USS COLLETT (DD730) in Action in 1968

as transcribed by Frank Olderr in July and August 2004.

Transcriber's Introduction

In 2002 our shipmate Gene "Swede" Michaelson loaned me a reel of magnetic recording tape that he had kept safe since 1968. The recording was definitely not made in studio conditions, but it is all the more authentic for that. Also the tape has unavoidably aged; while making a cassette copy I had to repair several original tape splices.

The sound quality was so bad at times I could not understand some words. Some speakers spoke very rapidly and did not enunciate clearly. Other speakers were over-modulated and so produced a mushy speech. Since several of the locations of speakers were "lined open," that is the "press-to-talk" switches were overridden, many background or "off mike" comments are included. I was not always able to distinguish "on-mike" (on circuit) from "off-mike" voices.

"Swede" told me that the recording was made in CIC (Combat) by Terry Nelson. And, yes, one may presume that the copy was unauthorized, but we are fortunate that Terry made it.

DD 730 was 24 years old in 1968 and as an aged gunship at the dawn of the age of guided missiles she was just 2 years away from being decommissioned. The recording tape ran for approximately 2 hours on a summer morning in 1968 while the ship was at General Quarters off the coast of Vietnam. Most of what is recorded are commands and responses over an MC circuit connecting locations such as the Bridge, Combat, Director, Plot and Sonar.

This transcription tells of the preparation for action, of shore bombardment, and of defense from surface attack by small boats, and finally the standing down from action. The confusion, excitement, and concern that these actions caused the crew are included: reports from the spotter plane, guns that won't aim properly, oversize powder that can't be loaded, the danger of "cook off" of a projectile stuck in the bore of a gun mount, running out of ammunition while firing at a hostile boat, loss of gyro to the director, etc. However, since this transcription records the events of one morning's action, please do not expect a story that begins at the beginning, has clear and understandable action, and finishes with a "Hollywood" ending.

Where I could identify a conversation between two or more shipmates, I have separated their voices with " // " marks. Where I could identify the same shipmate's voice after a long pause, I indicate the pause with " -- ". Where I cannot be fairly sure of spoken words, I precede them with "[sounds like:]". I represent the stately pace of firings of projectiles in Salvos (generally about 8 seconds apart) as a series of "*BOOM!*, *BOOM!*" and the quicker but erratic progression of firings in Rapid Continuous Fire as a clusters of "*BOOM-BOOM!*" For the 5-inch Mounts, I retain the interchangeable usage of "51" or "1" for the Mount on the bow, "52" or "2" for the Mount on the 01 deck forward of the Bridge, and "53" or "3" for the Mount on the fantail.

Borrowing a transcription machine recently made it possible for me to make this transcription. I regret any errors that remain and welcome your corrections. As stated above, I could not understand all of the dialog; the "off-mike" dialog was particularly difficult. It was not practical for me to transcribe all the "off-mike" voices, but many are included.

"Swede" hasn't just kept a tape all these years. He has preserved a real treasure and I thank him for making it possible for me to share the contents with all our COLLETT shipmates.

Frank Olderr (onboard 1962-1965)
October 7, 2004

The Transcription

NOTE 1: The tape, and therefore this transcription, begins with General Quarters having sounded and the crew beginning to man their battle stations. Please see **NOTE 4** following this transcription for definitions of several gunnery terms.

** Preparation for Action **

51 reports Upper Handling Room filled with VTNSD. Hoist filled with Able-Able-Common. That's all the Able-Able-Common he's got. Okay? // He should have about 3 rounds of Able-Able-Common left and all the rest VTNSD. // Yeah, that's approximate. // If he has Able-Able-Common on his hoist then everything else he's got is VTNSD. // Okay. // Bridge, Combat; one six zero, all right? // It's all right with me.

[off mike:] All engines ahead two thirds.

53 [sounds like:] "say what is with us."

All stations and controls, man your phones. // Plot, aye. // All stations, Director's on line. // Sonar's now on the line. // Combat on the line. // Director on the line.

Control, Director; [sounds like:] "Monitor line."

All stations, Bridge on the line. // Plot on the line. // Director on the line, manned and ready. // All right.

Plot manned and ready. // Mount 2 manned and ready.

Plot, Combat; I'll need a count of what we've got in the Upper Handling Rooms. // Plot; aye.

Mount 1 has all VTNSD in its Upper Handling Room. // All right. // Sonar's manned and ready.

Combat, Bridge; we're at three four zero, five knots. // All right. // Is this satisfactory for the target we have?

Plot; the range and bearing to target? // Two seven zero, twelve thousand. // Two seven zero, twelve.

True wind three five four, six knots. // Three five four, six. // Three five four.

** All Mounts Manned and Ready **

All Mounts manned and ready except 3 which is manned and ready with the exception of Dumbrowsky, the mess cook. We can shoot without him. // All right.

Combat, Bridge; you manned and ready? // Combat is manned and ready. // All right.

Upper Handling Room count? // Yeah. // Mount 51 has 44 VTNSD, 44 SPDN. // All right.

Skip over Mount 2 for a second. His doesn't add up to 44. // All right. // Mount 3 has 22 Able-Able-Common, 22 H.E., 44 SPDN. // All right. // Mount 3; fill your hoist with Able-Able-Common, SPDN. Mount 1; fill your hoist with VTNSD, SCDN. // On hoist, what should Mount 3 replenish Able-Able-Common with? // Able-Able-Common. // And 1, replenish with VTNSD? // Yeah, but ask him if he has an approximation of how much he has in his Magazine of VTNSD. I'm going to clear it of him out of it, I hope, today. // That 1 or 3? 1 has 30 additional rounds, and an additional 44 in addition to his Upper Handling Room. // It's just 44 in his Handling Room. I want to get a count of what he's got left. // Right. 44 in his Handling Room and 30 in his Magazine. // Okay, he'll replace VTNSD with VTNSD's. // If he's clearing 30 out then they got room for 113 shore bomb ammos and that's it. // Yeah. I'll want to put some A.C. up here. // Mount 52 ammo count? // 28 Able-Able-

Common, 16 Willy-Peter, 44 SPDN. // That doesn't add up to four-- okay, have him fill his left hoist with Willy-Peter, his right hoist with Able-Able-Common.

Bridge, Plot; all Mounts need ammo handlers. // All right. // Get that Plot? // Left Willy-Peter; right Able-Able. // Yeah. // Mounts 1 and 3 will have their fuse setters in Manual and set on Safe. Mount 2 will have his fuse setter in Automatic. // Plot, Director; Tell [sounds like:] Marco to make sure he's got point set and not multiple time fuses. // That's all right. It doesn't matter. I'm putting his, ah; I'd rather get rid of that time fuse stuff. // Right. Well, that's all he's got in his Handling Room now is that time fuse. // Okay. That's why I'm putting the fuse setting in Automatic. Some of it should go off.

How do you want 52 to replenish? // Same way. If he uses his-- // All right, Plot aye. // [continuing quickly from the "If he uses his--"] Willy-Peter and Able-Able-Common.

What do you want 51 to shoot when the VT is gone? Able-Able-Common? // Yeah. I want to get rid of that Able-Able-Common before-- I mean the VTNSD before he shoots the Able-Able-Common.

** Target: Suspected Ammo Storage **

Target number zero one zero one. Bearing's on target line. Height 30 feet. // 53's manned and ready. // All right. -- Height 30 feet. // Height 30 feet, aye. // Suspected ammo storage. 2 guns, main armament. High Explosive fuse quick, will adjust. -- Bridge, Combat. // Bridge, aye. // I have permission to shoot any ammo I desire. // All right.

That's target nine zero one. -- Standby for computer checks. -- Target speed zero. // Speed zero, aye. // High speed and indirect method.

On the mark, target will bear, two six nine and three quarters, eleven seven hundred. Mark. On the mark, target will bear-- two six nine and one half, eleven six seven five. Standby; mark. On the mark, target will bear-- two six nine and a quarter, eleven six five zero. Standby; mark. On the mark, target will bear-- // Plot set two eight. // Request batteries release at all Mounts, Land Action Port.

Combat, Bridge; did you make pre-firing check off this morning? // That's affirmative. It's been turned in to the Quartermaster. // [sounds like:]"Points" filled, all Mounts. // All right. // He wants those turned into the Captain personally. Batteries released. // All Mounts in Automatic. // Wait. All Mounts Auto.

Check fire. The Observer-- the Spotter-- has some aircraft up on the target line.

Combat, Plot; we have target speed zero. // All right.

** Mount 53 Fires - Trouble **

Combat, Bridge; up and down the coastline is a whole bunch of small boats. So they are going to be asking for a recommendation when we get-- // Plot, Combat; Mount 53, two guns, one salvo! Load! // Loaded. // Shoot. *BOOM!* // Temporary line two six seven and one-half. // Bores clear 3, no casualties. // Check fire. Shells landed about 10 feet from the ship. // We just got a burst in the water about 20 feet off our port bow. Right full rudder, all engines ahead flank.

We are being fired at. // We are being fired at. -- Director, do you see them? // No, I don't. Director believes that was Mount 3 that fired in the water. -- Believe that was Mount 3 firing into the water. // Check Mount 3. Ask the elevator if he had his pointer-- // We are checking right now.

Spotter did <u>not</u> see the fall of shot.

1 and 2 are in the stops. // All Mounts ready air.

53's pointer was not matched up when we fired. // He was not matched up?! // That's what the report is. // What was he? // 53 was pointing in the water. // Plot, Bridge; <u>Did</u> 53 fire? // 53 <u>did</u> fire. Believe it was his rounds going into the water. // All right.

[off mike:] That was f---ing close. Somebody took the lifelines off on that one.

My next question is why wasn't he matched up. // [sounds like:] "I throw fen."

Combat, Plot; Pointer claims that he had the pointers matched up, but the barrels were pointing in the water when they shot. // All Mounts ready air. // All right.

Conn, get the Chief back there to check out the transmission of proper elevation to that Mount. // All right. // Was that lit off properly, Plot? // Combat, Director; it is possible that they were matched up 180 out.

** Viet Cong on the Beach **

Spotter has another target for us. -- Mount 53 will be out of commission until we can figure what happened.

We have V.C. in the open, a high priority target! Request you slow! Request you slow down to 5 knots immediately!

Slow at niner, niner, niner. All ahead two thirds. We are going to get back in [sounds like:] "bells" momentarily.

Approximate range and bearing, two seven zero, seven thousand. // Two seven zero, seven thousand. // True wind is zero four eight, eighteen. // Zero four eight at eighteen // Zero Four eight at twelve. // Zero Four eight at twelve. // All engines are back two thirds.

Combat, this is Director. Ah, the pointer back there-- I probably matched them up 180 out, which they checked it out back there. I was talking to the Mount captain, and it appears there is nothing wrong with the mechanism. // I thought we were going to put our best-qualified people in that seat. // It is supposed to be the way was. // The best-qualified person would not make a mistake like that. That is <u>not</u> something I consider an honest mistake.

Our engines are back one-third.

The Spotter wants high explosive and VT fused ammo on this. We'll leave that Willy-Peter in just for kicks. // Plot, aye.

Target height? // Target height zero. This is right on the beach, right on the beach.

Standby for computer checks.

Director, Bridge; can you see the target? // I don't know what to tell you. I don't know what the bearing is here. // Target is V.C. in the open, on the beach.

On the mark, target will bear-- two five five and a half, six eight hundred.

[off mike:] Are you on two five five and a half? Six eight hundred yards.

1 and 2 on Automatic. // All right. Standby. Mark. On the mark, target will bear-- two five five, six eight hundred.

[off mike:] Request we stay on this until we finish the unit checks.

Appears like approximately 10 people. // Standby. Mark. On the mark, target will bear-- two five four and three quarters, six eight hundred.

[off mike:] Does it look that way?

Standby, mark. On the mark, target will bear-- // Plot set one two. // Request batteries release.

** Mount 52 Fires **

Navigator, I have two six two. // Oh, come on! // We're right on them right now with the director and they are climbing into fishing boats.

Batteries released. // All right. Plot to Combat; Mount 52, two guns, one salvo. Load! // Loaded. // Shoot! *BOOM!* // Temporary line two five three and one-half. // Bores clear 2, no casualties. // All right.

Ah, Combat-- // Be quiet! // They are running! // Plot, Spot; right two hundred, add one hundred. // Right two hundred, add one hundred. -- Plot set one two. // Mount 52, two guns, one salvo. Load. // Loaded. // Shoot! *BOOM!* // Temporary line two five three and one quarter! // Bores clear 2, no casualties. // All right.

Plot, Spot; left four hundred, no change. // Left four hundred, no change. // All right. Now we are getting on them.

[off mike:] What do we got to do to get them?

Plot set one two. // Mount 52; 2 guns, 1 salvo. Load. // Loaded. // Shoot! *BOOM!* // Temporary line two four eight and a half! // Willy-Peter doesn't appear to be taking effect.

Plot, Spot; left four hundred, no change. // Left four hundred, no change. -- Plot set one three. // 52; 2 guns, one salvo. Load. // Loaded! // Shoot! *BOOM!* // Temporary line two four four! // Bores clear 2.

[off mike:] Did you get them?

All right.

We'd get them good from the Director.

Plot, Combat-- // That was right on target!

Combat, Bridge; Mount 53-- // Plot, Spot; left two hundred, no change! Keep on this sucker! // Left two hundred, no change.

** Mounts 1 and 2 Fire **

Plot set one three. // Mounts 1 and 2, all guns, 6 salvos. Rapid salvo fire. Commence fire. *BOOM!* // Temporary line two four one! *BOOM!, BOOM!*

[off mike:] Ho, ho, ho! *BOOM!*, *BOOM!*, *BOOM!*

** Underwater Bearings **

Combat, Sonar; we've got underwater bearings on the gun bearing line. // Right, you've got V.C.-- // [sounds like:] "All support runners--" // Rounds complete! // Temporary line two three niner and one-half! // Plot, Spot; left one hundred, add five zero. // Left one hundred, add five zero. // Bores clear in 1 and 2. // All right. // Plot set one and three. // Mounts 1 and 2, all guns, 6 salvoes. Rapid salvo fire. Commence fire!

[off mike:] That one Willy-Peter was beautiful! *BOOM!*

Temporary line two four eight, one quarter! // Spotter says the people are running. // Belay that, two three eight and a quarter. *BOOM!*, *BOOM!* // Left two hundred, add one hundred. // Left two hundred, add one hundred. *BOOM!* Plot set. *BOOM!*, *BOOM!* // Temporary line two three five and one-half! // Rounds complete. // Mounts 1 and 2, all guns, 6 salvoes. Rapid salvo fire. Commence fire! *BOOM!* // Temporary line two three five! *BOOM!*

[off mike:] Where are they now? *BOOM!*, *BOOM!*, *BOOM!*, *BOOM!*, *BOOM!*

Temporary line two three four! // Plot, Spot; left five zero zero, no change. // Left five zero zero, no change // Bores clear 1 and 2. // Plot set one, two. // 1 and 2, all guns, 6 salvoes. Rapid salvo fire. Commence fire! *BOOM!* // Temporary line two two nine! *BOOM!* // Bridge, Plot; who need ammo handlers? *BOOM!* // Bridge, aye. *BOOM!*, *BOOM!*, *BOOM!* // Temporary line two two eight. // All right. Now make sure you get this set in properly; left five hundred, add one hundred. // Left five hundred, add one hundred. // Bores clear 1 and 2. // All right.

Plot set one and three. // 1 and 2, all guns, 6 salvoes. Rapid salvo fire. Commence fire! *BOOM!* // Temporary line two two three and one quarter.

[all off mike:] We still hitting the water? *BOOM!* We still hitting the water? // Can't even see 'em going off; there you go- *BOOM!*, *BOOM!*, *BOOM!*, *BOOM!*

Temporary line, two two two and one-half. // Rounds complete. // All right. // Mount 52 left gun loaded. // Add two hundred, no change. Add two hundred. // Add two hundred. -- Plot set one three.

[off mike:] One four now.

We are blowing the s--t out of them. // Request permission right now to use the Director. // Plot set? // Plot set one four. // [2 rapid syllables of garble followed by:] All guns, 6 salvos, rapid salvo fire. Commence fire.

** Mount 51 Gun Bearing Problems **

Check fire. // Check fire. // The barrels are not matched up with each other. // Plot aye. // What?! // Plot aye. // What?! // The barrels haven't matched up with each other. // They are matched up now. // 1 and 2 loaded. // All right, set the direct method. Director, take control now of Mounts 1 and 2. [2 syllables of garble.]

[off mike:] We have direct control! Get on it! Get on anything you can see. See any of them over there?

All right, Director has control! // All right! Rapid continuous fire!

[off mike:] All right. Do you see anything? I want you to go up and down the beach. Range the beach plus 200 yards!

They are not matched up, Director!

[off mike:] So you see them?

Okay we see them. // They are not matched up, Director! // Mount 1 doesn't appear to be matched up. // Tell both Mounts to make sure they are in Automatic Release.

[garble of several voices]

Give Mount 2-- // All right, they're following. // All right. Go ahead.

[off mike:] Okay. You ready? You got the center range down?

** Mounts 1 and 2 - Rapid Continuous Fire **

Okay, Mount 1 and 2; rapid continuous fire. Commence fire.

[off-mike:] Walk it over the beach.

Commencing rapid continuous fire. // All- *BOOM!*, *BOOM-BOOM!*, *BOOM!*, *BOOM-BOOM!*, *BOOM-BOOM!*

[all off mike:] Walk it across the beach. *BOOM-BOOM!* // Mayday, g-d damn it! *BOOM!*, *BOOM!* // Watch what you're doing. Get on it now. *BOOM!*, *BOOM!*, *BOOM!*, *BOOM!*, *BOOM!*, *BOOM!*, *BOOM!*

** Mount 52 Left Gun Jams **

Go ahead. // What's the trouble? *BOOM!* // Any problem with 52, Plot? // Mount 2 has a loaded right gun. // Unload it! *BOOM!*

[all off mike:] Tell them to shoot it! *BOOM!* // They've got a loaded right gun. *BOOM!* // They can't get the breechblock- *BOOM!*, *BOOM-BOOM!* // They what?! *BOOM!* // They can't get the breechblock- *BOOM!*

All right. Cease fire. *BOOM!* Cease fire. // Mount 2 has a loaded right gun; they can't get the breechblock open! // Okay, that's why I'm ceasing fire. *BOOM!* // Bores clear 1.

Bore report, Plot. // Bores clear 1. // Left gun loaded 2. // Right gun loaded 2. // Unload it on a target. // Can you get the breech closed?

[all off mike:] Is the breech closed or open? // How is the breech block? Open or closed?

Barrels are not matched up, Director.

[off mike:] Is it stuck in there?

Mount 2 can't get his powder out. It's stuck in there. // All right! Combat requests that we jettison that thing and ah-- pull it out and put another one in so that we can clear the projectile out of there before we get a cook off!

[off mike:] Tell them to start working on the clearing the right side of the Mount so we take it out and jettison it.

[sounds like:] "Would you-" // Say again? // Permission granted Combat. // Go ahead Director. // All right. He's working on it.

** Two White Boats **

Director; about sixteen hundred meters to the left of the point of impact of the last salvos, there's two white boats pointed towards the ship. The Spotter wants you to hit them!

[off mike:] All right. You ready to go? // You got a new round in it? // Right.

All Mounts ready to go! // All right! // One thousand meters to the left of the last impact salvo. // Do you see it? Do you see the smoke?

[all off mike:] To the left of where you fired before! Look for a boat! // Let's get rid of the f---ing round. Get it out of here. // Two boats. All right.

Director, your guns aren't matched up. // All right! Tell Mount 1 to, tell Mount 1 to loose fire the-- // All right, lets unload 52! // All right!

[off mike:] Put, train 52 on the beach. Is 52 trained on the beach?

All right, 52 is trained on the beach. Permission to fire at the, er, to unload it? // Granted. // All right. // 52, Fire! *BOOM!* // Bores clear. // All right. Tell 51 to match up at-- // Bores clear. // All right. There's some boats heading out from the beach just south of where-- // Director, Aye. Well, Mount 51 is pointed way the hell up in the air -- // All right. Put 51 at ready air. Have you got a loaded gun? // 51 is messed up. All the guns are ready to go! // Okay, do you have the boats?! // All right.

** Firing on the Boats **

[all off mike:] Do you see those 2 boats out there, [sounds like:] "Peavy"? Train left. // I got them. // All right. You got 'em? You got 'em? Okay. Take the one on the left.

[3 syllables of garble followed by:] Request permission to commence firing on the boats. // Go ahead! // Mounts 1 and 2; rapid continuous fire. Commence firing. // Tell 1, tell 1 to, tell 1, oh f---! Tell 1 to Surface Action Port. Mount 52; rapid continuous fire. Commence firing. // Those boats have about 15 or 20 - *BOOM!* - V.C.'s per boat. *BOOM- BOOM-BOOM-BOOM-BOOM!*

** Loss of Gyro Input to Director **

[off mike:] What the hell is going on?

Check fire! Check fire! // Check fire! Why? // We seem to be having problems with the gyro. // All right. // With what Mount?! // With a gyro!

Bore report? // Bore report. // Bores clear in both Mounts.

[off mike:] All right, turn it around, [sounds like:] "Peavy." turn it around! Right, go right. Come right.

Spotter said that you are real close. He wants you to do the spotting yourself. // Great guy! // What's the problem now with the Check Fire? // Director's gone and run away.

[off mike:] All right. Get on 'em!

We lost gyro input to the Director! // What? // Lost gyro input to the Director. // We got it back? // That's affirm! // All right, request, request batteries release! // Negative, ah-- // Check Fire! // Mount 52 is trained way the hell abaft to the beam. // All right, all right! // There is a boat here that we are shooting here!

** Gyro Input Restored to Director **

[all off mike:] Come on; get them on them! Are we ready?! // Right! // All right! Rapid continuous fire! Commence firing! // 1 and 2?! // 1 and 2!

All right, commencing rapid continuous - *BOOM!* - fire. *BOOM!*, *BOOM-BOOM-BOOM!*, *BOOM-BOOM!*, *BOOM!*, *BOOM-BOOM-BOOM!*, *BOOM!*, *BOOM-BOOM!*, *BOOM-BOOM!*, *BOOM!* // Hey! // *BOOM!*, *BOOM!*, *BOOM!* // [sounds like:] Plot, Spot left on that area. Left 2 hundred. // All right.

** Projectile falls off Mount 52 **

Plot, Spot; left 200-- // 52, you had a projectile fall off the gun mount. *BOOM!*

Combat, Plot: -- // Yeah, I got it. *BOOM!* // Plot set. *BOOM!*

We have to jettison, the shallow's not water, deep enough, the water's not deep enough. *BOOM!* // Are you supposed to let it roll around on the deck? // Negative. *BOOM-BOOM!* // Well, it fell outside the gun - *BOOM!* - mount. // All right. *BOOM-BOOM!* // Spot twelve one hundred. // [sounds like:] "Damn, one of those! -" *BOOM!* //Plot set! *BOOM!* // Plot set. *BOOM!* // Director come left two hundred-- from the Spotter. // Plot, Spot, left two hundred. // Plot, aye.

** Locking on Small Boat with Radar **

[all off mike:] Come left, left, come on, left! // Okay, you on 'em? You on 'em? // Yeah!

Okay, Plot, [sounds like:] "six six hundred Spot,: we're on 'em! // All right.

[off mike:] All right, lock it on him with the radar.

Plot zero-- -*BOOM!* // Say, ah, Conn, you know we're in direct fire so you can maneuver any way you want to. You can speed up, slow down, anything you want to do.

[off mike:] We locked on and tracking?

All right, Plot, we're locked on and tracking! // All right, I'm matched up!

** Out of Ammo **

[off mike:] Tell the Mounts to start humping that ammo!

You're not matched up Director! // Hey, take the gun that's matched up and shoot the mother f---er, will you?! // I got them - *BOOM!* - we're under continuous fire to the [several syllables blared followed by:] mount they're out of ammo!

[off mike:] Start humping that ammo! *BOOM!* There's V.C. heading this way! *BOOM!*, *BOOM!*, *BOOM-BOOM-BOOM!*, *BOOM-BOOM!*, *BOOM-BOOM!*, *BOOM!*, *BOOM!*

Bridge, Plot; how about sending more - *BOOM!* - ammo handlers? *BOOM-BOOM!* // All right. *BOOM-BOOM!*, *BOOM!*, *BOOM!* // Spotter says you're right on them. *BOOM-BOOM!*, *BOOM-BOOM!*, *BOOM!*

Plot, Spot; add five zero! // Add five zero! *BOOM!*, *BOOM!* Plot Set! *BOOM!*, *BOOM!*

** Secondary Explosion on Boat **

[off mike:] Woo! That looks like a secondary from that boat!

We've got a secondary from the boat! *BOOM!*, *BOOM!* // You're not matched up-- *BOOM!*, *BOOM!* // The boat is blowing up! // Great! // You're not matched up both Mounts! *BOOM-BOOM!* // We're hitting the g-d damn thing! *BOOM-BOOM!* // Check fire on 51. // Check fire on Mount 51!

[off mike:] Tell Mount 52 to keep it coming!

** Mount 52 is Out of Ammo **

Spotter says go ahead and shoot. You are doing good, ah, he confirms the secondary explosion. // Mount 52, continue to fire. // Mount 52 is out of ammunition! // Hell, they can shoot anything they got there! // They got nothing!

[off mike:] Mount 3 is ready to shoot!

** Mount 53 is Ready to Shoot **

Mount 3 is ready to shoot [sounds like:] "not continually!" // Request permission to use Mount 3!

[all off mike:] What do you want to do?! // All right, we're waiting on them. We got to get permission-

Bore report, 1 and 2?! // Bores clear on 1 and 2. // All right.

[off mike:] Mount 1 has got 3 powders he wants to throw over the side.

Do you have them both in sight, Director? // No, there's a big cloud of haze and smoke out there. We can't see 'em. Oh, wait one. Ah, we see one. We see one! // Standby to fire 53. // Hey, there might be another one out there!

** Direct Hit on Second Boat **

[off mike:] Got 'em? Okay!

We've got a boat out there! // Okay. // We're locked on and tracking the boat. // All right. // Will 53 bear? // 53 will bear. // Request permission to fire Mount 53. // 3 in Auto! // Batteries released on 53. // 3 is in Auto. // All right. Commence fire. // Rapid continuous fire! // Plot, Bridge; have Mount 52 get rid of that projectile - *BOOM-BOOM!* - on deck. // All right. That's Mount 52. *BOOM!* // Well, tell 52 then. *BOOM!* // What do you want to do with it? // Put a man and, ah - *BOOM!* - ah, [sounds like:] "belay that." *BOOM!* // What do you want them to do with it? // Put a man out, grab on to it - *BOOM!* - and bring it back in the Mount and we'll shoot it. *BOOM!* // Okay. *BOOM-BOOM!*, *BOOM!* // Jettison it over the side, - *BOOM!* - Plot. // Jettison it over the side, Plot. *BOOM!* // All right. *BOOM!*, *BOOM!* // We're blowing the s--t out of this one too! // Direct hit on one boat. *BOOM!* // Direct hit on one boat. *BOOM!*, *BOOM!*

** Oversize Powders in Mount 51 **

Ah, 51 says he wants to throw - *BOOM!* - 3 powders over the side.

[off mike:] Tell 51 to match up his elevation. *BOOM!*

Why? // Because they are oversize and they won't shoot! *BOOM!* // It's either that or have them roll around on deck.

[off mike:] Hey! [whistles a sharp note] Hey! *BOOM!* Hey! Get that thing out of there! That's the shell line! *BOOM!*, *BOOM!*

Mount 51 would like - *BOOM!* - to throw 3 projectiles-- 3 powders over the side. *BOOM!* // Permission granted to Mount 51 to throw the projectiles-- the - *BOOM!* - powders over. *BOOM!* // Plot, aye. *BOOM!* // 52 -

BOOM! - has it's projectile over the side. // Plot, aye. *BOOM!*, *BOOM!* // Can you still see it; can you still see any - *BOOM!* - target? // It's obscured by - *BOOM!* - splashes of smoke. // Okay, - *BOOM!* - let's cease fire.

[off mike:] Mount 3 cease fire. *BOOM!*, *BOOM!*

Bores clear 3. No casualties. // All right. // Continue firing. He says you're right on! Continue firing! // Rapid continuous- *BOOM!*, *BOOM-BOOM!*, *BOOM-BOOM!*, *BOOM-BOOM!* // Plot, tell 53 to set their fuse setters in Automatic. // Plot, aye. *BOOM!*, *BOOM!*, *BOOM!*, *BOOM!*, *BOOM!* // Plot, Spot; - *BOOM!* - add one hundred. // Add one hundred. *BOOM!* Plot set. *BOOM!* // 51 has its projectiles over the side, ah his powders over the side. // All right. *BOOM!*, *BOOM!*

[off mike:] Can we still see them?

Plot, Spot; add one hundred. // Add one - *BOOM!* - hundred. *BOOM!* Plot set. *BOOM!*, *BOOM!*, *BOOM!*, *BOOM!*, *BOOM!*, *BOOM!*, *BOOM!*, *BOOM!*, *BOOM!* // How are 1 and 2 doing about - *BOOM!* - getting that ammo up. *BOOM!*, *BOOM!* // Ah, Plot. // Plot, aye. // Plot, - *BOOM!* - Bridge; Mount 51 and 2 ready air.

[off mike:] Hey! [whistles a sharp note] Get the hell out of there! *BOOM!* Move that light! *BOOM-BOOM!*, *BOOM!*

Plot, Spot; add one hundred. // All right, Plot, add one hundred. // Plot, this time - *BOOM!* - one air burst, twenty yard air burst! // See any more targets out here, Director? // Spotter sees him, he - *BOOM!* - says we got both targets, he wants an air burst. *BOOM!*, *BOOM!*, *BOOM!*, *BOOM!*, *BOOM-BOOM!* // Cease fire; cease fire! //

** Spotter Takes a Look **

Spotter's going down to take a look now. // Plot set for air bust. // All right. // How about a bore report? // Bores clear 2. // All right. // 1 and 2 ready air. // All Mounts ready air. Shut down. //How are 1 and 2 doing on ammo? // [sounds like:] "Well," from Director [sounds like:] "itself now," Combat? // Combat, Bridge; do you want to go around to the south? // Yeah. // Well right now, 1 and 2 won't bear. // Well, 1 and 2, are they getting ammo up there? // Plot, how are they doing? Are they getting that ammo? // They should have plenty of [sounds like:] "Cory Planks," "Wallzee's," Able-Able-Commons, Willy-Peters, any f---ing thing will do.

[off mike:] Look, we're trying to train on the g-d damn target, now stay the hell out of the way.

Spotter's going to fly down there and take a look, try to access the damage. // Plot, Bridge; do you have the problem on 51 and 52 solved? // 52 needs more ammo handlers! // I mean, are they are matching up in elevation. // 52 needs more ammo handlers! // Bridge, did you get that? // Bridge, aye. // 53 [sounds like:] "ready air" he has got 2 powders he'd like to throw over the side. // Mount 1 is back in commission and elevation. // All right. // 53 has 2 powders he'd like to throw over the side. // Permission granted to throw the powders over. // Mount 1 Brake switch was switched on during the action and it screwed up his elevation. It's all right now. // 2 of 4 boats still underway, 3 bodies in the water, [sounds like:] "spattered." // Plot set for air bust. // All right. // Dial one seven. // There is only one boat left.

We had 2 K.I.A.s confirmed on the beach, 3 in one boat, and 2 in another boat. // There were 10 in that boat besides fish when it blew up. // They were all those fish splatters. // There were 3 boats when we started this. Now there is only one. // Do you have the Spotter plane in sight? // 52 reports full Upper Handling Room with Willy-Peter and Able-Able-Common. // Director, do you have the Spotter plane in sight? // He's seen it a minute ago. He was going out there. [5 syllables of garble]

11

** Green Smoke Grenade **

The Spotter plane is going to try to put a smoke grenade into the boat so we can see it. It will be green; green smoke. // Right.

[off mike:] All right, look for green smoke.

Recommend we alter course, Director is going into the stacks. // Come on Bridge, we can keep the guns out of the stops, or the Director must go. // Director, did you see a trail of smoke coming down? Green smoke? // That's a negative. If we move another 5 degrees out, our optics will bear. // Plot recommends two eight zero.

[off mike:] Keep checking for that green smoke.

Plot recommends coming left. // What do you want, Combat? -- Just come to the left or the Director is going to lose the target. You are free to maneuver. Come way back around to the left and then turn to the right if you want. // But make a hard right turn and come around and we'll train in the right direction. // We got people out there on the Bridge looking for the green smoke?

** Director is in the Stacks **

Director is in the stacks. Lost target. // They are swinging right. // Ah, roger.

The boat is now a mile to sea. // We are going to try to give you an approximate range and bearing to the boat now. // Roger.

Plot, Bridge; you say that problem with Mount 51's elevation has been corrected? // Ask Director, they have control here. // That's affirmative. // What was the problem? // The brake switch; that switch down below the [sounds like:] "collar that mar L. A."

[off mike:] Say, Burke, Burke! How about taking down these two signal lamps? Well, at least this one.

NOTE 2: This is the end of the first side of the original tape. Since as much as 6 feet of tape had bonded together and could not be separated, there is a gap before the second side of the tape picks up the action.

** Land Action, Starboard **

Standby for computer checks.

[off mike:] Are we locked, are we locked on this dude?

Approximate bearing, ah approximate range and bearing, two five zero, nine thousand.

Target height, three zero feet. // Right.

You want to use all Mounts on this? // Yeah, I want all Mounts to be ready to fire. // Plot, aye. // 1 and 3 will have their fuse setters in-- no-- everybody will have their fuse setters on Safe, have Manual set on Safe. // All right.

All right, spotter wants 6 guns on the Fire-For-Effect.

Target speed zero. // Plot aye. // True wind one five five, six knots. // One five five at six.

Is Chief Sayers or Anderson in 53? // All right. // Tell Anderson if he is on the Bridge, I'd like him to go to 53, sit in that Pointer Seat and take that position. // Oh.

[off mike:] Anderson? From Mr. Wall, take the Pointer Seat in Mount 53.

Is the ammo up there? All Upper Handling Rooms are filled? // All those Handling Rooms filled. Neither one, neither Sayers or Anderson are in 53. // All right.

Combat, Bridge. // Standby for computer check. // Plot, aye. // On the mark, target will bear--

[off mike:] All Mounts, land action starboard.

[continuing quickly from the "On the mark, target will bear--" above:] Two five seven and three quarters, nine two seven five. Standby; mark. On the mark, the target will bear-- two five eight, nine two seven five. All Mounts Auto. // All right. // Standby. Mark. On the mark, target will bear-- two five eight and a half, nine three hundred.

1 and 2 in automatic? // Find out if it's starboard, Combat. // Plot, Combat; are Mounts 1 and 2 in Automatic? // Tell Plot that is affirmative. // All right.

Start your course one nine seven, speed six. // Standby for computer check. // One nine seven, speed six.

Still do not have communications. // On the mark, the target will bear-- zero seven two, five eight five zero. Mark it. On the mark, target will bear-- zero seven two and a half, five eight hundred. Standby. Mark. On the mark, target will bear-- zero seven three. // [sounds like:] "Check minus" request check batteries release. // Okay, you're bearing forward of the beam now. // One eight zero looks good. // Batteries released. // All right.

Mount 52, 2 guns, 1 salvo. Load. // Loaded. // Shoot! *BOOM!* // Temporary line two six zero one-half! // Bores clear! // All right.

Plot, Spot; right one hundred, no change. // Right one hundred, no change. -- Plot set two zero. // Mount 52, 2 guns, 1 salvo. Load. // Loaded. // Shoot! *BOOM!* // Temporary line two six two and one quarter. // Bores clear. // All right.

** Continuing Concern About Third Small Boat **

[all off mike:] See anybody in that boat? // Yeah. // There's people in it? // Well, I see at least 4; they are crouching down though. // Are they?

We are moving in on that boat. // All right. // What's your range? // There's people in it crouching down.

Plot, Spot: left two hundred, add one hundred. // Left two hundred, add one hundred. // Range to boat, seven four fifty. // Track out, track out both spots. // Five zero, that's five zero.

Plot, Spot; right two hundred, add one hundred. // Right two hundred, add one hundred. -- Plot set two zero. // 52, 2 guns, 1 salvo. Load. // Loaded. // Shoot! *BOOM!* // Temporary line two six four and three quarters. // Bores clear 2. // All right.

Plot, Spot; right five zero, no change. // Right five zero, no change. -- Plot set two zero. // All Mounts, all guns, 4 salvos, rapid salvo fire. Commence fire. *BOOM!* // Temporary line two six five and three quarters. *BOOM!*, *BOOM!*, *BOOM!* Temporary line two six six and one quarter. // Rounds complete. // Bores clear all Mounts. -- Bores clear all Mounts. // Range to small boat seven three fifty. // Bores clear all Mounts. // All right.

Plot, Spot; drop five zero. // Drop five zero. -- Plot set, two zero. // All Mounts, all guns, 6 salvos, rapid salvo fire. Commence fire. // Spotter said we are taking good effect. *BOOM!* // Temporary line, two six six and one half! *BOOM!*, *BOOM!*, *BOOM!*, *BOOM!* // Was that 4 salvos? // That's 5. // Cease fire. *BOOM!* I told you 4 salvos. 6 guns, 4 salvos. // Ah, Meadows and I both heard 6. // I heard 6 on the Bridge. // Plot, Spot; right five zero, no change. // Right five zero. // Bores clear. // All right. My mistake. // Plot set two zero. // All Mounts, 4 salvos, rapid salvo fire. Commence fire. // Small boat, three thousand one hundred. *BOOM!* // Temporary line two six eight and one half. *BOOM!*, *BOOM!* // This the same boat, Director?

[off mike?:] The computer [sounds like:] "fast guys" we do it salvo fire, so we can spot to it. *BOOM!*

Temporary line two six eight and three quarters. // Rounds complete, bores clear all Mounts, no casualties. [2 syllables of garble] // All right. // Plot, Spot; no change. // No change. Plot set two zero. // All Mounts, 4 salvos, rapid salvo fire. Commence fire. *BOOM!* // Temporary line two six nine. *BOOM!*, *BOOM!*, *BOOM!* Temporary line two six nine and one half. // Rounds complete. // All right. // Bores clear all Mounts. // All right.

The boat is at two eight hundred and appears to have approximately 8 people in it. // All right. // This the same boat we tracked before? // That's affirmative; he is a V.C. // Plot, Spot; right four hundred, no change. // Right four hundred. // Recommend-- // Plot set two zero. // All Mounts, 4 salvos, rapid salvo fire. Commence fire. *BOOM!* // Temporary line two seven one. *BOOM!*, *BOOM!*, *BOOM!* Temporary line two seven one and one quarter. // Rounds complete. // Bearing to the boat, Director? // Loaded left gun in number 1. // Boat bearing one nine five. // Bores clear 2 and 3. // Request permission to follow our target. // [sounds like:] "ah plot shoot" that's *BOOM!* // Bores clear 1. // Temporary line two seven one and one half. // All right.

Plot, Spot; right five zero, no change. // Right five zero, aye. // [sounds like:] "Let's" fire-for-effect. // Plot set two zero, all Mounts. All guns. 4 salvos. Rapid salvo fire; commence fire. *BOOM!* // Temporary line two seven two and one half. *BOOM!*, *BOOM!*, *BOOM!* Temporary line two seven two and three quarters. // Rounds complete. // All right.

[off mike:] What is it, two four hundred?

Range to small boat two four hundred and closing. // Mount 3 right gun loaded. // Ah, try to unload her on target. Shoot. Hear that? Shoot. // Yes! *BOOM!* // Temporary line two seven three. // Bore report. // 52 has a loaded right gun. It is not ready to shoot. Bores clear 1 and 3. // What do you mean, he's not ready to shoot? // Wait. -- Ready to shoot. -- 2's ready to unload, on target. // All right. Shoot. // Ah, we're not getting any response. We're getting a hot circuit note whenever I try to shoot. // So shift to Local, attempt to kick it off Local. *BOOM!* // Temporary line two seven four. // Bore report. // Bores clear all Mounts. // Thank you. // What color of boat, Director? // Say again? // All Mounts ready air. // Bearing one nine five, range two two hundred. // All Mounts ready except [sounds like:] "foul."

We got a boatload of V.C.'s. There's 8 of them, all crouched down in the boat. // This boat was at the same area that we were shooting at. Is that correct? // That's what we've been doing. We tracked him from where we were shooting him. // All right. The only thing is, your initial bearing was when we first got him was about 35 degrees from the bearing of the boat that the spotter was reporting. // That's affirmative. One was at one three five and I think around one six five. // One eight zero. // One eight zero. // 45 degrees. // All Mounts ready air.

52 has a powder case they want to throw over. // Permission granted. // Mount Captain 1 wants to go to his magazine. // Bearing to this boat, one six five, two thousand. He came right out of where he was shooting at us. When the spotter was saying that's good, that's where he was. We tracked him right out of there. He's got 8 guys crouching behind the gunwales. // Powder's over the side in 2.

[4 garbled syllables followed by:] is Pete Sayers [could be "Chief" instead of "Pete"] out there? // Ah, wait one. // Lets go see Sayers gets some of these, ah, [sounds like:] "foremen" to man the 50 calibers. // [6 garbled syllables] presume destroyed, [sounds like:] "test" structure damaged. Three structures burning and one secondary.

Chief says he's not up here. // All right.

Range to small boat one nine hundred. // All right. How long it take you to see to the C.O. to shoot these things? He doesn't want to shoot them. He's not sure. // Recommend we get in touch with the jump base over here and have them come out and pick them up. That's their job. // These guys really shoot right out, these guys. We didn't kill them before but these are them. It's getting [sounds like:] "6 round." Range one eight hundred.

51's Mount Captain would like to go down to his magazine and check out his ammo. // Negative!

[off mike:] You see anything fishy looking in there, [sounds like:] "Du-on"? Are they wearing black pajamas?

What's the range to the boat? // One seven hundred. // Range to the boat?! // One seven hundred! // All right.

Okay. Bridge, Combat; C.O. is putting the word on Combat to get the [sounds like:] "fast" attack people to check this guy out. The single fix we got-- // Wait. We got a spotter who told the spotter bearing; he's got in touch with his people. They'll try to get a swift boat down here. // All right.

** New Target, Suspected Bunker **

We have a new target. // Ah, what course do you want, ah, Combat? // Wait. -- I recommend we turn around--three four zero or three five zero. Recommend we get around as quickly as possible; we have a call for fire now. // Where is the target, Combat? // Target coordinates are one eight five, five five nine. // Range one five hundred. The V.C. are raising a yellow and red flag.

Target height three zero feet; this is a suspected bunker.

Range to small boat one four hundred.

2 guns, main armament, high explosive, fuse quick, will adjust.

** Spotter Looks at the Boat **

Range one three hundred. Range one two hundred. // Spotter is going to take a peek at the boat now. // Well, they've got their flag broken out now. // Old Indian trick. // Range eleven hundred. It's not rigged like a fishing boat. // What does it look like it's rigged like? // It looks like its got a little box in it. // Does it really? // What's the flag look like? // Say again. // What's the flag look like? // It's red, with a little yellow in it. // Yeah, that's the Vietnamese flag. // These guys don't look like fishermen. // What's a fisherman look like? // Well, these guys are all ducking down behind the gunwales. There's two fishing boats out fishing but we haven't been paying any attention to them. They're just going on, merrily on their way. These guys know we're looking at them. // Yeah. All right. Wouldn't you just be ducking behind a gun when you caught a hundred rounds of five inch? // All right.

Mounts in stops, Director. // Say again. // In the stops. // Yeah, you're in them now. Oh, we can go around another three hundred and fifty in this direction.

[off mike:] Keep your eye on them.

Three four zero five, five nine four hundred. // The Vietnamese say he's going to go out and look at the boat. // He's directly between us and the stacks, so we can't see him at all; we're going to lose him.

All right; the spotter sees the right one; he's flown around him there. We still can't bear on him because of the stacks and the mast. // All right, standby for computer checks. // Spotter is approaching us now. Spotter plane is approaching us now, from the stern, I believe. // Yeah, we see 'em. // On the mark, target will bear, two nine one

and a quarter. Nine one two five. // Mount 3 will not bear on this heading. // Standby. Mark. On the mark, target will bear, two nine one, nine one hundred. // All right, we will adjust course after we get a plot set. // I don't see how the spotter's gonna spot him. He's flying right around us here. // He'll be leaving. Standby. Mark. On the mark, the target will bear, two nine one, nine one hundred.

[A propeller-driven airplane is heard going by.]

** Land Action, Port**

1 and 2, Land Action Port. Standby-- // 1 and 2 in Auto. // Mark. On the mark, target will bear, two nine one, nine zero five zero. Stand by, mark. On the mark, target will bear-- // Plot set one nine. // Request batteries release with Mounts 1 and 2. // Ah, is this spotter that just spotted, the same one that will spot for this target? // Yeah, but he'll, he's ah, it'll take him about 30 seconds to get over there. // Ah, how far right, Plot, will we have to come to unmask Mount 53? // [2 men talk at the same time followed by:] about 20 degrees. // Right. Well, about 5 degrees when I'm asking 20 degrees for-- // What? // 5 degrees will unmask 3. // I recommend coming right to three five zero. // Coming left to -- you want to come to-- oh, yeah, three five zero, right. // Request batteries release. // Coming right to three five five. // All right. // I won't shoot until the spotter tells me to shoot, so don't worry about that. I would like to have batteries released so that I can report "Ready" to the Spotter. // Batteries released by the Bridge. // All right. // True wind from Combat; three two seven at seven. // Three two seven at seven, all right! // Got target lines? // Got target lines! Two eight nine and one quarter. // What course you coming to? // Three five five at fifty three [sounds like:] "badow." // Mount 3 is in Auto. // All right. // Turn one eight. // All right. // Start turn right two eight eight. // All right.

Range to the target, ah, Plot? // Range, eight thousand eight hundred sixty.

Mount 53, 2 guns, 1 salvo. Load! // Ah, Chief, the chief says check the elevation in 53. // Loaded. // Is the elevation all right? // The Chief says it looks like it is too high.

Anderson is working the elevation. // All right. // Plot shoot. *BOOM!* // Temporary line, two eight six and one quarter. // Bores clear 3. // All right, check fire. // Ah, something's wrong with the air picture. // Ah, did the aircraft give a "Shoot" on that, Combat? // The aircraft gave us a "Fire," that's correct. // [sounds like:] "Da-av-ved" aircraft does not like the picture, air picture.

** Mount 53 - Nose Cap of Projectile Broke Off **

Mount 53 has a projectile with the nose cap that broke off. They'd like to throw it over the side. // Not yet; not yet; not yet. // Permission granted when you get a chance.

Okay, go ahead. Mount 52, 1 salvo, 2 guns. Load. // Loaded. // Shoot! *BOOM!* // Temporary line two eight five and one quarter! // Bores clear 2. // All right. // Standby for a mark on the range bearings, Plot. // All right. // Projectile's over the side in 3; back in the Mount. // All right. // [sounds like:] "Look there" in the water, is that a sinking boat? See them between us and the beach?"

Bearing, bearing two eight -- two eight five and three quarters, eight eight hundred, mark. // Two eight four and three quarters-- // Plot, Spot; Right three hundred, no change! // Right three hundred, no change. -- Plot set one eight. // Mount 52, 2 guns, 1 salvo. Load. // Loaded. // Shoot! *BOOM!* // Temporary line two eight six! // Bores clear 2. // All right. // It was on the bearing, but it's 75 yards off. // All right. // Plot, Spot; right three hundred. Make sure you set in // Right three hundred, no change. -- Plot set one eight. // Mount 52, 2 guns, 1 salvo. Load. // Loaded. // Shoot. *BOOM!* // Temporary line two eight six and three quarters. // Bores clear. // All right.

Plot, Spot; right one hundred, no change. // Right one hundred, aye. -- Plot set one-eight. // Mount 52, 2 guns, 1 salvo. Load. // Loaded. // Shoot. *BOOM!* // Temporary line two eight six and one-half. // Bores clear. // All right. There should be 2 shooting just Wally-Peter. If he is, tell him to just shoot Able-Able-Common, so fill his

hoist with Able-Able-Common. // Say again? // I want 52 to fill his hoist with only Able-Able-Common. If he's got some Willy-Peter now, go ahead and shoot it, but don't shoot any more.

** Air Range Fouled **

Plot, Spot; right five zero, no change. // Right five zero, no change. // Check fire. Air range is fouled. // Plot set one eight. // All right. // Check fire. // Plot, aye.

All right. Sector is clear. Request batteries released again. // Batteries released. // Mount 52, 2 guns, 4 salvoes, rapid fire salvo. Commence fire. *BOOM!* // Temporary line two eight five and three quarters. *BOOM!*, *BOOM!*, *BOOM!* // Temporary line two eight five and one quarter. // All right. // Bores clear 2, no casualties. // All right. // Plot, Spot; right five zero, no change. // Right five zero, no change. Plot set one eight. // Mount 52, 2 guns, 4 salvos, rapid salvo fire, commence fire. *BOOM!* // Temporary line two eight five and one quarter. // All right. *BOOM!*, *BOOM!*, *BOOM!* // Temporary line two eight four and three quarters. // All right, cease fire. // Rounds complete. Bores clear 2, no casualties.

[off mike: The prop wash of a helicopter is heard for a few seconds.]

** Winding Down of Action **

End of target. // Spotter's going home. // [sounds like:] "Low boy is slow and fair," he's still got it. // What do you recommend? // 6 guns, 6 salvos. // 1 gun, 6 salvos. // The Spotter is going home but he is going to have somebody else out here very quickly. // Another Spotter or some [sounds like:] "Coast Guard"? // Right, another Spotter.

Okay. Now these guys can roll out of that stuff. When we tried to kill them about 20 minutes ago, I don't see how the status has changed a whole lot. We ought to go and take a look at them. // Right.

Director, Combat; there is a surfboat on its way down from the north right now; he's going to check out this fishing boat. // All right. // Bridge, aye.

[off mike very faintly:] All non-rated personnel lay to the [sounds like] "fantail" deck to hand out [2 syllables of garble] secure from General Quarters.

Plot off line. // Look alive, Plot, you've still got a Condition 3 watch. // Say again? // [3 syllables of garble.]

Director, Plot. // Director, aye. // What's the range to our friend?

[off mike:] Are we off of him now? Can we find him again?

Ah, we've lost him. // Plot, aye.

** We Don't Have a Shell That Big **

Director, Bridge. // Director, aye. // Did you observe a secondary explosion on-- // That's affirmative. It was not on the line of shell. It was a big on the [sounds like:] "beam." It was lots of V.C.'s coming out of it. It was a couple of boatloads of something besides fish. // Ah, this was a secondary explosion, and not on one of the targets but on one of the boats. // Yeah, the boat out from the beach. The boat went KA-BOOM and blew-- you saw it, didn't ya? A big-- // Oh, I didn't know what it was from a shell or-- // We don't have a shell that big! You saw the size of [sounds like:] "bubble" splash we made. That one, that one was when the Spotter confirmed it was definitely a secondary explosion. // All right. // And it appeared to be a series of secondary explosions, like the boat was full of ammunition. // They had a torpedo they were bringing out undoubtedly. // They were probably just peaceful V.C.; wanted to come out and sell us some rugs or tables or something.

Okay, no more Spotters coming so, that's all spotter missions for this morning. // Say again? Did he say no more Spotters?

Ah, we might have only killed 3 of them on the beach, but there was a whole s--t load of them running down the beach; that shrapnel was basically right over their heads. There would be a lot of them that would be hit.

Director, Bridge. // Director, aye. // [sounds like:] "There's a cover" ah, get back out on the boat you were talking about as we open out here. // It's extremely difficult to do because he's blended back into the fishing fleet. We'll look around for him. -- We had him but you kept us in the stacks for about 10 minutes there and he blended in with a bunch of other ones. // Okay, so you lost him? You don't know which is which? // Yeah. We'll look around. When we last saw them, they were still crouching behind the gunwales. They didn't know when they were going to catch it again.

Plot, Director; send up a little cross level. // Ah, you're very weak; say again. // Send up level and cross level please. // Say again. // Ah, I understand secure cross level, level cross, cross level. You should put the mouthpiece up to your mouth, you're not coming in. // Right. Level with cross level. We're getting it. // You want it or do you want us to secure it? // We want it. // You got it.

Plot, set up for Direct Control. // Director, aye.

Okay, here's the walk back on the boat full of Viet Cong. Ah, the boat bears zero, ah, one seven two, range -- five thousand six hundred.

[all off mike:] Right out there. One seven two. There's 8 of them in the boat. // You sure that's the boat? // Yeah, that's the third boat of the 3 that came out of that-- what we where shooting at. // Where's the other two? // They're all dead!

Range five four fifty. // Plot, aye. // Plot, Bridge; you might try to get together some kind of ammo expenditure. // Yeah, we're, we've got an approximation now going out for reports. // I'd like permission for Mr. Collins to be secured to go down and start checking the magazines, see what we can hold for the A.O. this afternoon. // All right. // Right, this is Director. I believe the [sounds like:] "credit connector" the A.P. seems to be out [sounds like:] "the optics on this boat." // All right. // Ah, just because permission granted, keep somebody on the target. // All right. // Go ahead, Director.

[off mike:] [a few minutes of very soft talking by several shipmates.]

NOTE 3: The tape ends with some of the crew, I presume, still at their battle stations.

NOTE 4: Mostly because of the poor quality of the reproduction of the tape, I was quite uncertain that I had properly labeled some of gunnery terms rattled off so quickly and glibly in 1968. So in Aug '04, I e-mailed several shipmates in the Weapons department of the time, requesting their help.

Alan Wickert (Weapons Department Head, a LT when onboard in 1965-1967) responded with the following definitions and comments:

> **"Able, Able Common** = Anti Air Common. I seem to recall these had a proximity fuse. If they did not sense a target in the air, they produced air bursts over the ground. Great anti-personnel weapon.
> **Auto** = fuse set by the gun mount. Bad news if it misfires.
> **HE** = High Explosive.
> **Manual** = fuse set, if set, by (pointer or trainer?) I can't remember.
> **Multiple time** = various height air bursts.
> **Point set** = explodes on contact with ground. Also can have delay, but can't recall how or designation.

SPDN (Please see the **Willie Peter** entry below.)

VTNSD = Variable Time (gives air bursts) Non-Self-Destruct. (Makes it explode on landing instead of when it goes over center and heads down. Old ammo which was primarily used for air defense but when fuse not set or of the **NSD** variety useful for shore bombardment.)

Willie-Peter = White Phosphorus. If I remember correctly, the **SPDN** exploded on contact. Another version produced flares on parachutes. I may have them mixed up.”

Alan also advised: “Keep in mind we were using WWII ammo which was not terribly stable nor reliable. As I recall, while I was on board we fired over 12,000 rounds. The magazines smelled terrible because of age of the ammo. We were very sensitive to watching the temperature and checking the powder samples.”

And John Aldrich (a GMG1 in Mount 52 when onboard in 1965-1968) responded with the following definitions and comments:

“AAC means ANTI AIR COMMON

HE stands for HIGH EXPLOSIVE

SPDN was used in the daytime because the powder did not make smoke.

SPDF was used at night because powder did not flash.

VT means regular VT FRAG.

VTNSD means VT FRAG NON SELF DESTRUCT”