

Liberty Whistleblower Killed

Insider into the attack on the *USS Liberty* dies in untimely single-car auto accident

By Mark Glenn

As if out of a spy novel, a former U.S. intelligence officer about to go public with damning information proving U.S. government involvement in the attack on the *USS Liberty* 40 years ago has died in an unexplained automobile accident on his way home from a conference sponsored by survivors of the brutal attack on the American ship.

Richard Thompson, or "Dick" as he was known to friends, was returning to his home in Melbourne, Fla., Sunday morning after attending ceremonies marking the 40th anniversary of the attack on the *USS Liberty* when his vehicle crossed into a median of Interstate 95 in Florence County, S.C. at 12:25 p.m. and struck a tree. According to the scant information available, he was instantly killed and witnesses to the crash say he did not swerve to avoid hitting something and he did not hit his brakes. A police investigation is underway, and it is not known at this time if there will be an autopsy. A final report on the accident is due to be released five days from the time of this writing.

Upon hearing of his death, many researchers, journalists and survivors interested in keeping the story of the *USS Liberty* alive—including *American Free Press*—were suspicious not merely for the fact that he was a close friend of the Liberty Veterans Association (LVA) and helped them with moral and financial support, but because he was about to go public with information that, in his own words, "had never before been published."

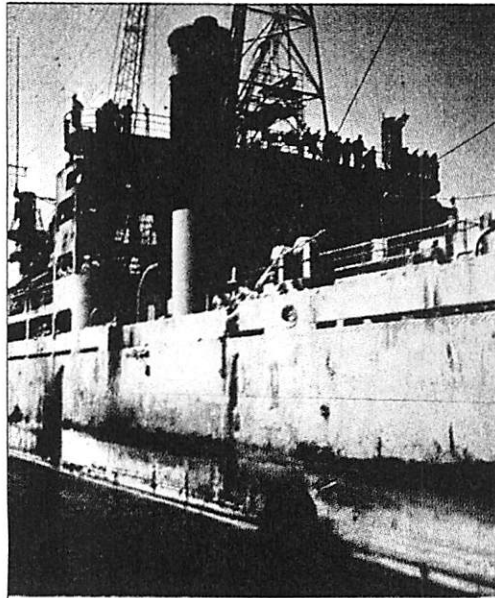
In particular, the information he was about to divulge dealt with something recently discussed by *American Free Press* in an article by this reporter involving a little-known but highly important item swirling amidst the *Liberty* affair known as "Operation Cyanide."

According to the information available, Operation Cyanide was a joint U.S.-Israeli plan to bring the United States into the Arab-Israeli War of 1967 with the ultimate goal of using American military might to drive the Soviets and their influence out of the Middle East.

The covert plan was the topic of the book by Peter Hounam, a BBC investigative journalist and a close friend of Thompson. The book was named *Operation Cyanide* and was covered in the BBC documentary entitled *USS Liberty: Dead in the Water*. (Available from FAB for \$25 (VHS only). See page 16 for order form.)

Thompson funded the production and distribution of both the book and the documentary and held the copyrights to both of them as well. At the *USS Liberty* reunion, taking place over the weekend of June 8, Thompson signed over rights to the DVD to the LVA and had just concluded a deal with this reporter for AFP to begin reprinting the book *Operation Cyanide*.

Through this reporter, AFP contacted Thompson in March and began regular discussions over the phone with



BIGGER PLOT? Photo above shows torpedo damage to *Liberty's* hull. Was the attack on the *Liberty* part of a much larger scheme to engage the Soviets in the Mideast? Did Thompson die because he was going to speak out about "Operation Cyanide"?

him about what he knew involving Operation Cyanide. In the many hours that were spent interviewing him, he was reluctant to discuss any specific information he had over the phone and suggested that discussions take place face-to-face. A visit was to take place between this reporter and Thompson in late April for a series of interviews but unfortunately had to be cancelled because of scheduling conflicts. It was agreed then that Thompson and this reporter would meet in Washington the weekend of the *USS Liberty* reunion where frank discussions could take place.

At the reunion, this reporter sat down with Thompson where he began the discussion by dictating a list of names that should be contacted by AFP. Judging by the information Thompson provided, these individuals all have intimate knowledge of the mechanics of Operation Cyanide.

It was agreed that Thompson would be willing to meet again with AFP on as many occasions as necessary in order to flesh out the picture of what happened that day in 1967 in which 34 of America's sons were killed by Israel. Thompson ended the discussion by taking the arms of this reporter in his own hands, fixing a serious stare into this reporter's eyes and saying "We are so close, so close that it may already be too late to do anything, but for the sake of our country it has to be done anyway. We're all counting on you, son. . . . Don't let us down."

Thompson was cryptic about his background. What is known is that he was a naval officer holding the rank of

commander and that he worked with some intelligence service, although he refused to specify which branch it was. He once quipped that he was the only naval officer who did not have a uniform and that he once had to borrow one in order to have an official picture taken. What this indicated was that he was involved with clandestine services where no uniform existed.

Thompson was friendly to the native peoples of the Middle East where he spent much time and was an avowed enemy of the Israelis, who he claimed killed his best friend, also an intelligence operative. Shortly after he produced the documentary *Dead in the Water*, the Jewish community in Britain initiated legal actions to prevent its release and Thompson was forced to spend some \$200,000 of his own money defending the documentary.

Thompson once gave away the two purple hearts he received after nearly having had his head blown off in a dangerous operation to the "two pretty nurses" who were taking care of him.

In other personal accounts that he relayed to this reporter, his movements and activities were monitored by Israeli operatives. In one case, two individuals whom he described as "Jewish men" driving a car with New York license plates were staking out his home. One call to the local police chief—a personal friend of Thompson—resulted in these two individuals being handcuffed, taken to the airport and told to go back to New York and to never visit Florida again.

Thompson was greatly loved by the men of the LVA and their families. They are devastated by this recent loss. Thompson was a tireless, selfless individual who wanted no other reward than to see the truth told concerning not only what took place 40 years ago but also the danger that Americans face today by backing Israel.

As if he had a premonition that his time was approaching, Thompson recently made known to the LVA that in the event of his death he did not want anyone wasting money on flowers for his funeral but rather that such individuals should send money to the LVA so that the truth concerning the attack on the *USS Liberty* could continue to emerge.

Readers of AFP should rest assured that America's last real newspaper will follow every lead in uncovering not only the facts concerning Thompson's unexpected death but also the story behind what took place 40 years ago off the coast of Gaza to a U.S. ship called *Liberty*. In pursuance of the noble goals of patriotism and truth that Thompson personally made such an intimate part of his life, AFP will say "damn the torpedoes" and will not give up the ship, just as he and the other survivors of the attack did 40 years ago and every day since. ★

Persons wanting to donate in the name of Richard Thompson can do so by contacting the USS Liberty Veterans Association, c/o Moe Shafer, 4994 Lower Roswell Rd., Suite 33, Marietta, GA 30068.