The USS LIBERTY (AGTR5) was a Naval intelligence ship attacked by the Israeli Navy and Air Force on June 8, 1967. The prolong attack left the LIBERTY with 820+ rocket & cannon holes, napalm fires, and a 40 ft torpedo hole in the starboard side.
USS LIBERTY leaves Norfolk on May 2, 1967 and docks in Abidjan, Africa for liberty call a month later.
Leaving the Atlantic for the Mediterranean

XO Lt Commander Armstrong with chiefs Lambert, Benkert & Smith. Armstrong & Smith died(80)
USS LIBERTY receives orders from Pentagon to proceed to Rota, Spain for supplies and personnel. Her ultimate destination was the Mediterranean to be close to the increasing tension between the Arab countries and Israel. The crews liberty was cut from 4.5 to 1.5 days in Africa.
The LIBERTY proceeds to its station approximately 15 miles off shore from the Gaza strip area. She traveled at 5 knots on June 7 and 8th. The converted W.W.II transport ship was armed with only 4-50cal machine guns.
Lt George Golden, the ship's Engineering Officer

Captain McGonagle sunbathing about 2 hrs before attack

Lt Cmdr Armstrong died soon after this photo
The hour long attack was preceded by Israeli reconnaissance planes. At 2pm Mirage fighters inflicted 820+ rocket & cannon holes in the Liberty. Nine sailors died from the Israeli Air Force attack.
Israeli reconnaissance plane that circled the ship about an hour before the attack. The pilot was heard reporting to HQ, he saw an American flag & men sunning themselves on deck.

Manned gun tub before attack (79)
The fighters were followed by Mystere bombers dropping napalm. While some fought fires others carried some of the 171 wounded to the mess deck where Doctor, corpsman, & crewman tried to save lives.
After the bombers came torpedo boats.
1 of the 5 torpedos created a 40 foot hole in the starboard side of the ship.
25 more sailors lost their lives and remained in the water filled compartments for a week, while the ship and crew limped 1000 miles to Malta.
Israeli torpedo boat during attack (77)
The attack started at 2pm on June 8. Although the 6th fleet’s attempt to help was recalled by the White house, the USS America, Davis & Massey arrived mid day on June 9th to evacuate wounded.
Port side looking aft toward TRSSCOMM moon relay antenna (91)

2 of 820+ rocket & machine gun holes (88)

Main deck, port side, looking aft (93)

Forward deck house showing rocket holes plugged with rags (40)

Rocket hole in bridge deck plating (61)
USS LIBERTY seen from USS America (14)

View looking forward, showing 15 degree list (84)
Lt Commander Dave Lewis was temporarily blinded by the torpedo blast (49)

USS Liberty Exhibit
A week later, traveling at 5 knots with a 15 degree list, the crew puts the ship in dry-dock at Malta. After 2 days of cleaning up their shipmates in the torpedoed compartment, some of the crew are flown home.
Caskets being loaded in Malta (23)

These men didn’t come home (48)

USS Liberty Exhibit
Walking wounded attending the memorial ceremony (45)
Press conference, USS America (47)

Walking wounded attending the memorial ceremony (46)
Torpedo hole, seen at waterline(31)
USS Liberty Exhibit
Looking forward at rocket holes in right side of bridge area (dwp)

Aft looking forward on starboard side. Missing burned whale boat & rocket holes in this area (dwp)

Starboard midship 50cal gun mount with rocket hole on left. Missing ships (whale) boat burned by napalm fire on right (dwp)

Dammaged ladder (68)
Crewman was blown out of forward starboard gun mount by rocket blast (dwp).

Forward starboard gun mount were shipmate was lost in rocket blast. USS Davis anti-aircraft gun in background (dwp).
Herb Peetoom on aft deck near entrance to after steering with 2 of 820+ rocket & machine gun holes (dwp)

2 of 820+ rocket & machine gun holes in aft port bulkhead on main deck (dwp)
Air ducts exploded from torpedo blast (25)

Shoring (supports) built to keep flooded compartment from collapsing (32)

Damage Control Officer, Ensign John Scott, examines shoring (35)
The 40ft torpedo hole seen during drydock in Malta. Most of the hole is below the water line. Note shipmate(dwp)
Other crewman stayed aboard to bring the ship home, where she was eventually scrapped.
Part of cleanup crew resting[18]

Don Pageler after 2 days in the research spaces were the torpedoes exploded. Picking up shipmates leaves a lasting scar(dwp)
Stern view, displaying normal steaming colors. The Israeli pilots & torpedomen claim they could not see this. During attack, an even larger flag was hoisted.

Stern view from air upon return to Norfolk.
Please “Remember the LIBERTY” and these 34 men.

William Allenbaugh
Gary Blanchard
Francis Brown
Jerry Converse
Jerry Goss
Lawrence Hayden
Alan Higgins
Richard Keene
Raymond Linn
Duane Marggraf
Anthony Mendle
James Pierce
Edward Rehmeyer
John Smith, Jr
John Spicher
Thomas Thornton
Stephen Toth
Philip Armstrong
Allen Blue
Ronnie Campbell
Robert Eisenberg
Curtis Graves
Warren Hersey
Carl Hoar
James Lenau
James Lupton
David Marlborough
Carl Nygren
Jack Raper
David Skolak
Melvin Smith
Alexander Thompson
Phillipe Tiedtke
Frederick Walton

USS Liberty Exhibit