

CUI

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Standard Form 901 (11-18)
Prescribed by GSA/ISOO | 32 CFR 2002

CUI

(b) (6)

17 Sep 09

Interview with (b) (6)

Date of Interview: 17 Sep 09

Time of Interview: 1146

Interviewers: (b) (6)

Respondent:

interviewer: So, good morning again. It's [redacted], senior investigating officer for the United States Coast Guard. We are doing a re-interview here on September 9, 2017 at 11:46. The individuals in the room could please introduce themselves.

interviewer: [redacted], deck watch officer, SME, Coast Guard Headquarters.

interviewer: And again, please state your name for the record.

respondent: Uh, [redacted].

interviewer: Uh, so again, we just had a few extra questions here. Kinda wanted to go over things one more time based on the information we've obtained since the last interview we had. Just a few, few leftover questions here. Uh, again from my notes before, you were stationed to the Antietam.

respondent: Correct.

interviewer: And so, you came on board the McCain at the end of May?

respondent: Right.

interviewer: That was like the 26th, 27th or so?

respondent: The beginning of the deployment, 26th, 27th.

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interviewer: Okay. And so again, they put you on the watch at Boatswain of the Watch?

respondent: Not immediately. They put me as a rotation like on the helm, aft lookout, bridge lookouts.

interviewer: Okay. Um, so when you are doing that rotation, is that as a qualified helmsmen, qualified lookout, or is that under instruction?

respondent: Qualified.

interviewer: Qualified.

interviewer: And so, was there a re-qualification process, or how did that work that they, any questions, any interviews?

respondent: No, it's like, it's on your uh, it's on your page 4, to see that you're qualified.

interviewer: Uh, okay. Were you also, so on the Antietam what watch station bills did you stand?

respondent: Boatswain of the Watch, lee helm, aft lookout.

interviewer: So pretty much the same things that they had you do on the McCain?

respondent: Right.

interviewer: Um, what's the control system on the Antietam?

respondent: What do you mean?

interviewer: Like, eh, like do they have IBNS? Is it touch screens? Is it actual mechanical throttles? What...?

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respondent: It's throttles.

interviewer: Okay. How about helm control?

respondent: It's a steering wheel.

interviewer: Okay, so they do not have IBNS?

respondent: No.

interviewer: They don't have any touch screens or anything like that for helm and throttle?

respondent: Not like, not like the McCain. Some of it might have been uh...

interviewer: Did you get underway on the Antietam?

respondent: Yes, but it's been like, it's been over a year.

interviewer: Okay.

interviewer: So when was the last, so again the Antietam has been in dry dock for the last year, is that correct?

respondent: Uh, we've been in the yards, just went into dry dock back in June.

interviewer: So, yards, June 16 and then the, and they were set to deploy in January of this year 17?

respondent: Uh, I think so.

interviewer: Okay. There was a casualty as they were getting underway, was that it?

respondent: Yes.

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interviewer: So, again you said you haven't, you hadn't stood watch on the Antietam for over a year. What watch station did you have when the vessel was getting underway? Like sea and anchor?

respondent: On the Antietam?

interviewer: Uh-um.

respondent: It would have been Boatswain of the Watch.

interviewer: Okay, so on the bridge?

respondent: Right.

interviewer: Alright, sorry, let me make sure that I'm, I'm making myself clear. As the Antietam was getting underway, the day of their casualty, your station for sea and anchor was...?

respondent: Boatswain of the Watch.

interviewer: Was Boatswain of the Watch. Okay, so you were on the bridge at the time of the casualty. Alright. Obviously, the Antietam can't get underway. They put you right over to the McCain for deployment in May. The McCain puts you in as helm, lee helm lookout that same rotation as a qualified watch stander. Um, what kind of training did they provide to you on the IBNS system?

respondent: Um, basically how to, you know, change speed, change HPUs, change control, location and control.

interviewer: Okay.

interviewer: So, you, you received that training after you were qualified, and they just kind of accepted you as qualified and then you received the training.

respondent: No, I was already qualified on the Antietam...

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interviewer: Right.

respondent: ...and then they just put me in the rotation. They just kinda went through it a little bit, made sure I was up to date.

interviewer: You didn't have PQS or anything?

respondent: No.

interviewer: So, you went through the qualified watches, just kinda played with the system and made sure you were familiar with how to do things?

respondent: Right.

interviewer: Okay.

interviewer: And that watch rotation, was that 1 and 3?

respondent: Yes, it was 3 sections.

interviewer: 3 sections, okay.

interviewer: You showed up the day they sailed?

respondent: Yes.

interviewer: And, uh, again, so you're on the 21st, that morning, you have the 02 to 07 watch.

respondent: Yes.

interviewer: What time did you wake up that morning?

respondent: Uh, probably 0115.

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interviewer: And what time would you have gotten on the bridge?

respondent: 0130.

interviewer: Okay. And again, your responsibilities as Boatswain of the Watch is really to kinda manage the helm lookouts, make sure that if there is anything requested you assist with that, but it's really making sure the enlisted watch standers are, um, trying to fish for the right words here?

respondent: Doing their job?

interviewer: Doing their job, there we go. About how um how much time was each watch stander on before you rotated them around?

respondent: An hour.

interviewer: An hour. Is that, uh, like a Navy standard or it's just whenever you feel or they feel "hey, it's time to switch."

respondent: It's, uh, kinda just how we feel.

interviewer: Okay. Um, we've been told that at some point I guess either the OOD or the CO, somebody, wanted the steering to be in its backup manual, I think is the name of it?

respondent: Yes.

interviewer: Do you recall when that might have, that switch might have happened?

respondent: Uh, I don't remember exactly when.

interviewer: Do you know if that may have happened before or after the modified nav, navigation detail?

respondent: I think it might have been after.

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interviewer: Do you know how they activated that?

respondent: It's a drop-down menu on the screen.

interviewer: And did you activate that, or did, was it [REDACTED]

respondent: Uh, I'm not sure who activated it. It was not me.

interviewer: Okay. So, uh, again, 5 o'clock rolls around. Folks are coming up to switch out to let folks get breakfast before sea and anchor. Uh, at what time did [REDACTED] (b) come up for to switch out the helm?

respondent: Um, he came up, well he came up probably like 5:15, 5:20 or so. He started out on the port bridge wing and then came, came inside to relieve the helm about, yeah, he probably relieved the helm at like 5:21, 5:22.

interviewer: And was that something you had directed or, who made that decision "Hey, [REDACTED], come over here."

respondent: Well, it was dark so I didn't even know who was up there at first and then I guess one of the other oncoming watch standers went out there and ah, to the bridge wing and I guessed (b) (6). I don't know if they had a discussion or not. They decided who was going to go and [REDACTED] came inside.

interviewer: So, "hey, I'm here to stand watch for helm." "Okay, come on in." I guess he did. Was there was there any discussion to you or do you think, did he go straight to the helm?

respondent: He just went straight to the helm.

interviewer: Okay. So, when did you realize that they had switched out?

respondent: Uh, like as soon as they were doing it.

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interviewer: Okay. Do they have to do any check in to you or do they report right to the CON?

respondent: They just report to the CON.

interviewer: Okay. So, what was the plan then with (b) (6)?

respondent: Uh, they wanted somebody at standby to lee helm because we were doing a lot of speed changes, course changes, whatever, and so, uh, that's where they wanted (b) (6) to stand.

interviewer: When you say they...?

respondent: Like the, the officer of the deck.

interviewer: Do you remember specifically hearing it from the OOD or was it JOOD or? Who told you?

respondent: It was both. I heard it from JOOD and OOD.

interviewer: And those were, who were they, who were those officers?

respondent: The OOD was (b) (6) and then JOOD was (b) (6).

interviewer: Okay.

interviewer: Okay. Um, when they said they wanted somebody at the lee helm did they specifically call a name or point to somebody and say "I want that person."

respondent: uh

interviewer: Or did they just say "we need somebody."

respondent: Yeah, I think had pointed to (b) (6) because he was right there, he was just getting off the helm so he was available.

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interviewer: Okay. So, we are standing up lee helm now, some things need to be switched over to that console, to that screen. Uh, who was it that was initiating that transfer?

respondent: Uh, that was, well, they didn't ask him specifically like to man up lee helm, they just asked him to standby so he could help with...

interviewer: Okay.

respondent: ...assist with speed changes, course changes. And then, but, you know they just he was going to be standing at the lee helm so I asked officer of the deck for permission to switch thrust control from helm to lee helm, and he gave...

interviewer: Okay.

respondent: ...we got the permission, started transferring, and that's when we lost steering.

interviewer: So, I was definitely, I was jumping ahead there. I was putting some words in your mouth, and I appreciate that clarification. So, the initial request from the OOD/JOOD was "let's keep [REDACTED] here"...

respondent: Yes.

interviewer: ...to assist [REDACTED] with operations and so they have everything at the helm stations.

respondent: Right.

interviewer: And then was it you or, who brought up the idea of "well why don't we just actually transfer things to the lee helm?"

respondent: That was me.

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interviewer: Okay. Okay. So, you asked for permission. You get the permission. Say, yep, go right ahead. Who, who starts, so if you are going, how do you get to those throttles to the lee helm?

respondent: Above the throttle display there is a, above each one there is a drop-down menu, and you press the location, and then the other, whatever location has to accept. So, I sent on this particular occasion sent it to the lee helm and then the lee helm accepted.

interviewer: Okay. At that time when you are looking at the screen, what indicators are you seeing on the steering side. Are there any flashing lights? Are there, what station does it say the control is in? What are you seeing on your big picture screen.

respondent: Well, for actual like steering, it says uh, it said location like it was at the helm.

interviewer: Do you recall any alarms, warnings, flashing lights, any...?

respondent: Uh, I don't recall any.

interviewer: Was there anything that you touched on that steering side, any like, again, any alarms or any confirmations, any anything on that left-hand side?

respondent: No, not on the steering side.

interviewer: You, you did not touch anything on the steering side?

respondent: Yes, uh, I didn't touch anything on the steering side.

interviewer: How about [REDACTED] or [REDACTED], anyone else touch anything on the steering side?

respondent: Uh, I was away from the helm by the time they transferred.

interviewer: And when you say transferred by...?

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respondent: Steering control.

interviewer: Okay, and, where was the steering control transferred to?

respondent: It was transferred to aft steering.

interviewer: Okay, so let me back up the timeline again. You get permission to transfer the throttles to the lee helm. You touch the drop-down menu...

respondent: Yes.

interviewer: ...to transfer control. Did you touch the drop-down menu for both port and starboard?

respondent: No, just port.

interviewer: Just port. Okay. So, the drop-down menu for port throttle, and you press the helm station?

respondent: Right.

interviewer: And then what happened?

respondent: And, I think I think before he had even accepted it over there was when, before [REDACTED] accepted it and controlled the port thrust, is when [REDACTED] had called loss of steering. I think [REDACTED] accepted it and then the OOD said "pass the word" so then I went back to the 1MC to pass the word for loss of steering.

interviewer: Uh, you say you think [REDACTED] accepted, why, did you see him?

respondent: Uh, [REDACTED] accepted control of port, port thrust.

interviewer: Okay. So once again confirming, you did not switch the starboard thrust.

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respondent: I did not switch the starboard thrust.

interviewer: And you didn't switch any steering?

respondent: No.

interviewer: Did you switch any of the HPUs?

respondent: No.

interviewer: The only thing you touched was that port throttle.

respondent: Yes.

interviewer: Because then you got called off to make the 1MC call, loss of steering.

respondent: Yes.

interviewer: Where did you go from there?

respondent: I was still by the 1MC when [REDACTED] called the phone that was right there by 1MC so I answered it.

interviewer: Okay. Uh, who then switched the starboard throttle to lee helm?

respondent: I'm not sure which one it was. I don't remember if it was [REDACTED] or [REDACTED]

interviewer: Okay. Um, when the loss of steering was called by [REDACTED] what was the reaction by the OOD, aside from call the loss of steering?

respondent: Uh, there was no, I mean, she was calm, you know, she was just like "go pass it". She was like attentive.

interviewer: Did you hear like who is, what's the loss of steering steps to take, and was anybody calling them out?

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respondent: Uh, the steps are you call, you know tell the Conning Officer and the OOD that you have loss of steering. And then you start switching to standby HPUs, testing for positive rudder control and if you don't have positive rudder control you press the emergency override to manual run and then send it to aft steering.

interviewer: Okay. The emergency override button, what button is that?

respondent: The big red button.

interviewer: The big red button. I might need a tattoo of that actually because of I have heard it so much, big red button. Okay. You push that big red button, what happens?

respondent: And whichever station pressed the button is what station, like it overrides everything and takes control of that station.

interviewer: You said a second ago, it was, push the big red button to transfer to aft steering?

respondent: No.

interviewer: Ah.

respondent: You push the big red button and then transfer it so...

interviewer: I'm sorry?

respondent: You push the big red button and then you transfer

interviewer: And then you transfer.

respondent: Yes.

interviewer: Okay.

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interviewer: And how would you transfer to aft steering?

respondent: Drop-down menu.

interviewer: So, what does pushing the big red button do?

respondent: It basically uh puts everything into like default, like your default setting, like if it was, you were in backup manual it would switch it to, I can't remember the word for what the actual name of it is called. So, like you have the steering mode that ran when we were just normal...

interviewer: Computer manual?

respondent: ...computer manual, yes. And then I would, uh, like if you if you were in a different steering mode it would take control at that station and put, put it like, revert it to you know like computer manual.

interviewer: Okay, so since the bridge was in backup manual, hitting the big red button, what would that do?

respondent: Uh, put it back to computer manual.

interviewer: Okay, put it back to computer manual and then you switch it to aft steering control on the other console.

respondent: Right.

interviewer: Okay.

interviewer: Do you remember seeing that button pressed?

respondent: I didn't physically see it. I just, uh, I don't remember whose voice it was. It was still dark. I just remember somebody I heard they were pressing it.

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interviewer: What happened then? What did you hear after that button was pressed?

respondent: After that button was pressed then uh I heard they were sending it to aft steering, and then I heard that aft steering had positive rudder control. Then there was some confusion because all of a sudden control was back at the pilot station. All this time, like, [REDACTED] had called from aft steering and then asked how close we are from shoal water. And then I went to the quarter master watch, asked him, came back to the phone, told him it was 2.2 nautical miles. And he said, "Do we need to man up the anchor detail?" I said "Wait one". I turned around to ask the OOD and then that's when we got hit.

interviewer: Had you had any steering, loss of steering drills done since your time aboard the McCain?

respondent: Uh, yes, two.

interviewer: Do you have a rough idea of when that might have been?

respondent: Uh, one of them was probably in July, like late July. The other one was early, I don't remember when.

interviewer: So, roughly one each month?

respondent: Probably.

interviewer: And what was your responsibility or duty during that drill?

respondent: Master helmsmen UI.

interviewer: Okay. Were you at the bridge or in aft steering?

respondent: I was on the bridge.

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interviewer: When they started the drill, and when I say drill were you the master helmsmen UI you are for both of those drills?

respondent: Uh.

interviewer: Or is this only one drill that you were on, on watch or on, on the drill team?

respondent: I did, I guess I was both.

interviewer: Both, okay. So, when they start the drill and they simulate a loss of steering, do you know if they were in that computer backup or computer aided or were they in the manual mode?

respondent: Uh, I don't remember.

interviewer: That's fine. In those drills did they push the big red button?

respondent: For the second one we did. I think we did for the first one.

interviewer: For the second one you know for sure they did definitely push that button?

respondent: Yes.

interviewer: Okay. When that occurred what, do you remember what changes happened on the screen?

respondent: Uh, it just goes back to computer manual.

interviewer: Okay, and where does it indicate computer manual?

respondent: On the top left portion of the screen.

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interviewer: So, on the left-hand side again it has a list of the different helm stations, is that correct?

respondent: Uh, there's a drop-down menu, yes. So, there's two drop-down menus, one with like steering mode and then another one with different locations you can steer from.

interviewer: Okay. So, what about not at the drop-down menu? Is there any place that lists I guess the status or like, like, not looking at a drop-down menu can you look and see the status of stations and who has helm control?

respondent: Yes, there is a, so the, it's like on an actual drop-down menu, like if its if it's not drop-down there's a black box that says what station has the control.

interviewer: And is that in the center of the console, or is that on the left-hand side, where is that?

respondent: It's on the left top.

interviewer: the top part of the menu?

respondent: Right. So, it's, it's at that exact, it's at the same location as the drop-down menu. It's part of the drop-down menu.

interviewer: Okay. So, please, please help me understand, cause again what we see in training screen shots might be different from what you are seeing on your screens so I just want to make sure I, I get what you were seeing. The right-hand side of the screen is throttles?

respondent: Yes.

interviewer: And so, you have pitch, RPM, the PCL number, and it gives you a rough idea of what your engines are doing.

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respondent: Yes.

interviewer: Middle of the console you kinda have like a compass rows, bearing indicator, on the bottom it's got your rudder indicator, what you're steering for and where your actually, rudders actually are.

respondent: Yes.

interviewer: Okay, what's on that left-hand side of the screen?

respondent: The left-hand side of the screen at the top is two drop-down menus, one for steering mode, one for steering location. Under that is uh your HPUs, what's online, what's on standby and then I think, yeah, I think that's it.

interviewer: Okay. And so, you push the big red button and on the top left what, what those two menus say?

respondent: After you press the button it would, depending, I mean if you press the big red button on the SEC in the pilot house for location it would say helm and for steering mode it would say computer manual.

interviewer: Okay. And then, then you're going to transfer to aft steering?

respondent: Yes.

interviewer: How do they transfer to aft steering during the drill?

respondent: Drop-down menu.

interviewer: Drop-down menu, okay. So, when you push that drop-down menu and it gives you a list of stations are any of them blinking, are any of them changed or highlighted or anything. Like how does it display those stations?

respondent: So, if you are sending it, you click on it, and it will highlight it. And I think if you're, if they are trying to send it to you the arrow in the drop-down menu

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will be blinking yellow. You click on it and then it will say, I think it will be helm, or the location will be highlighted and then you just press accept.

interviewer: Is there a way to, to I guess give steering without picking a particular location? Like just say any station that can get it, take it.

respondent: Uh, like, are you saying like is there, is there a way to send it and then without them having to accept it?

interviewer: So, like if you want to, like maybe the system's not working right, maybe there's some problem with your screen, and you're touching the screen and nothing's happening. And you just like hey, any, any station at all please take steering. So rather than specifically saying aft steering or lee helm or the forward station or I know engineering can't take steering but if you, is there like a instead of picking one particular station can you push a button that says any station?

respondent: Um, I think the only way you can take it is with the emergency override to manual button.

interviewer: Okay. That's only at the station that pushes it?

respondent: Right.

interviewer: So again, there's one at helm...

respondent: And then there's one in aft steering.

interviewer: ...one in aft steering. And whoever pushes that gets it.

respondent: Yes.

interviewer: How long did it take you to get comfortable with the touch screen, the IBMS?

respondent: Uh, just a few days.

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interviewer: And just to make sure I understand this correctly, the transfer for steering is on the left-hand side. The transfer for throttles is on the right-hand side.

respondent: Yes.

interviewer: And again, the throttles you have to do one at a time.

respondent: Yes.

interviewer: Port throttle, starboard throttle, whichever you do first. Do they stay ganged together?

respondent: Uh, after you switch them, after you switch the location I'm not sure.

interviewer: Have, have you done that before? Have you ganged the throttles together or...?

respondent: Yes.

interviewer: ...so you were in a situation where they were un-gaged and then you ganged them together?

respondent: Yes.

interviewer: How does that work?

respondent: There's just a little box and next to it, it says "gang" and you click the box, the box will be highlighted green.

interviewer: And then do the throttles come together? Do they match one point? Do you pick a point? Do they stay separate and then as you move one it moves the same distance? How, how does that gang function work?

respondent: Uh, they will be the same uh, they will be the same speed.

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interviewer: I guess what I'm saying is if they are un-ganged maybe you have em at different speeds, like one-third and one-half. If you press the gang button does one come down to one-half or does the other match one-third? How do you set?

respondent: I think when you press gang you have to change the speed and then for them to match up.

interviewer: Is that as in if you move the port throttle to a certain PCL the starboard throttle will match that PCL or...?

respondent: Uh, I think you press gang and then, you, like the throttles will move together and then then they will match that speed.

interviewer: Okay, so I guess my question is, and I know I've said that a couple of times now, that if you have a situation where the throttles are not matched to begin with when you engage gang do they automatically line up when you move?

respondent: I don't think so.

interviewer: Okay, so you have to, do you have to move each one individually to line them up?

respondent: Uh, you just press the gang and then you move the throttle, and then it will, when you move they will come together.

interviewer: Okay. So, gang throttles, you push a button, you move the setting on. So, I guess when I say move the setting is there like an extra button in the middle or are you just moving one of the throttles on port or starboard?

respondent: It's like a, you can press either one on the screen and then it will move them both together.

interviewer: Okay.

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interviewer: Did you see the Command Master Chief on the bridge?

respondent: Uh, not till later.

interviewer: After the collision or...?

respondent: Yeah, after.

interviewer: Okay.

interviewer: When you say later, like how much later?

respondent: Uh, like maybe 20, 30 minutes.

interviewer: What do you think happened?

respondent: Uh...?

interviewer: As far as steering control.

respondent: We lost steering at a bad time, drifted to the left, got hit.

interviewer: How do you think you lost steering?

respondent: How do I think? Um, I don't know if there was a system failure.

interviewer: Uh-um.

respondent: So, I guess that's my, my best guess.

interviewer: Again, our, our focus here is safety. Very much similar to the Navy Safety Team. Our intention is to uh determine the cause of the casualty and to see if there is anything that can be done to prevent similar casualties in the future. So, there's you know certainly no punishment, nothing that we are looking to hurt people or anything like that. It's all about safety. Is there anything that you think

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could be done better in the steering system, in the watch station? What do you think could make things better on that ship?

respondent: Uh, steering system, I don't really know much about, I don't really know about what could be changed about the steering system, what the electronics was. But for, for the watch team you know do more training, like training, like consistent training, like on a regular basis.

interviewer: And correct me if I'm wrong, most of your training on the steering system was under instruction essentially?

respondent: Yes. Well, for, I mean it was just master helmsman I was already helmsman qualified.

interviewer: Right, but....

interviewer: You were....

interviewer: The first day you were on watch was the first day you had used the, the steering system on the McCain.

respondent: Yes

interviewer: When did you qualify BMOW?

respondent: When? Uh, probably January or February of 16.

interviewer: While Antietam was in dry dock?

respondent: No, we were, we didn't go into dry dock. So, we went into the yards in March because that's when we came back from our deployment, March of 16.

interviewer: Uh, okay.

interviewer: Too many years, get mixed up.

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interviewer: Yeah. Okay so the Antietam dry dock was March of 16 to January of 17?

respondent: No, it was like we were in the yards, like an SRA period from March of 16 to I want to say October of 16.

interviewer: Okay.

respondent: And then we started doing sea trials, test runs.

interviewer: And when did she run aground?

respondent: Uh, it was January of 17.

interviewer: Okay, so you had your quals basically honored on board the McCain?

respondent: Yes.

interviewer: You didn't stand any under instruction watches or anything like that?

respondent: For BMOW?

interviewer: Yeah.

respondent: No.

interviewer: Okay.

interviewer: Again, when you say training and what-not, do they ever point out to you where like manuals are or power points, anything to do on your own time regarding the system?

respondent: Uh, as far as like different situations?

interviewer: I'm thinking more again the IBNS system.

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respondent: Uh.

interviewer: This touch screen that you didn't have on the Antietam. Did anyone on the McCain point out to a stack of books and say hey, here's the operator's manual?

respondent: No.

interviewer: Do you know where that might be?

respondent: I don't know.

interviewer: On the Antietam do you know where an operator's manual might be for their steering system?

respondent: Uh, I don't know.

interviewer: It's all I got.

interviewer: We definitely appreciate your time, coming back and answering these questions for us. Like I said, we've gotten some time of screen shots and what-not manuals of the system and unfortunately with the condition of the ship we can't test things out and try different theories on the equipment itself so this actually helps us to kind of, you know, what did you know, what did you see, with what little knowledge we do have. I said it before, if you do come up with any questions or maybe some thoughts afterwards do feel free to come back. We will be glad to sit down and talk to you and you know, continue to work this out of what may have happened aboard the ship. Thank you again for your time.