

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

MAJOR MARINE ACCIDENT - *
COLLISION OF THE JAPANESE *
FISHERIES TRAINING VESSEL * NTSB Project ID No.
EHIME MARU AND THE U.S. NAVY * 51701
NUCLEAR ATTACK SUBMARINE *
USS GREENVILLE, DCA01MM022. *

Saturday, February 17, 2001

11:00 a.m.

Telephone interview of Mr. Jay Brehmer by

Donald J. Tyrrell, Chief, Major Investigation
Division,

Office of Marine Safety, National Transportation
Safety

Board.

P R O C E E D I N G S

11:05

a.m.

MR. TYRRELL: Now, it's Saturday, February the 17th, and it's 11:05 Eastern Standard Time.

And what's the proper pronunciation of your name, sir?

MR. BREHMER: Jay Brehmer.

MR. TYRRELL: Brehmer, okay. Mr. Brehmer, could you please start with when you arrived at the sub base at Pearl Harbor and -- and start your narrative there and tell me what you did and what you saw?

MR. BREHMER: Okay. Got there early in the morning, six thirty or seven o'clock. We were escorted -from the parking lot to the guard station (inaudible) -to the parking lot adjacent to the submarine, it was probably about seven thirty to eight o'clock-- (inaudible) -- we were met-- there by the Commander, Waddle, the chief of staff-- (inaudible) -- we were also met there by the various other officers -executive officer (inaudible) -- board the ship -- were given instructions for the

1 day -- (inaudible)

2 MR. TYRRELL: Were you given any idea of
3 what the submarine was going to do, what types of
4 evolutions it was going to -- be placed on, be
5 executing?

6 MR. BREHMER: (Inaudible)

7 MR. TYRRELL: Okay. So what did you do
8 after the -- after you finished the initial
9 welcoming and the -- (inaudible)?

10 MR. BREHMER: At that point -- (inaudible)
11 -- said that we would separate into groups, two or
12 three groups -- (inaudible) --

13 MR. TYRRELL: And what did you do?

14 MR. BREHMER: I went first to the --
15 (inaudible) --

16 MR. TYRRELL: The main deck?

17 MR. BREHMER: Outside -- (inaudible).

18 MR. TYRRELL: Not up on the sail or the
19 counting tower but down on the main deck?

20 MR. BREHMER: That's correct. On the main
21 -- main deck.

22 MR. TYRRELL: Okay.

23 MR. BREHMER: We were all given -- given
24 life jackets and told - told how to use them

1 (inaudible) -- watched as they prepared the ship for
2 -- prepared the ship for sea and -- (inaudible) --
3 the submarine crew -- (inaudible).

4 MR. TYRRELL: Okay. How long were you out
5 on deck?

6 MR. BREHMER: Oh, I'd say twenty to --
7 (inaudible).

8 MR. TYRRELL: Okay. Where did you go from
9 there?

10 MR. BREHMER: From there we went back to
11 the crew mess -- (inaudible) --

12 MR. TYRRELL: Mm-hmm.

13 MR. BREHMER: Once we were in the crews
14 mess-- (inaudible) -- for a period of time watching
15 things -- (inaudible) John Hall, Wyatt, .

16 MR. TYRRELL: Uh huh.

17 MR. BREHMER: (Inaudible) --

18 MR. TYRRELL: Okay. And did anything
19 significant transpire while you were up in the -- in
20 the sail area? Anything that related to later
21 events?

22 MR. BREHMER: (Inaudible).

23 MR. TYRRELL: Okay. Leaving the -- the
24 sail, where did you -- where did you then go?

1 MR. BREHMER: Then we went back to the
2 crew's mess and -- (inaudible).

3 MR. TYRRELL: What -- what areas did it
4 take you to?

5 MR. BREHMER: We were in the bridge area
6 is that what they, right term- bridge area,
7 periscope (inaudible).

8 MR. TYRRELL: I think they call it a
9 control room?

10 MR. BREHMER: Control room -- (inaudible) -
11 - officer's quarters, officer's mess-- crew's
12 quarters.

13 MR. TYRRELL: Mm-hmm. Did you go into the
14 sonar room?

15 MR. BREHMER: (Inaudible).

16 MR. TYRRELL: Okay. Did -- did anybody say
17 anything about any of the equipment not being
18 operational?

19 MR. BREHMER: Yeah. I was in the sonar
20 room (Inaudible) -- we were -- able to hear -
21 whales -- (inaudible).

22 MR. TYRRELL: Mm-hmm.

23 MR. BREHMER: (Inaudible) -- I sat in the
24 sonar room probably half an hour.

1 MR. TYRRELL: Mm-hmm.

2 MR. BREHMER: 45 minutes. During that time
3 the sonar -- (inaudible) -- station - had to be
4 rebooted (inaudible).

5 MR. TYRRELL: Okay. After you finished the
6 tour, what -- what did you do next?

7 MR. BREHMER: We were - it was then a
8 lunch time -- (inaudible) -- water that -officers
9 mess (inaudible).

10 MR. TYRRELL: Was the submarine still on
11 the surface at this time?

12 MR. BREHMER: (Inaudible).

13 MR. TYRRELL: Did you have anything to do
14 with the submerging operation?

15 MR. BREHMER: (Inaudible).

16 MR. TYRRELL: Okay. So you went to have
17 lunch. I understand that there were two seatings
18 for lunch?

19 MR. BREHMER: That's correct, I was in the
20 second seating (Inaudible).

21 MR. TYRRELL: In the second seating, okay.
22 Up to the time that you had lunch were you or did
23 you see any of the other guests in any -- any
24 position where they were actually operating any of

1 the submarine's controls?

2 MR. BREHMER: I believe that -who were, -I
3 did see one of the guest sitting in one of the
4 (inaudible).

5 MR. TYRRELL: Okay. Do you remember who
6 that was?

7 MR. BREHMER: (Inaudible).

8 MR. TYRRELL: Okay. All right. So about
9 what time did you finish lunch?

10 MR. BREHMER: I believe it was around
11 twelve thirty . . -- (inaudible).

12 MR. TYRRELL: Okay. And what did you do
13 after lunch?

14 MR. BREHMER: After lunch I think we all
15 assembled -- (inaudible) -- either in the crew's
16 mess or -- (inaudible) -- not long after lunch ended
17 - report to the control room for (inaudible).

18 MR. TYRRELL: Okay. When you were in the
19 control room, were there -- were all of the guests
20 there together in the control room?

21 MR. BREHMER: I don't know if all of them
22 were there or not -- (inaudible) -- I believe all of
23 them in our group -- (inaudible).

24 MR. TYRRELL: Okay. Were you positioned in

1 a particular location or were you allowed to go
2 about wherever you wanted to go?

3 MR. BREHMER: No, I wasn't positioned in a
4 specific location. I was standing next to the --
5 (inaudible) -- facing the front of the boat I was to
6 the left -- (inaudible).

7 MR. TYRRELL: Mm-hmm.

8 MR. BREHMER: (Inaudible) - of the control
9 room, left of the periscope area.

10 MR. TYRRELL: Mm-hmm.

11 MR. BREHMER: (Inaudible).

12 MR. TYRRELL: Okay. Were you given any
13 type of instructions relative to moving around or --
14 or speaking or anything like that?

15 MR. BREHMER: (Inaudible) -- told us to be
16 quiet -- (inaudible).

17 MR. TYRRELL: Is that -- those instructions
18 are given by whom?

19 MR. BREHMER: (Inaudible) -- given by the
20 captain or they were given by the person who was
21 escorting us -- (inaudible).

22 MR. TYRRELL: Okay. Would you say that the
23 guests followed those instructions?

24 MR. BREHMER: (Inaudible).

1 MR. TYRRELL: Okay. So it was relatively
2 quiet and -- and -- and the guests were not moving
3 around in the control room?

4 MR. BREHMER: There was -- there was no --
5 (inaudible).

6 MR. TYRRELL: Okay. What types of
7 maneuvers did the -- did you observe the crew put
8 the submarine through?

9 MR. BREHMER: We -- we dove to the -- feet
10 mark-- (inaudible) came back up -- 400 feet.

11 MR. TYRRELL: Uh huh.

12 MR. BREHMER: Number of turns ...
13 (inaudible). (Inaudible) -- angle -- (inaudible).

14 MR. TYRRELL: And these -- these maneuvers,
15 were -- were all the maneuvers executed by -- by
16 Navy crew or were any of the guests involved in --
17 in the -- in -- in the --

18 MR. BREHMER: I did not see any of the
19 guests involved -- (inaudible).

20 MR. TYRRELL: Okay. Now, if I understand
21 it, at -- at some point in the process there was --
22 there was guests invited to -- to -- to become
23 involved directly in -- in at least one, within the
24 last minute-- (inaudible) -- before the accident

1 happened. I was wondering if you could tell me
2 exactly how that transpired, as you can best recall?

3 MR. BREHMER: I -- I was close to John Hall
4 -- (inaudible).

5 MR. TYRRELL: Uh huh.

6 MR. BREHMER: (Inaudible) -- not see --
7 (inaudible) -- was not aware of -- (inaudible) -- I
8 did not see that and I don't recall -- (inaudible).

9 MR. TYRRELL: Do you recall Mr. Hall
10 receiving any instructions on what he was going to
11 be expected to do?

12 MR. BREHMER: Yes, very clearly --
13 (inaudible) -- crew member going over that --
14 (inaudible) -- times.

15 MR. TYRRELL: Okay.

16 MR. BREHMER: What the procedure was.

17 MR. TYRRELL: Did it appear, from your
18 vantage point anyways, to be a very intricate
19 operation?

20 MR. BREHMER: Not at all. I -- (inaudible)
21 -- think it was intricate. I thought it was --
22 (inaudible) -- specific procedure -- (inaudible).

23 MR. TYRRELL: Okay.

24 MR. BREHMER: It looked to be --

1 (inaudible).

2 MR. TYRRELL: Okay. All right. Can you
3 take me through what happened up until the -- as I
4 understand it, the -- this maneuver was -- was
5 executed and then -- and then during this maneuver
6 the collision with the Japanese vessel occurred.
7 Can you take me through how the maneuver progressed?

8 MR. BREHMER: We surfaced -- (inaudible) --
9 checked the periscope.

10 MR. TYRRELL: Mm-hmm.

11 MR. BREHMER: I was very close to a screen
12 -- (inaudible) -- and one of the periscopes --
13 (inaudible) -- that periscope was used by one of the
14 crew members. He made three or four 360-degree
15 revolutions --

16 MR. TYRRELL: Mm-hmm.

17 MR. BREHMER: -- with that periscope. I
18 did not see anything on the screen that looked like
19 a vessel-- (inaudible).

20 MR. TYRRELL: Mm-hmm.

21 MR. BREHMER: (Inaudible) -- water. At
22 that point Commander Waddle -- (inaudible) --
23 periscope, did one revolution. And then asked for
24 the sub to, I believe, to go up another two feet, ...

1 shallower another two feet-- (inaudible).

2 MR. TYRRELL: Mm-hmm.

3 MR. BREHMER: He did at least one more
4 revolution maybe ... two more revolutions--
5 (inaudible). Again, I did not see anything --
6 (inaudible).

7 MR. TYRRELL: Did you hear any reports from
8 the sonar crew at that time?

9 MR. BREHMER: No, I was -- (inaudible) --
10 opposite corner -- (inaudible).

11 MR. TYRRELL: Okay. So after Commander
12 Waddle made the sweeps with the periscope, what
13 happened next?

14 MR. BREHMER: He gave the command to dive
15 (Inaudible) -- at that point - we dove to
16 approximately 400 feet (inaudible) - from the time
17 of him giving-- (inaudible) -- that command to the
18 time of -- (inaudible) -- John and the other crewman
19 - pulling the, pulling the valves for the
20 (inaudible) -- blow-down.

21 MR. TYRRELL: Mm-hmm.

22 MR. BREHMER: I figure that wasn't more
23 than five minutes.(Inaudible).

24 MR. TYRRELL: When he pulled the levers?

1 MR. BREHMER: When he pulled the levers
2 probably took three or four -- (inaudible) or ten--
3 seconds for the ship to begin to rise. The bow
4 started to come up at a rather-- (inaudible) --
5 severe angle.

6 MR. TYRRELL: Mm-hmm.

7 MR. BREHMER: The -- at that time the men
8 on (inaudible) -- the submarine. There was a very
9 large bang.

10 MR. TYRRELL: Mm-hmm.

11 MR. BREHMER: At that point the commander
12 said, what the hell was that?

13 MR. TYRRELL: Uh huh.

14 MR. BREHMER: At that point ... (Inaudible).

15 MR. TYRRELL: I see. And when you went to
16 the crew's mess did you see anything?

17 MR. BREHMER: Yes. We saw a, boat --
18 (inaudible).

19 MR. TYRRELL: Okay. Was it -- was it
20 obvious that the -- that it was sinking?

21 MR. BREHMER: It was obvious (Inaudible).

22 MR. TYRRELL: Okay. Did you actually see
23 it -- see it sink?

24 MR. BREHMER: I saw it taking on water. I

1 was only in the crew's mess maybe a minute.

2 MR. TYRRELL: Uh huh.

3 MR. BREHMER: But within that minute --
4 (inaudible) -- it was going down very quickly. At
5 that point the crew was coming in a number of --
6 (inaudible) emergency -- equipment.

7 MR. TYRRELL: Mm-hmm.

8 MR. BREHMER: And we were all asked to go
9 to the torpedo room -- (inaudible).

10 MR. TYRRELL: Okay.

11 MR. BREHMER: (Inaudible).

12 MR. TYRRELL: Okay.

13 MR. BREHMER: From the time of the bang to
14 the time we got to the torpedo room I don't believe
15 it was more than -- (inaudible).

16 MR. TYRRELL: And did you do anything
17 special in the torpedo room or were you just -- was
18 that like a holding area for you and the -- other
19 guests to -- to wait?

20 MR. BREHMER: It was really a holding area.
21 We helped them untie -- (inaudible) -- one of the
22 ceiling panels.

23 MR. TYRRELL: Mm-hmm.

24 MR. BREHMER: We helped -- (inaudible).

1 MR. TYRRELL: Okay. How long were you in
2 the -- the torpedo room?

3 MR. BREHMER: (Inaudible).

4 MR. TYRRELL: I'm sorry?

5 MR. BREHMER: A long time.

6 MR. TYRRELL: Okay. I understand that --

7 MR. BREHMER: An hour.

8 MR. TYRRELL: An hour?

9 MR. BREHMER: Plus.

10 MR. TYRRELL: Okay. Did you hear any
11 announcements that were going on over the public
12 address system on the submarine during the time you
13 were in the torpedo room?

14 MR. BREHMER: During the torpedo room I
15 remember hearing one specifically, and that was -
16 the captain was coming over and telling (inaudible)
17 -- the crew that there was a boat-- (inaudible) - I
18 believe he stated the name of the boat at that
19 point, and he needed everyone's attention --
20 (inaudible) -- and the rescue effort.

21 MR. TYRRELL: Mm-hmm.

22 MR. BREHMER: He said everyone had trained
23 for this -- this contingency. Everybody --
24 (inaudible) -- relax and focus on the job at hand --

1 (inaudible) -- don't remember any other
2 announcements -- (inaudible).

3 MR. TYRRELL: Okay.

4 MR. BREHMER: (Inaudible) -We were being
5 given certain information from a -- I believe his
6 name was Harris.

7 MR. TYRRELL: Mm-hmm.

8 MR. BREHMER: (Inaudible) -- Harris and Bob
9 -- (inaudible).

10 MR. TYRRELL: Bob?

11 MR. BREHMER: The chief of staff
12 (Inaudible).

13 MR. TYRRELL: Oh, okay. Okay. At any time
14 while you were aboard the submarine and after the
15 accident, in your presence did anybody ask the
16 captain what happened or why it happened?

17 MR. BREHMER: (Inaudible) no I don't think
18 so. -- after being down -- (inaudible) -after being
19 down torpedo room -- (inaudible) -we were moved up
20 into the officer's mess.

21 MR. TYRRELL: Uh huh.

22 MR. BREHMER: (Inaudible).

23 MR. TYRRELL: Did he volunteer any
24 explanation as to why the accident happened?

1 MR. BREHMER: (Inaudible).

2 MR. TYRRELL: Did any of the crew from the
3 submarine other than the captain say anything along
4 those lines?

5 MR. BREHMER: (Inaudible).

6 MR. TYRRELL: Okay. I understand that you
7 ended up staying overnight on board?

8 MR. BREHMER: Yes.

9 MR. TYRRELL: Okay. About what time was it
10 that you returned to Pearl Harbor?

11 MR. BREHMER: Around nine thirty--
12 (inaudible).

13 MR. TYRRELL: Next morning, okay. I
14 understand there was some kind of a debriefing that
15 the Navy put you through before -- before you left?

16 MR. BREHMER: (Inaudible) -- debriefing --
17 (inaudible). That was a -- (inaudible).

18 MR. TYRRELL: All right.

19 MR. BREHMER: (Inaudible). We were treated
20 very well.

21 MR. TYRRELL: Mm-hmm.

22 MR. BREHMER: (Inaudible) -- professional
23 atmosphere. They bent over backwards to make sure
24 we were safe -- (inaudible) -- what was going on --

1 (inaudible).

2 MR. TYRRELL: Okay. It's been reported to
3 us that the guests may have been served alcohol
4 while on board the submarine. Can you tell me
5 whether or not that was --

6 MR. BREHMER: That's not accurate
7 (Inaudible).

8 MR. TYRRELL: It's not accurate? Okay. To
9 your knowledge, did any of the guests bring any
10 alcohol on board?

11 MR. BREHMER: (Inaudible).

12 MR. TYRRELL: So it's a completely
13 inaccurate, false statement that -- that we heard?
14 Okay.

15 Well, sir, is there anything else about the
16 incident that you'd like to tell me that -- that we
17 haven't covered?

18 MR. BREHMER: Yeah, one other thing.
19 (Inaudible).

20 MR. TYRRELL: Mm-hmm.

21 (Pause)

22 MR. TYRRELL: Hello? I'm sorry.

23 (Pause)

24 MR. BREHMER: This was a -- a very

1 difficult situation.

2 MR. TYRRELL: Uh huh.

3 MR. BREHMER: (Inaudible).

4 MR. TYRRELL: I appreciate that, sir. I
5 really -- I don't have any -- any further questions
6 for you, sir. I would like to go through the same -
7 - same process with your wife -- get you to put her
8 on the phone. Thank you very much.

9 MR. BREHMER: Thank you.

10 (Whereupon, the interview was concluded.)