some guidance for
7 drills like that and I don't recall on that. So there
8 might be something in the joint training manual on the
9 man overboard drills.
10 MR. HENRY: Okay, with the exception of
11 February 9, have you ever participated in a real rescue
12 or a man overboard?
13 LCDR MEADOR: On a submarine, no. We had a
14 swimmer, during one of the swim calls, that was -- it
15 looked like he was just kind of getting tired and we
16 had to send our top side swimmer in after him, but
17 that's not -- when we're stopped and it's fairly calm
18 seas, and you're already prepared to do it, it's not
19 really a man overboard at that point.
20 MR. HENRY: Okay. And your estimate was that
21 the people were in the raft were for about forty-five
22 minutes?
23 LCDR MEADOR: Yes, sir, before the Coast
24 Guard arrived.
25 MR. HENRY: Right.
26 LCDR MEADOR: It was probably sometime after
27 that before they finally got back to the beach.
28 MR. HENRY: We need to check on the camera.
29 We asked about the video, but we didn't ask about the
30 camera. Can you remember whether the people up there
31 manning the periscope -- from my understanding, it's
32 not something you can look at for hours on end without
33 --
34 LCDR MEADOR: Your best bet is to keep people
35 fresh on it because then their eyes are less fatigued
36 and they're more alert, so you don't want to run
37 somebody too many hours on a periscope.
38 MR. HENRY: I'm just going through a separate
39 list of questions that were sent us to make sure we've
40 covered them.
41 MR. WHITE: Was the gyro on the periscope --
42 whoever -- or they discovered it was out of -- did the
43 tests after?
44 LCDR MEADOR: I haven't seen the formal
45 results of the test.
46 MR. WHITE: Okay.
47 LCDR MEADOR: But the previous -- used the
48 gyro. You're talking about the gyro head window
49 stabilization? I used that and it worked fine during
50 the previous underway -- prepared that.
51 MR. WHITE: Do you normally use that?
52 LCDR MEADOR: I do. It's an individual
53 officer deck preference. Maybe it's a level of

1 knowledge. Maybe some of them don't know that it
2 exists, but it just -- you turn it on, turn it off and
3 -- I like it.

4 MR. WHITE: Did you happen to scan in the
5 forty-five seconds or minute you had, do you know if it
6 was on --

7 LCDR MEADOR: No, sir, I don't know. It
8 would typically be off. It would typically be off and
9 turned on as the officer got to the --

10 MR. WHITE: Do you remember turning it on?

11 LCDR MEADOR: I definitely didn't turn it on.
12 I know I didn't. And I didn't check. It's not --
13 like I said, it helps if you're on the scope for long
14 periods of time, but if you're only on there for a few
15 minutes, you wouldn't ordinarily use it. It's an aid
16 that helps you out.

17 MR. HENRY: Does the -- are you short on
18 time?

19 LCDR MEADOR: No, I was just thinking of
20 fishing down --

21 MR. HENRY: Do you carry extra life jackets?

22 LCDR MEADOR: Yes, sir. I don't recall how
23 many on board. Petty Officer Darby, like I said, he's
24 the First Lieutenant so he can tell you about that.

25 MR. HENRY: Okay. What were you wearing when
26 you were on top side?

27 LCDR MEADOR: I was wearing a safety harness.

28 MR. HENRY: A safety harness?

29 LCDR MEADOR: Yes, sir.

30 MR. HENRY: No life jacket?

31 LCDR MEADOR: No, sir.

32 MR. HENRY: You don't wear it?

33 LCDR MEADOR: If you have a safety harness,
34 there's no need for a life jacket because you actually
35 latch in the cockpit area.

36 MR. HENRY: Okay. You were operating in a
37 reduce crew size and you have a man overboard, or
38 suspect you have a man overboard, how do you know you
39 have somebody missing? How do you know you have
40 everybody on board?

41 LCDR MEADOR: One of the things we do every
42 time we get underway is we send off a sailing list and
43 that's a very rigorous process and if you transfer one
44 person of the boat, you have to send back a new -- an
45 update to your sailing list. So there's always a
46 record on shore of exactly who's underway. I can
47 guarantee you there's -- somewhere there's a sailing
48 list that included all the visitors we had that day and
49 everybody on the ship. It's always sent off when we're
50 underway.

51 MR. HENRY: Say you have a situation where
52 you think you've lost somebody --

53 LCDR MEADOR: Uh-huh.

1 MR. HENRY: -- this is not like standing on
2 the ship where you can line up and count heads --
3 LCDR MEADOR: Right.
4 MR. HENRY: -- how do you account for the
5 people you're responsible for and how do you ensure
6 you've got an accurate --
7 LCDR MEADOR: We'd check them versus the
8 list. But if you think about the nature and the design
9 of a submarine, the fact that while were underway,
10 typically, the only hatch that's open is going to the
11 bridge and one of the things we do when going to the
12 bridge is you tell the Chief of Watch and the Chief of
13 Watch logs who's up on the bridge.
14 When you come down from the bridge, you say,
15 engineer down from the bridge or Captain, you know,
16 Officer of Deck and look out remain. And so they keep
17 balancing that check so, if who's up on the bridge
18 versus who's down below they always know who's going up
19 there. So you shrink down the problem of missing
20 people when you only have one access and you carefully
21 control that one access.
22 MR. HENRY: Okay, it could become more
23 complicated if you open the forward escape hatch --
24 LCDR MEADOR: In response to a casualty.
25 MR. HENRY: Can you see the forward escape
26 hatch from the console of the bridge?
27 LCDR MEADOR: I could see the -- yes. I can
28 see the forward escape hatch. You lean out the side of
29 the sail, but you can tell that it's taking water over
30 it or not.
31 MR. HENRY: Now, were you running around in
32 your snorkel when you were up on the bridge?
33 LCDR MEADOR: We were running the low
34 pressure blower. We had the induction masts -- we were
35 taking in air through the induction masts. That's part
36 of our surface ventilate line-up.
37 MR. HENRY: That's not the snorkel?
38 LCDR MEADOR: The snorkel -- what we refer to
39 as snorkeling is operating the diesel.
40 MR. HENRY: Right.
41 LCDR MEADOR: The surface ventilate line-up
42 brings in air through the induction mast, which is the
43 same mast you use for snorkeling of the diesel. It
44 brings in air through the induction mast and it
45 recirculates it through the ship and actually exhausts
46 it out the bridge access hatch. So you have air flow
47 constantly up on the bridge, a constant air flow -- you
48 said you did go to the Bridge on the Asheville?
49 MR. HENRY: Uh-huh.
50 LCDR MEADOR: You may have noticed that. You
51 notice it more when other hatches are shut and there's
52 no place for it to go?
53 MR. HENRY: So that was the genesis of your

1 comment about air flow out when we went up?
2 LCDR MEADOR: The nature of a submarine is
3 you're doing -- you use up air for different loads on
4 board and when you do air charges and various things
5 like that and so you would change the pressure in the
6 submarine relative to the atmospheric pressure. And
7 one of the required actions on surfacing a ship is to
8 crack open the bridge access upper hatch and verify air
9 flow -- in or out. You make that report.
10 MR. HENRY: Can you physically open that
11 hatch --
12 LCDR MEADOR: If it's a vacuum?
13 MR. HENRY: Yeah.
14 LCDR MEADOR: I think you could. If it was a
15 big enough vacuum, obviously, it wouldn't -- I don't
16 think -- I've never had that situation. Air flow is
17 almost always out. Just based on the fact that you're
18 taking in air from the low pressure blowers is taking
19 it air from the induction mast at that point in time,
20 so you almost always do that -- put a little bit of
21 pressure in the ship.
22 MR. HENRY: Okay. I don't have anything
23 more. We conclude at 1535.
24 (Whereupon, at 3:35 p.m., the interview was concluded.)