

The USS Liberty: Israel's Unspoken Role, A Test for Americans

By [Phil Restino](#)

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June 8, 1967. The USS Liberty, a U.S. Navy intelligence ship, was stationed in international waters in the Mediterranean Sea off the Sinai coast, while the U.S. ally Israel was engaged in its Six-Day War with the Arab nations.

Israeli planes had flown over the *Liberty* many times that morning, sometimes close enough that crewmen could see the Israeli pilots wave back to them as the crewmen casually sunned themselves on the ship's deck.

However, later in the day, the Israeli military returned to carry out an unprovoked two-hour air and naval attack on the basically defenseless ship. The idea was to sink the *Liberty*, leaving no survivors. Yet due to the great courage and efforts of the ship's crew and captain, William L. McGonagle, the *Liberty* survived and stayed afloat.

Rescue aircraft from the nearby 6th Fleet were launched to aid the *Liberty*, but were recalled by direct orders from President Lyndon B. Johnson. Never before in the history of the U.S. Navy had a rescue mission been recalled when an American ship was under attack.

The White House proceeded to cover up the truth about the attack on the *Liberty*, and to this day, the corporate media and our U.S. representatives and senators who would rather not deal with it continue to cover it up.

In October 2003, an Independent Commission of Inquiry Into the Attack on the *USS Liberty*, co-chaired by the former chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff retired Adm. Thomas J. Moorer, and former assistant commandant of the Marine Corps, Medal of Honor recipient Gen. Raymond G. Davis, issued the following statement among its findings:

"Israel committed acts of murder against American servicemen and an act of war against the United States."

"Freedom isn't free" is more than sending American troops into harm's way. It requires participatory citizenship from the American people here at home, which entails holding accountable those in our servant government who have violated the U.S. Constitution and otherwise broken the law.

It is when we the people do not hold those in our government accountable for their crimes that we allow for similar or worse crimes against the American people to continue, and there have been many since that shameful day in June 1967.

Right now, justice for the men of the *USS Liberty* is long overdue. We owe them.

“Thank you for your service” and singing “God Bless America” during the seventh-inning stretch don’t cut it. Demanding from our servant government full and proper accountability for the 34 American servicemen killed and 174 wounded by the foreign state of Israel is the test before you, the reader. Let’s see how you do. So far, we’ve been failing miserably.

Phil Restino, who lives in Port Orange, is a member of the Dr. Bob Bowman Memorial Chapter of the nonprofit peace-and-justice organization We Are Change-Central Florida. For more information about the organization, email restinop@aol.com.

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