

I have been suspended from all Navy League functions for threatening the 501©3 charitable status by using the Navy League to foster my USS Liberty agenda. This is not true and I am not anti-Semitic as stated.

Jim Ennes, the author of “Assault on the Liberty”, initially signed me up in the Washington state area and that seemed like a neat idea. Then, in the 2005 fall, I was asked to give a USS Liberty speech to the St. Augustine Navy League (SANL). I was warmly received and I liked this group of people. So, I moved my affiliation from Washington State to the SANL. As time passed, I enjoyed the interaction with the navy ships at Mayport, the navy air wing at Jacksonville Navy Air Station, the coast guard facility and ships at Mayport, the air wing at Cecil Field, and the Marine Logistics Command at Blount Island. As a matter of fact, I had the opportunity to go aboard the boomer, the USS Tennessee, and tour the boomer school at Kings Point, Georgia. I was having the time of my life and at every opportunity I was keeping the USS Liberty story alive. That was NEVER a hidden agenda.

Furthermore, when one of our members wrote a great navy story, “Heros of the Hook”, the SANL explored passing this book to the components we supported. I suggested that I could also supply a book entitled “Assault on the Liberty” and a DVD “Dead in the Water”. They were receptive to the idea. Then, I suggested that why don’t we collect used books, box them up, and give them to our typical components and also to every ship at Mayport. The SANL approved the project and I jumped to name it “The Captain William McGonagle Memorial Library” and I received overwhelming support. Since I started this project, over 5,000 books have gone through my hands to also include the USS Constitution and the USS Freedom LCS-1. When I presented my box of books to the respective command, I talked freely about Captain McGonagle, his Medal of Honor, and how he got us out of harms way. But, I discovered that if I indicated that the attack was a brutal and deliberate attack by Israel, I received a few irritated comments by a very few SANL members. If I was in a good mood, I refrained from mentioning Israel and if not, I gave the historical rendition. Nevertheless, my project was very successful and I was always warmly greeted at the ships quarterdeck. None of the commands ever complained about the USS Liberty story.

However, I was curious as to why SANL directors were not making any attempt to beat the SANL drum with Washington. Sea Power magazine cites positive actions by either personnel or councils. Ignoring the lack of notoriety, I was happy just giving back to the sailors and marines and that’s all that counted. As a matter of fact, I received a Presidents award in December 2009. One of the reasons I received the award was that I came to the aid of the USS Farragut DDG 99, an Arlie Burk destroyer. I was the SANL liaison. The ship had hit heavy seas and the Ward Room 46 inch LED TV came off its mounting and broke. They could not replace it and they asked me for help. So, I acquired \$250 LVA support and raised \$600 from SANL. Needless to say, everyone was very happy. My rapport with the Farragut was so good that when I came aboard I was piped aboard as “SANL arriving” or “Liberty arriving”. I was even invited to an overnight sail for a Tomahawk Missile Launch Test firing. I was given the Commodore quarters. Wow! During that cruise, the CTs, now called Cryptologic Technicians which make up the Electronic Warfare Division, asked that I give them a USS Liberty briefing in THEIR spaces. I have been flying very high as a member of the SANL.

Ending 2009, I was elected Vice president for Military Affairs; continued to carry my USS Farragut liaison duties; and, continued the Capt. William McGonagle Memorial Library project. Then, my trouble started with out new elected SANL President on Jan. 1, 2010.

At our February meeting, he invited a Lt. Colonel Ranger who had been very much involved in fighting the fanatical Islamics. He spoke three of their languages fighting them in Iraq, Afghanistan, and North Africa. He was very much into their mind set. When he finished, I asked a hypothetical question. I said, "I deeply respect what you do and I deeply appreciate your service to our country. As a USS Liberty survivor, most of us have become students of the Middle East to attempt to understand what happened to us. I have completed much research and I believe we are facing a religious war. Therefore, if we stopped supporting Israel and told them to make peace with the Palestinians, would the fanatical Islamics stop coming after us." Before I could get my question asked, our new President jumped all over me and said, "We will have none of that". But at the same time, others at the council shouted for me to ask the question and I did. While I was angry, I did not say anything as I planned to talk with the SANL President after the meeting privately. However, towards the end of the meeting he publicly trashed my Middle East politics and indicated that I was an anti-Semite. I demanded a public apology and never got it and he saw to it that I was drummed out of the SANL. I have learned there were others who also were tired of me trashing the good name of Israel. Or, was I telling the truth of the Liberty attack and they did not want to hear it anymore?

From that point on, as I insisted that I was wronged party, it went down hill after that. Therefore, I was told that I threatened the 501©3 status of the Navy League. Unless, I am missing something, I have never asked the Navy League to lobby congress, business, or the media to investigate the USS Liberty. In the beginning, I have asked the Navy League Florida directors to push for the above investigation. They complied and wrote letters to Washington and were told that the Navy League does not get involved in these situations. I understood and put it behind me. I have asked council members individually to write to the President and their congressmen and no problems were cited. But now all of sudden I threaten the Navy League's charitable status? I know the personalities involved and they have to find something to send me packing.

On April 30th, 2010, I visited the Navy League Headquarters to determine if the SANL President and the All Florida President can ban me from all Navy League functions. The individual I talked with began by giving me a lecture indicating that the USS Liberty Veterans Association (LVA) has been a thorn in their side for years. Needless to say, I knew I was not going to get any help. In fact, the individual said I should read Jay Crystals book on the attack.

The basis for their lack of empathy comes from their belief that the attack was accidental. That is, they acquired their position from Judge Jay Crystal and his book. They believe he is a much respected Federal Judge. With that I knew I was in trouble. I countered and indicated that his book is full of lies, half truths, and incorrect statements and I gave them examples. I was also told that Admiral Thomas Moorer did not help by convening an investigative panel indicating that the attack was deliberate. He was very critical of Admiral Moorer.

With that statement, I understood why the LVA has been a problem for them. That is, the Navy League wants to believe that the attack was accidental and therefore, we should also. I pleaded

with him to read James Scott book "The Attack on the Liberty". Nevertheless, I indicated that the SANL board of directors had not say in my termination and I did not feel that was fair. While he would not commit one way or the other, he did indicate that I should "work it out with the board".

The All Florida President and the SANL President has forbidden the SANL board of directors to discuss my termination or reinstatement. Therefore, to all of you, please keep this in mind if you are involved with the Navy League. I could use your help.

Before I close, I also want to say that they have engineered this dismissal so that I cannot speak to the SANL board of directors or the council itself. Fair? No, just label him anti-Semitic and kick him out.

Thank you, Ernie Gallo