

# The Liberty Incident

[About...](#)

[Documents](#)

[The Book](#)

[Interviews](#)

[Author](#)

## Nowicki's letter to the Wall Street Journal

Letter from Marvin E. Nowicki, Ph.D., published in The Wall Street Journal, Wednesday, May 16, 2001, page A-23:

### Tragic "Gross Error" In a 1967 Attack

In regard to Timothy Naftali's review of James Bamford's book "Body of Secrets" (Leisure & Arts, May 9): Mr. Naftali doesn't quite have it right concerning the book portion dealing with the Israeli attack on the USS Liberty in 1967. I know because I am the person to whom Mr. Naftali [sic] refers as the "chief Hebrew-language analyst" aboard the U.S. Navy (not Air Force) EC121 aircraft. He says that I recall one of my teammates telling me of hearing references to "a U.S. flag" from Israeli pilots.

For the record, we (my teammate and I) both heard and recorded the references to the U.S. flag made by the pilots and captains of the motor torpedo boats. My personal recollection remains after 34 years that the aircraft and MTBs prosecuted the Liberty until their operators had an opportunity to get close-in and see the flag, hence the references to the flag.

My position, which is opposite of Mr. Bamford's, is that the attack, though terrible and tragic especially to the crew members and their families on that ill-fated day in June 1967, was a gross error. How can I prove it? I can't unless the transcripts/tapes are found and released to the public. I last saw them in a desk drawer at NSA in the late 1970s before I left the service.

MARVIN E. NOWICKI, PH.D.  
Ashley, Ill.

[Contact information](#) - [Privacy statement](#) - [Disclaimer](#)

©2002-7 A. Jay Cristol