

Questions to members of Joint Accident Investigation Committee (JAIC)

1. According to the Final Report of the Joint Commission, the Finnish Police took certain paint samples from the interior of the visor. Thin layer chromatography (TLC), liquid chromatography (LC) and drop analysis of these samples did not indicate any traces of an explosive (see section 8.12).

In addition to the tests specified above, were any other analyses performed in order to determine a possible explosion?

If not, please specify the reasons underlying such decision.

2. Is it true that the bottom part of the hull was not examined and filmed during diver's investigation to the full possible extent? If yes, please specify the reasons underlying such decision.

3. According to the final report, the ship started developing a list after the visor had fallen into the water and the ramp had opened completely (section 20). This happened at about 01:15. According to the final report, at 01:14, the list was 0 degrees but had reached 15 degrees at 01:15 (figure 13.3). However, three witnesses who were present in the engine control room at that time state that they saw from the camera viewing the ramp that the ramp was in place but water was forcing in at its sides. The ship was already heeling at that time.

Did the joint committee acknowledge such contradiction?

If yes, how did the Committee eliminate that contradiction for itself or, in other words, how did the Committee justify the fact that the statements of the witnesses were ignored?

4. There is yet another contradiction related to the witnesses in the engine control room. Two of them have described the sequence of events as follows: at first they felt three heavy blows after which they perceived the ship developing a list and then they saw from the camera viewing the ramp that the ramp was in place but water was forcing in at its sides. According to the final report, the heavy crashes were caused by the separation of the visor and its collision with the bulbous bow (section 13.2.5). Thus, if we are to believe those witnesses, one of the two conclusions of the Final Report must be incorrect – either the conclusion that the visor, when falling, had forced the ramp open or that the blows perceived by witnesses had been caused by the separation of the visor and its collision with the bulbous bow.

Did the joint committee acknowledge such contradiction?

If yes, how did the Committee eliminate such contradiction for itself or, in other words, how did the Committee justify the fact that the statements of the witnesses were ignored?

5. More than a half of all the survivors and 2/3 of those who were awake felt some time after 01:00 one, two or three heavy thrusts, blows, shakes or crashes. According to the Final Report, the blows and other such sounds had been caused by the breaking and separation of the visor (section 13.2.5).

Did the Joint Committee consider any other possible causes for the blows and other sounds such as a big wave or cars moving on the car deck, etc?

6. Two witnesses have described their surviving as follows. While on the side of the heeling ship, they were looking for a place where it would be safer to jump into water. Finally they moved to the front part of the ship, where they saw that the head of the ship was damaged and some kind of a grid had formed in the place of the visor. The witnesses guessed that the grid could have been the bottom side of the ramp. They remember clearly however that from their position, they could not look inside the ship into the car deck. Thus, it can be concluded from the statements of the witnesses that, at the time when the ship had fallen fully on its side (according to the final report, that must have happened between 01:35 and 01:45), the ramp must have been in the closed position. The materials located in Estonia give no indication of any additional questioning by the Commission of those witnesses in order to find out exactly what they saw while they were at the bow of the ship and when they saw it.

Was the Commission aware of the existence of such witnesses?

If yes, then why were their statements disregarded?

7. The Joint Commission has handled the issue of water entering the decks below the car deck very briefly. The Final Report only states that the watertight compartments below the car deck were flooded from above, as there were connections between different decks via staircases and other openings (section 13.6).

As a result of what analyses the Joint Commission reached such conclusions?

In the opinion of the Joint Commission, was the flooding of the compartments below the car deck of significant importance to the sinking of the ship or, in other words: whether, in the opinion of the Commission, the ship would have sunk as quickly even if water would not have reached the premises below the car deck?

Why were no tests performed in order to check the resistance of the windows and doors on decks 4 and 5 to wave blows?

Why were the divers not given the task to investigate the condition of ventilation openings, watertight doors and the doors of the car deck?