

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

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In the Matter of:           :
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Major Marine Accident - Collision :
of the Japanese Fisheries Training :
Vessel EHIME MARU and the U.S.   : NTSB Project
Navy Nuclear Attack Submarine     : ID No. 51701

USS GREENVILLE (DCA01MM02)      :
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Monday,
February 19, 2001

Telephone Interview of:

MRS. LEIGH ANNE HALL

CONDUCTED BY:

DONALD J. TYRRELL
Chief, Major Investigation Division
Office of Marine Safety
National Transportation Safety Board

1 P R O C E E D I N G S

2 MR. TYRRELL: It's Monday, February 19, and
3 it's 4:28 p.m. East Coast time.

4 Mrs. Hall, if you would, if you could start
5 just telling me what happened, starting when you
6 first arrived at the submarine base in the morning
7 and tell me what you did and where you went and just
8 start the story from there.

9 MS. HALL: Well, someone from the Navy, a
10 woman, I don't remember her name, met us at a
11 certain entrance to the base and escorted us to the
12 area where we would be getting on the submarine. We
13 met several of the crew members. Again, I don't
14 remember their names. I believe the captain and
15 several others.

16 When we were getting ready to board the
17 submarine, we -- I'm trying to think if some of the
18 group went into the submarine and some stayed on top
19 on the surface as we started to go out to sea, and I
20 was one of the ones that was on top, so I don't
21 think everybody was.

22 And we rode out I guess out -- I think part
23 of the way out of the harbor on top. We were going

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1 at a slow pace. And then I went with my husband and
2 the other members of the group who were on top first
3 into the submarine.

4 MR. TYRRELL: And what did you do when you
5 went down into the submarine?

6 MS. HALL: In smaller groups because there
7 were about 15 of us total, they started taking us on
8 tours around the submarine, the inside of the
9 submarine.

10 MR. TYRRELL: Do you remember where they
11 took you?

12 MS. HALL: I'll have to think about that,
13 where we went first. (Off mike.)The crew mess
14 first--

15 After that, I know they took -- there were
16 certain areas that were definitely off limits - (off
17 mike) -- the reactors were off limits--

18 When we were below going out to sea, it got
19 a little rougher. I got a little bit seasick so I
20 actually went back into the crews mess while the
21 rest of the group continued to tour around.

22 I do remember the torpedo room. That's
23 kind of the area where I got sick and I went back to

1 the crews mess.

2 MR. TYRRELL: How long did you stay in the
3 crew's mess?

4 MS. HALL: Oh, probably 10 minutes. After I
5 went in -- and I think it was shortly -- it took
6 about 10 minutes and I then I think that the
7 submarine submerged and -- (off mike)

8 MR. TYRRELL: When you left the crews mess,
9 where did you go?

10 MS. HALL: We went -- a portion of our
11 group, I went with that portion of our group that
12 went into the control room.

13 MR. TYRRELL: And when you got to the
14 control room, what were you doing?

15 MS. HALL: They were demonstrating -- well,
16 actually they were just kind of giving us an
17 overview of the personnel in the control room and
18 the duties they performed. They also at that time
19 let different people with supervision steer -- I
20 don't know -- the rudders. Whatever those controls
21 were.

22 And actually, they had me calling out, I
23 guess it's the procedure to call out the depth as

1 the submarine is going down. (Off mike.)

2 The crew member would tell me what to say
3 so I could call it out loud so that everybody knew
4 how deep we were going.

5 MR. TYRRELL: I see. What were the other
6 guests doing at that time?

7 MS. HALL: They were -- I think probably
8 half of us were in there at that time. Most of them
9 were observing. I would say that. And there were -
10 - oh, at least one person was at the rudder. I
11 guess somebody can come in and tell me what the name
12 of that is so I can accurately describe it.

13 MR. TYRRELL: Well, it's more important that
14 you tell me what you recollect rather than I tell
15 you.

16 MS. HALL: Okay. Well, I recollect at least
17 one.

18 MR. TYRRELL: Right. Okay. Do you recall
19 who that person was?

20 MS. HALL: I recall it was Mike Mitchell at
21 that time.

22 MR. TYRRELL: And that was the first time
23 that the submarine submerged?

1 MS. HALL: Yes. I believe so.

2 MR. TYRRELL: Okay. Okay. And what did you
3 do next after you finished calling out the numbers?

4 MS. HALL: I think we just spent a short
5 amount of time in there. And I was with the group
6 that had lunch first. And I think that was around
7 11:30.

8 MR. TYRRELL: So then the next -- what did
9 you after lunch then?

10 MS. HALL: After -- immediately after lunch
11 I think while the other group was having lunch, I
12 had not had a chance to do -- I remember going into
13 the sonar room -- with one other person. They
14 showed us what they were tracking, this ship or that
15 ship. And there were whales on the sonar.

16 MR. TYRRELL: This was after lunch?

17 MS. HALL: After lunch. And so just for a
18 short period of time, I had the earphones on. (Off
19 mike.)--to hear the whales

20 MR. TYRRELL: Do you remember how many
21 contacts they were tracking at the time?

22 MS. HALL: I can't tell you with any degree
23 of certainty but four or five.

1 MR. TYRRELL: And how many sonar men were on
2 duty in the sonar room at that time?

3 MS. HALL: I believe three at that time.
4 I'm not sure.

5 MR. TYRRELL: All in all, how long did you
6 stay in the sonar room?

7 MS. HALL: Very short period of time.
8 Probably two minutes.

9 MR. TYRRELL: When you left, did another
10 guest go in and take your place?

11 MS. HALL: Yes.

12 MR. TYRRELL: I see. Okay.

13 After you left the sonar room what did you
14 do next?

15 MS. HALL: I don't remember. I think I might
16 have gone back to the torpedo room because at one
17 point they were demonstrating how the torpedoes were
18 released or something. And they were -- because I
19 hadn't had the tour of the torpedo room before, I do
20 believe I went down there. And they were showing
21 how you push the button. And they were -- torpedoes
22 but what were called water slugs-- It was just water
23 released from the torpedoes.

1 And some -- I remember one or two of our
2 group compressing a button to release this water.

3 MR. TYRRELL: I see. And after you left the
4 torpedo room, where did you go next?

5 MS. HALL: I think at that point, back to
6 the control room for the sort of final maneuvers.

7 MR. TYRRELL: And can you describe to me the
8 type of maneuvers they were?

9 MS. HALL: The captain had the crew do
10 turning maneuvers. I'm trying to think if they did
11 -- I don't remember so much any dives or anything of
12 that nature or so much of that. I specifically
13 remember turns and him complimenting the crew on
14 doing a good job. Because -- and he explained a
15 little bit about it and it's a fairly complicated
16 maneuver and the crew members have to do everything
17 in unison at the right time and the right -- work as
18 a team to perform those maneuvers.

19 MR. TYRRELL: I see.

20 MS. HALL: And he said something to the
21 effect that having not done them in a while, he was
22 pleased with their performance.

23 MR. TYRRELL: At this time when you went

1 back to the control room, were any of the other
2 guests at any of the control stations?

3 MS. HALL: Not at all during the time when
4 they were doing the turns and whatever other
5 maneuvers, the training type maneuvers, that they
6 were doing. No. Not until the very final ballast
7 blow or whatever they called it, were any of us at
8 any controls as far as I can remember.

9 MR. TYRRELL: Can you tell me how that final
10 maneuver went and how it was that the guests --
11 which guests ended up where?

12 MS. HALL: Well, I personally was standing
13 fairly close to the periscope and so it was more
14 towards the back. There was ship crew I guess in
15 back of me at a sort of drafting table, doing
16 whatever calculations they do. I don't know what
17 they did back there. But I was next to the
18 periscope. So when it surfaced, before doing the
19 final maneuver, I do know that the crew member, I
20 think a Mr. Cohen, that first looked in the
21 periscope. And he went around -- my feeling about
22 it at the time was that he just kept kind of
23 spinning around. And he went around fast for two or

1 three times first and then slower.

2 And my recollection was that the captain
3 came around to look at the periscope after Mr. Cohen
4 and he went around once or twice. It just seems to
5 me now that it was slower than Mr. Cohen. And then
6 I believe he asked for the periscope to be put up
7 higher and looked again.

8 MR. TYRRELL: This is the captain. Okay.

9 Were all of the guests -- at this point in
10 time, the guests hadn't been placed by any controls;
11 right?

12 MS. HALL: No, no. And I don't believe
13 until we -- after he determined that it was okay,
14 that the coast was clear. And I was not in a
15 position to see the video monitor. I didn't see --
16 because I was kind of behind the periscope. I really
17 didn't have a view of the video monitors. But after
18 it was determined that it was safe to do the final
19 maneuver, the crew took the ship down -- and I think
20 at that point we started the final -- we were going
21 up. The ballast was released. I think he asked my
22 husband if he wanted to press the button to release
23 the ballast.

1 I did not really have a view of the person
2 again in the rudder or in front of whatever that
3 control was because there were many crew members
4 surrounding that seat. So, actually others were
5 talking later about Mr. Cleary being in that seat.
6 I didn't see him because I was behind so many other
7 crew members standing around, either sitting in
8 those seats or standing around those seats, that I
9 was not even aware --

10 MR. TYRRELL: When -- at this time when the
11 guests were all in the control room, were they
12 talking amongst themselves at all? Was there a lot
13 of chatter going on in the control room?

14 MS. HALL: I don't believe so, because the
15 maneuvers were -- the turning maneuvers were fast
16 and the submarine was tilting. And so we were all
17 trying to sort of maintain our balance. And we knew
18 that this was coming so I don't remember much talk
19 at all going on.

20 MR. TYRRELL: Did the captain or anybody say
21 anything about talking or not talking in the control
22 room?

23 MS. HALL: I don't believe so.

1 MR. TYRRELL: Were the -- were all 16 of the
2 guests in the control room at the time that last
3 maneuver took off?

4 MS. HALL: I didn't count everybody. I
5 couldn't say that everybody was in there for sure
6 but I would say the majority --

7 MR. TYRRELL: Were the guests moving about?

8 MS. HALL: No.

9 MR. TYRRELL: No. Were you told to stand in
10 specific locations or were you allowed to go
11 wherever you wanted to go as long as you stayed
12 there?

13 MS. HALL: I think we were all trying to be
14 very considerate of the crew and allowing them
15 enough room to perform their duties without
16 hindering them in any way. So I think we kind of
17 took a place to stand that was out of the way and
18 stayed there. I don't think that it was necessary
19 for anybody to tell them to not to move or to --
20 because we were all very conscious of trying not to
21 be in the way.

22 MR. TYRRELL: Can you take me through what
23 you recall of that final maneuver up to the time

1 that the accident happened?

2 MS. HALL: We went to 400 feet-- the crew
3 members did whatever they needed to do to -- I'm
4 guessing at what they did. They obviously readied
5 the submarine to go up. When they were ready,
6 somebody gave the command to release the ballast, if
7 that's the correct term. And then we just took off
8 at a fairly steep angle. Again, just continued on a
9 track until -- I was not aware of when we were
10 coming out of the water or anything. You obviously
11 can't see. And I heard a big bang and the submarine
12 shook a little following that.

13 The captain made a comment saying like what
14 the hell was that. Then we all sort of froze. The
15 captain immediately went to open the submarine to
16 see if it was stabilized and as soon as he could get
17 to the periscope, he looked out of the periscope and
18 -- I don't know if he informed us right at that time
19 but he said we struck a ship or if it was a few
20 seconds later. He asked all of us to leave, to go
21 down one deck to the crew's mess and we would be
22 given more instructions.

23 But immediately at that time -- we went to

1 the crew's mess and then very shortly, within a
2 minute or two after we got down there, he asked to
3 go down -- somebody did -- (off mike). And we were
4 all asked to go one deck further down to the torpedo
5 room so that they could use the crew's mess area to
6 bring on survivors if need be, an area where the
7 crew could work to get out their rescue rafts and
8 equipment. That kind of thing.

9 MR. TYRRELL: I see. When you were in the
10 crew's mess before you went to the torpedo room,
11 were you able to see the video monitor?

12 MS. HALL: Yes.

13 MR. TYRRELL: Can you describe for me what
14 you saw on the monitor?

15 MS. HALL: We saw the ship through the
16 monitor. Looked like it was riding very low in the
17 water, and so we didn't see it until it was low in
18 the water, so it appeared that it was taking on
19 water. And before it even sunk, we were asked to go
20 below to the torpedo room. So I did not see it
21 actually --

22 MR. TYRRELL: While you were in the torpedo
23 room, did you hear any announcements over the

1 loudspeaker system?

2 MS. HALL: I don't know whether we were --
3 the crew was full of activity, bringing out life
4 rafts, because I think those were stored in the
5 torpedo room on some kind of long, long pole with a
6 hook on it, inner tube looking things on a rope to
7 rescue. I don't remember if it was by loudspeaker
8 or just crew members in their talking.

9 At some point I think some of us tried to
10 offer to help to get out the rafts and that kind of
11 thing.

12 MR. TYRRELL: Did the captain come down to
13 the torpedo room and talk to you while you were down
14 there?

15 MS. HALL: I don't recall him coming down.
16 Other crew members came down periodically and I
17 guess informed us a little bit of what was going on
18 and made sure that we were comfortable as possible
19 and bringing down water.

20 MR. TYRRELL: The people who came down, do
21 you know whether they were officers or enlisted men?

22 MS. HALL: (No audible response.)

23 MR. TYRRELL: How long did you stay in the

1 torpedo room?

2 MS. HALL: I personally didn't stay in there
3 very long, maybe 30 minutes. Because again we were
4 in so much water and --

5 MR. TYRRELL: You were getting seasick
6 again?

7 MS. HALL: -- I was getting seasick again.

8 MR. TYRRELL: All right. I understand.
9 I've been seasick myself. I know it's no fun.

10 MS. HALL: (Off mike.)

11 MR. TYRRELL: So you ended up spending the
12 night on board; right?

13 MS. HALL: Yes.

14 MR. TYRRELL: That must have been fun.

15 MS. HALL: Reclining was better than
16 standing up.

17 MR. TYRRELL: While you were on board the
18 submarine after the accident, at any time did the
19 captain tell you what happened or did anybody ask
20 him within your hearing what happened or why did we
21 hit that ship, things like that?

22 MS. HALL: He came several times during the
23 course of that night because I came back into the

1 officer's mess area, if that's the correct name for
2 it, while the crew was continuing to help search for
3 survivors. I came back for an hour or so after
4 being in the bunk, back up to the officer's mess.
5 And during that time and the following morning
6 several times he just explained what they were
7 doing. They were searching for -- I believe that he
8 told us that the Coast Guard was coming in at a
9 certain point --

10 It was kind of confusing at first who was
11 filling us in. But later, later in the night when
12 the survivors that were in the life raft had been
13 picked up, at that point he came in several times to
14 talk to us. And mostly he was basically taking
15 responsibility. Very visibly upset because of the
16 loss of life or the missing at that point.

17 Anyway, I felt that he did as good a job as
18 possible under the circumstances. He certainly
19 tried to make sure that we were safe and comfortable
20 as possible and the crew members kind of watched
21 over us all night long, helping with anything, if
22 there was any question further on. The ship could
23 not have been nicer, more professional. I mean, the

1 top to the bottom. They were wonderful.

2 MR. TYRRELL: Okay. So then the next
3 morning is when you got off? At what time was that?

4 MS. HALL: (Off mike.)

5 MR. TYRRELL: Someone has reported to us
6 that they had served alcohol to the guests on board
7 the ship. Is there any truth to that?

8 MS. HALL: No--(Off mike) -- and there was
9 none to be had. I assure you.

10 MR. TYRRELL: Okay. I had to ask the
11 question.

12 MS. HALL: Absolutely not.

13 MR. TYRRELL: Is there anything else about
14 the accident or about your visit on board the
15 GREENVILLE that you think I ought to know about that
16 I haven't asked?

17 MS. HALL: No. Other than just a statement
18 to commend the Navy and to support their program. I
19 don't have any kind of military family. I have had
20 no contact really. My husband had an interest in
21 light of my stepson, my husband's son, who's
22 interested in joining the Navy. And I really had no
23 idea what the Navy does, what goes on. But I was

1 really so impressed by everyone we came in contact
2 with, even under such horrible circumstances.
3 People should know that. That's from the top to the
4 bottom. (Off mike.) A friend, a brother, a father,
5 whatever. (Off mike.)

6 MR. TYRRELL: Well, thank you very much for
7 taking the time to tell me about your experience.
8 If you think of anything that you think might be
9 important later on, please don't hesitate to give me
10 a call.

11 MS. HALL: Thank you.

12 MR. TYRRELL: Once again, thank you very
13 much.

14 MS. HALL: You're welcome.

15 MR. TYRRELL: Okay. Bye-bye.

16 (Whereupon, the telephone interview was
17 concluded.)