

SH2 [REDACTED] was interviewed via telephone by LCDR Tracy Riker, JAGC, USN, on 16 November 2000. SH2 [REDACTED] resides in [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] A summary of his interview is provided below.

SH2 [REDACTED] was standing Petty Officer of the Watch (POOW) at the time of the explosion.

1. Were you briefed on the threat situation in Aden?

No. Prior to deployment SH2 [REDACTED] did attend a counter-terrorism brief, which consisted of a videotape and summary of prior acts of terrorism on Americans in the Middle East, but no specific brief on the threat in Aden was given to the crew.

What was your understanding of the threat?

SH2 [REDACTED] believed terrorism was high in the Middle East. He believed there was always a chance of someone harming them.

2. Were you briefed on the security/force protection plan for Aden?

No. The only brief he received was the ROE brief the ship's crew received prior to deployment.

3. Were the rules of engagement for small boat threats ever discussed with you?

No. Prior to deployment, the ship's crew received a ROE brief and were handed ROE cards; however, no specific ROE was given regarding small boat threats.

What was your understanding of the rules?

Only time you may draw and use your weapon is when your life or the life of one of your crewmembers is in danger. SH2 Freeman indicated that talk must be the first approach. The last measure is to pull and fire your weapon.

4. What was your understanding of how you were to keep unauthorized boats away from the ship?

If the small boats fired at the ship, then the ship could fire back at the small boat. On the morning of the explosion, SH2 Freeman indicated that the ship had internal and external

and ammunition. Everyone on the quarterdeck watch had on bulletproof vests and battle helmets.

Was this discussed with you prior to your assuming the watch?

No. Although SH2 [REDACTED] was trained on the Small Craft Attack Team (SCAT) approximately 1 month before the explosion. He stated that he was trained to man the .50 and .60 cal guns if word is passed that there is a small craft threat. Even then, he indicated, he is not permitted to fire that weapon until instructed by the OOD to do so. On the day of the explosion, the SCAT Team had not been manned-up.

5. Did anyone tell you what boats were authorized to be along side?

No.

6. How many boats do you remember coming along side? What order, and what were they doing?

SH2 [REDACTED] remembered he had pass the word for two trash barges during that watch. Because he was on the starboard side of the ship, he did not see these barges but knew the first came alongside port at 1000-1015 and the second back AFT at 1100-1110.

7. Were you told to report any suspected threats to the ship or crew to a particular person in your chain of command?

Yes. Any suspected threats are to be reported to the OOD. SH2 Freeman believes the OOD is then responsible to report that threat to the CDO.

8. If you saw a suspicious vessel near your ship, what were you trained to do?

SH2 [REDACTED] indicated he was trained to report that threat to his OOD, who, in return will report to the CDO. If the word is passed regarding a small craft threat, then SH2 [REDACTED] would man-up the SCAT team.

9. Did you have any specific training on when it is appropriate to use deadly force when faced with a threat to your ship and/or crew?

Yes. SH2 [REDACTED] attended the pre-deployment ROE brief and he was given a ROE card.

Under what circumstances do you believe you could use deadly force?

SH2 [REDACTED] believes the ROE allow him to use deadly force when there is a direct threat to the ship, himself or to his shipmates and when all their lives are in danger.

10. When was the last time you had firearms training?

In May/June 2000. SH2 [REDACTED] believes this is required annual training.

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