

U.S.S. HARDING (DMS-28)  
c/o Fleet Post Office,  
San Francisco, California

29 April, 1945

From: Executive Officer  
To: Commanding Officer  
Subject: Executive Officer's report of action details.  
Reference: (a) U.S. Navy Regs., Article 948.

1. In accordance with reference (a) various details of activity aboard following the action on the morning of 16 April, 1945 are submitted to the commanding officer. These details are for the most part the result of personal observation.
2. The fact has been well substantiated that following the shooting down of the first attacking plane, the after machine gun battery performed admirably. FORBUSH, Charles (n), P2c, V-6 USNR., loader on gun #41 sighted the second plane, identified it, and called it to the attention of his gun captain, MULLINS, A. A., GM3c, USNR. MULLINS reported the plane to machine gun control, immediately brought the gun to bear and opened fire without waiting for orders. Thus registering hits on the plane earlier than would have been otherwise possible.
3. WATSON, G. T., GM2c(T), USNR, gun captain of gun #42 brought his gun to bear across the ship, and opened effective fire on the plane. Both WATSON and MULLINS functioned admirably as leaders, urging and encouraging their men, maintaining continuous fire on the plane as long as their guns could bear, keeping their entire crews on station and functioning, in the face of direct attack and certain danger.
4. After the ship was hit, the crew was orderly, no evidence of panic were observed. When the ship was listing badly to port, while at high speed, most persons amidships mounted well to the high side. Prompt word from the bridge overcame the tendencies of any who may have wanted to abandon ship. Following receipt of the order from the bridge, the word spread rapidly along the deck. The increase in confidence was perceptible.
5. Immediately following the explosion while the ship was making high speed and listed over sharply, the port access hatches to both forward and after fire rooms, blown open by the force of the explosion were underwater, and both spaces were thus taking water through those hatches in the steady stream. This undoubtedly tended to cause alarm and panic among the personnel on these stations. WILSON, W. F., WT1c, USN, and BURGER, A. 9n), B1c(T), USNR., in charge of the forward and after fire rooms respectively, demonstrated outstanding leadership, in keeping all hands on station, answering bells and responding promptly and efficiently to all orders given them. WILSON under the direction of chief Demming, rigged the shoring in the forward fire rooms.
6. Immediately after the ship was hit and during the subsequent flooding forward, the forward repair party, badly decimated by the explosion, responded promptly to do whatever could best be done. Lt.(jg) R. E. REETZ, although badly injured himself, tried to take charge and direct the repair party. He was soon taken in charge by the chief pharmacist's mate and was forced to give up his attempts.

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7. LAMISON, W. I., CPhM(AA), USNR, although he was present in the galley passageway in which a number of people were killed or badly injured, slightly wounded himself, and suffering from the blast and nervous strain, did an admirable job. He assumed complete charge of all casualties, including the medical officer, who was suffering from internal injuries. Assisted only by FEIGE, J. H., PhM3c, USNR, Lieut. C. S. BERGER (SC), USN, CHRONISTER, J. S., RM2c, USNR, and JONES, P. R., Rdm3c, USNR, he worked quickly and efficiently.

8. He examined those killed, supervised attempts at artificial resuscitation, ministered to the injured and subsequently supervised their transfer to the U.S.S. SHEA. Throughout the period he showed intelligence, initiative, and a familiarity with his responsibilities and the procedures for discharging them.

9. As soon as access to the damaged areas was possible, steps were taken to open the hatch to the I.C. room, to determine the extent of damage below decks, to plug and shore holes permitting entry of water, and to rig pumps to reduce the water level as much as possible. The cooperation of both skilled and unskilled men was extraordinarily good in accomplishing these ends. The skilled men who worked under difficult conditions in a dark and partially flooded compartment, steadily for four hours until the job was done are listed here:

THOMSON, C. S., Jr., MM1c, USN.  
ERICKSON, C. H., CM2c, USNR.  
SIKOR, E. T., MM3c(T), USNR.  
DICKINSON, R. B., SM2c, USN.  
KAPLAN, H. (n), CM3c, USNR.  
SPENCER, L. A., RM2c(MS), USN.

10. DEMING, W. A., CWT(AA), USNR., supervised shoring operations in the forward fire rooms, reinforcing existing bulkheads and was invaluable in supervising the rigging, adjustment and operation of two fire and bilge pump suction lines to the flooded area. He demonstrated unflagging energy, and zeal in his own efforts and in directing the work of his men.

11. The I.C. room hatch was removed by a party under the direction of LT.(jg) F. H. STRATMAN, in an endeavor to reach the men below. Removal of the hatch showed the compartment flooded. FOGMIRE, C. W., EM2c,(T) (MS) was the first man into the compartment, followed by:

DUCK, V. H., CFC(AA)(T), USN.  
KREBS, D. C., SoM3c, USN.  
ERICKSON, C. H., CM2c, USNR.  
SIKOR, E. T., MM3c(T), USNR.

12. These men removed the bodies of the men on station in the I.C. room, investigated damage and rigged pumps to remove the water.

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13. Upon completion of shoring in compartments A-20<sup>4</sup>, constant attendance, examination of damage, supervision of the pumps, and continuous searching for and plugging of minor leaks was necessary. Removal of wreckage and debris also was accomplished as possible.

The following men accomplished this and subsequently rigged shoring in partially flooded compartment, forward of the damaged area.

ERICKSON, C. H., CM2c, USNR.	NEELEY, R. P., S2c, USNR.
DICKINSON, R. B., SM2c, USN.	MOLDENHAUER, F. P., BM2c, USN.
ERICKSON, G. G., RT2c, USNR.	BARNES, R. G., Cox., USN.
MURRAY, C. (n), Slc, USNR.	LEWIS, J. D., Slc, USNR.
SIKOR, E. T., MM3c(T) USNR.	BENNETT, T. J., Y3c., USNR.
HARMON, L. O., MM3c(T), USNR.	WIGGINS, L. B., Slc, USNR.
WOLFE, R. O., EMLc(T), USNR.	TROTT, J. H., Slc, USNR.
KULYNICK, J., EMLc, USN.	LINDEKUGEL, R. L., Slc, USNR.
HENDERSON, B. C., BM2c, USN.	JOHNSON, B. J., Slc., USNR.
SPENCER, L. A., BM2c(MS), USN.	JOHNSON, L. H., S2c, USNR.
STATA, R. R., Slc, USNR.	KAPLAN, H. (n), OM3c, USNR.
KOWALSKY, G. (n), S2c, USNR.	GALLI, R. N., Slc, USNR.

14. Numerous instances of exceptional devotion to duty occurred during the subsequent period of repair and reclaiming of damaged portions of the ship. Outstanding was the job done by MASTERSON. I. L., EMLc, USN, in taking charge of the electrical gang following the death of Chief MAXWELL. Under his direction prompt and effective measures were taken to reclaim and repair any salvageable electrical gear, as well as rigging emergency power lines promptly wherever required. He showed outstanding leadership and initiative as well as a thorough knowledge of his duties and responsibilities.

15. The performance of duty by the various officers was excellent, in a situation requiring not heroism but cool perception and sound judgement. Outstanding was that of Machinist J. J. ROGERS, USNR, who, possessed of considerable personal skill, worked unstintingly at many different points of the ship, wherever his efforts could best be used. He clearly demonstrated high qualities of leadership, coolness in emergency and a thorough knowledge of the problems involved.

W. H. LINDSAY, JR.

DMS28/A9-8  
Serial: 006

U.S.S. HARDING (DMS-28)  
c/o Fleet Post Office  
San Francisco, California

S-E-C-R-E-T

14 June 1945

From: The Commanding Officer.  
To: The Bureau of Ships.  
Subject: War Damage Report.  
References: (a) PacFlt Conf. Ltr. 33CL43 (Rev.)  
(b) BuShip's Ltr. C-FS/L11-1(374) over  
C-EN28/A2-11 of 17 April 1942.  
Enclosure: (A) War Damage Report, U.S.S. HARDING(DMS-28) of  
16 April 1945.  
(B) Harding serial 004 of 24 April 1945 - Report of  
Damage Incurred 16 April 1945.

1. Enclosures (A) & (B) are forwarded herewith as required by  
current directives.

D.B. RAMAGE.

Copies to: Cominch  
OpNav  
CinCPac  
AdComMinPac (2)  
BuOrd

U.S.S. HARDING (DMS-28)  
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S-E-C-R-E-T

14 June, 1945

Enclosure (A) to C.O. Harding serial 006

S-E-C-R-E-T

## A. I General

1. Damage incurred 0959(-9), 16 April 1945
2. Lat. 26°-42' N Long. 127°-25' E
3. Depth of Water - over 300 fathoms
4. Weather clear, few clouds, visibility good to excellent. Sea flat calm, no waves or swells. Very little wind.
5. Drafts:
 

	Fwd.	Aft.
Before damage (approx.)	14'	12-6"
After damage	19-6'	11'-0"
6. List about 10° to port.
7. At time of hit speed 30 knots with right full rudder. Dead in water five minutes after hit.
8. (a) Attacked by two suicide Val type planes between 0957 and 0959. First shot down at 0958 and fire immediately shifted to the second plane coming in from the opposite side. Right full rudder used to bring the second plane more on the starboard beam. Plane was diving at a position angle of 25° aiming at the bridge. Gunfire set him on fire at 1700 yards range and at the last moment he dove and crashed very close aboard abreast Guns #1 and 2, starboard side. Whether he dove intentionally or whether the plane was out of control is not known. He was being hit repeatedly by 20mm and 40mm fire.
 

(b) No bomb was seen. The plane exploded on contact with the water and showered the ship with fragments and water. The bomb continued underwater and exploded either next to or inside the ship just above the keel at frame 32.

(c) The scoop effect of the hole and high speed caused most of the forward area of the ship to flood. Water which came up through the hatch from the after messhall (there is no WT hatch cover) was waist deep in the galley passage way. All controls and communication with engine spaces and steering aft were lost and messengers had to be sent to order the engines stopped. Before the ship was stopped it took a large list to port because of the right full rudder. Amount of list is not known but it was severe enough to float the life net out of its stowage at frame 116 on the port side of the superstructure deck. Before the engines were stopped the forecastle bull nose was down to the level of the sea.

(d) After the way was off, the ship freed itself of the water above the main deck and about half of the list platform deck. The draft settled to that given above.

(e) Transferred seriously wounded to U.S.S. Shea. Commenced making watertight bulkhead between forward and after messhalls, regained steering control, and power to the after guns. List removed.

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(f) At 110 Commenced backing to Kerama Retto at an estimated speed of seven knots. Distance covered about 30 miles, under own power.

(g) At 1500 lay to off Kerama Retto to await tug assistance into port. ATF 93 arrived and took ship in tow at 1710.

(h) At 1845 tug anchored in Kerama Retto. Ship stayed moored alongside.

(i) Bulkhead between messhalls made fairly well watertight by 1200 and commenced pumping out water between that bulkhead and frame 67.

(j) It is believed that the extreme flooding immediately after being hit caused much damage. It is also believed that it prevented an extremely serious ammunition and fuel oil fire.

9. Effect of Damage on the fighting efficiency of the ship.

(a) Main battery fire control system out of commission.

(b) #1 and 2 5/38 guns cannot be fired because of structural weakness.

(c) #3 5/38 can be fired and controlled by the 40mm Mk. 51 directors.

(d) All 40mm and 20mm guns in full commission.

(e) Unable to make any speed ahead and only slow speed astern. Maneuverability practically non-existent.

B. Not applicable.

C. Underwater Explosion.

1. Bomb (or bombs), delayed action. Type, size and number unknown as they were unobserved.
2. Center of explosion starboard side, frame 32, near keel.
3. No outstanding circumstances or peculiarities.
4. Single explosion.
5. Noise was muffled but loud.
6. No flash observed but flames were seen in Wardroom country shortly after the explosion.
7. Considerable smoke came up through Wardroom country and out through the galley passageway and forecastle deck passageway. Smoke was very dense around the radio room. The odor of the explosion, very similar to that of burned shotgun shell powder, existed for several hours. It is considered that this smoke was due to the explosion since what fire existed was immediately quenched by the flooding.

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8. Shock effect was not serious. The Loran receiver in the upper sound room was torn from its fastenings on a table and thrown to the deck. Several items of equipment were torn from bulkheads in the pilot house, such as TBS speaker, etc. Generators tripped out causing loss of electric power.
9. There appeared to be no general flexural vibration of the ship except for the immediate one at the instant of explosion. While the bulkheads on the pilot house level are undamaged considerable bending must have taken place, since the brass plate in the door lock to the captain's sea cabin was bent about 1/4 inch out of line. The forecastle deck house at frame 55 has a wrinkle on both sides and across the top, most severe on the starboard side.
10. Distribution and amount of liquid in the forward tanks:

Tank number	Capacity	Amount filled
A-2-F	21317	empty
A-3-F	9195	9195 oil
A-4-F	9195	9195 oil
A-5-F	21485	14900 oil
A-6-F	10182	10182 oil
A-7-F	10172	10182 oil

Suction forward on A-5-F. A-2-F had just been emptied and was about to be ballasted.

- 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20:

These paragraphs are covered in enclosure (B).

S-E-C-R-E-T

24 April 1945

A I R M A I L

From: The Commanding Officer.  
To: The Commander in Chief, U.S. Fleet.

Subject: Report of Damage Incurred 16 April 1945.

Reference: (a) PacFlt. Conf. Ltr. 33CI-43 (Rev.).  
(b) Harding despatch 170243 of April 1945.  
(c) Harding despatch 230003 of April 1945.

1. Reference (b) and (c) contained the brief immediate reports of damage incurred.

2. This report gives the details of the damage as determined to date, including results of diver's inspection. Full details cannot be determined until the ship is docked.

3. The bomb exploded either next to or in the ship just above the keel at about frame 35. It is possible, and from the damage sustained probable, that part of the powder magazine, A-406-K, also exploded.

4. The Chief Pharmacist's Mate, who was in the galley passageway, felt intense heat and could see through the smoke the red glow of fire forward of the wardroom. It is felt that the severe flooding sustained prevented an extremely serious fire. (See para 5)

5. Damage - Structural:

- (1) Hole starboard side frame 32, 10 feet high from keel up and 20 feet long.
- (2) Holes port side frame 34 from keel to main deck.
- (3) The bow is very limber.
- (4) Keel twisted 45° over a length of ten feet at frame 32.
- (5) Skin of ship has severe wrinkle, both sides from fore-castle deck down, frame 34.
- (6) Skin of ship has wrinkle frame 45 from fore-castle deck, down past the waterline, both sides. Lower limit undetermined.
- (7) Skin of ship, both sides, bulged out between frames 34 and 45.
- (8) Fore-castle deck buckled upward between frames 34 and 45 with the maximum deflection amidships at frame 37.
- (9) Following damage to transverse strength frames under the fore-castle deck:
  - (a) Frame 52 - Slight buckle starboard side at the turn.
  - (b) Frame 45 - Slight deflection amidships.
  - (c) Frame 41 - Badly bent and distorted. One vertical stranchion driven 2" upward into it.
  - (d) Frame 37 - Badly twisted and distorted.
  - (e) Frame 33 - Distorted slightly.



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A-I-R M-A-I-L

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- (10) Following watertight bulkheads between main and forecandle deck damaged:
  - (a) At frame 45 - Buckled most of length. Watertight door and frame buckled.
  - (b) At frame 33 - Buckled at each end. Watertight door and frame buckled and jammed.
- (11) Non watertight bulkheads throughout wardroom country distorted, badly buckled or completely destroyed.
- (12) Main deck ruptured at frame 38, distorted upward between frames 33 and 45. Slight buckling between frames 25 and 33. Several small holes through deck at frame 32 $\frac{1}{2}$ .
- (13) Longitudinals under forecandle deck between frames 33 and 45 badly distorted or ruptured.
- (14) Draft forward, 17 $\frac{1}{2}$  feet; aft 10 feet.
- (15) Watertight bulkhead frame 56 (forward bulkhead of Sick Bay) buckled, and deflected aft. Watertight door blown out.
- (16) Bulkhead between Sick Bay and IC Room demolished.
- (17) Bulkhead between IC Room and Ship's Office badly distorted and deflected to port.
- (18) Watertight door to passageway into Ship's Office and IC Room frame 56 distorted.
- (19) Watertight bulkhead frame 45 between compartments A-204-L and A-205-L badly distorted and holed. Both watertight doors blown off. Bulkhead deflected aft.
- (20) First platform deck just aft of frame 45 distorted in several areas.
- (21) Area between frames 45 and 25, and between first platform and main deck completely demolished and open to the sea. (Compartments A-203-L and A-204-L).
- (22) Watertight bulkhead between A-202-L and A-203-L deflected forward with watertight door blown off.
- (23) Compartments A-203-L and A-204-L still flooded to outside water level.
- (24) Strength transverse frame 23, under the main deck has slight upward deflection.
- (25) Deck of compartment A-202-L has several slight buckles.
- (26) Fuel oil tanks A-2-F, A-3-F and A-4-F open to the sea. Extent unknown.
- (27) Compartments between frames 33 and 45 and between keel and first platform deck blown out.
- (28) Status of watertight bulkhead frame 45 between keel and first platform deck not known because of debris piled up next to it, but it is probably holed and deflected aft.
- (29) Watertight bulkhead frame 33 between keel and first platform decks upturned and deflected forward.

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A-I-R M-A-I-L

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- (30) A-304-A and A-405-M flooded but amount of damage sustained unknown.
- (31) Status of A-404-M unknown.
- (32) Watertight bulkhead frame 25 between keel and first platform deck deflected forward a considerable amount but is still watertight.
6. (1) Permanent flooding covers the following area: frame 25 to frame 45 from keel to outside waterline, plus fuel tanks A-2-F, A-3-F, and A-4-F.
- (2) All the compartments on the first platform deck between frames 14 and 67 were completely flooded at time of hit because of the scoop effect of the hole. When the ship was stopped these compartments freed themselves to the outside waterline. Cofferdam between frames 66 and 67 flooded from overflow of damaged fuel oil tanks.
- (3) The area between frame 14 and 67 on the main deck were partially flooded before the ship was stopped, because of the scoop effect forcing water through the hole at frame 38, up the hatch at frames 56-59 (this hatch has no cover), and up number one ammunition hoist.
- (4) Bulkheads and doors in frames 25 and 45 were shored and plugged. Compartment A-202-L and the area between frames 45 and 67 (first platform deck) are now dry although pumps are still required.

7. Damage - ttings and Equipment:

- (1) Degaussing installation between frames 14 and 67 damaged and broken.
- (2) All electrical wiring damaged by water or severed between frames 14 and 67. Much of this wiring probably can be saved and ship's force is making every attempt to do so, especially in the IC Room.
- (a) Galley range transformers in A-205-L damaged by water but being repaired by ship's force.
- (b) Lighting transformers in galley passageway flooded but repaired by ship's force.
- (c) IC transformers (A-206-IC) flooded but being re-conditioned by ship's force.
- (d) 1KC and 17KC switchboard and amplifiers (A-206-IC) total loss.
- (e) Gyro bulkhead transmitter follow up and switchboard (A-206CIC) total loss.

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A-I-R M-A-T-L

Subject: Report of Damage Incurred 16 April 1945.

- (f) Gyro follow up and switchboard (A-206-IC) total loss.
  - (g) Dummy log transmitter (A-206-IC) being reconditioned by ship's force.
  - (h) Action cutout switchboard (A-206-IC) being reconditioned by ship's force.
  - (i) IC switchboard (A-206-IC) being reconditioned by ship's force.
  - (j) IC motor generator set (A-206-IC) being reconditioned by ship's force.
  - (k) Gyro motor generator sets (A-206-IC) being reconditioned by ship's force.
  - (l) Fire control switchboard (A-206-IC) being reconditioned by ship's force.
  - (m) Ventilation on motors (two) in galley and passageway being reconditioned by ship's force.
- (3) Ventilation system ducts throughout area that was flooded, including galley passageway, either destroyed, or distorted.
- (4) All piping in damaged area destroyed, including hot water heater.
- (5) Refrigerating boxes and ice machinery destroyed.
- (6) Scullery destroyed.
- (7) Ammunition hoists to number 1 and 2 guns badly damaged.
- (8) Steam table distorted but can be reconditioned.
- (9) Messing tables and benches distorted or destroyed.
- (10) All fittings and equipment in Sick Bay destroyed.
- (11) All fittings and equipment in Ship's Office (including Storeroom and Pay Office) damaged. Typewriters can be reconditioned.
- (12) Fire Control equipment (computer, strashell computer, stable element) in A-206-IC flooded by salt water. The equipment has been washed down and filled with preservative and probably can be reconditioned.
- (13) Master gyro damaged beyond repair by shock and water. It received the same treatment as the fire control equipment, and in addition has been disassembled.
- (14) Radio, Radar and Sonar:
- (a) RBQ receiver and TEK motor generator flooded with water and damaged by shock but is being repaired by ship's force.
  - (b) TBS bridge speaker knocked from bulkhead and damaged. Repairable.
  - (c) IBS transmitter functioning but not properly. Repairable.
  - (d) SCR-610 antenna (ship) sheared off.
  - (e) All antennae or supports damaged, being repaired by ship's force.
  - (f) D/S Loren receiver knocked to the deck but repairable.

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I-I-I M-I-I-L

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- (g) Sonar (QOB) projectors probably damaged. Remainder of equipment believed undamaged but at present inoperative.
- (h) SA-2 and SG undamaged.
- (i) MK. 4 and 22 inoperative, cause unknown. Not serious.
- (j) BN, BL-2 inoperative but damage not serious.
- (k) BK motor generator flooded but being reconditioned.
- (l) Internal broadcasting system wiring damaged. Two speaker amplifiers damaged probably beyond repair.
- (15) All wardroom stateroom equipment destroyed or badly damaged.
- (16) All equipment in CPO messroom, A-202-L damaged by shock and water.
- (17) All equipment in CPO bunkroom A-103-L damaged by water but can be reconditioned.
- (18) Wardroom refrigerator damaged by water but can be reconditioned.
- (19) CPO messroom refrigerator crushed and flooded. Compressor unit salvagable and being reconditioned by ship's force.

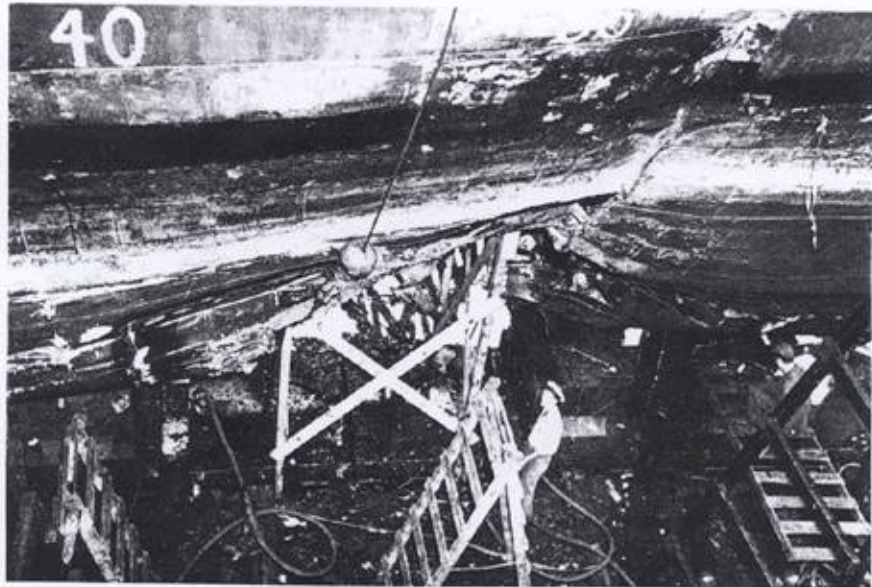
8. The engineering plant is intact. The rumbling in the port reduction gear previously reported is now believed to have been a recurrence of a phenomenon characteristic of this ship.

9. There is no deflection of the skin of the ship, or of the decks aft of frame 67.

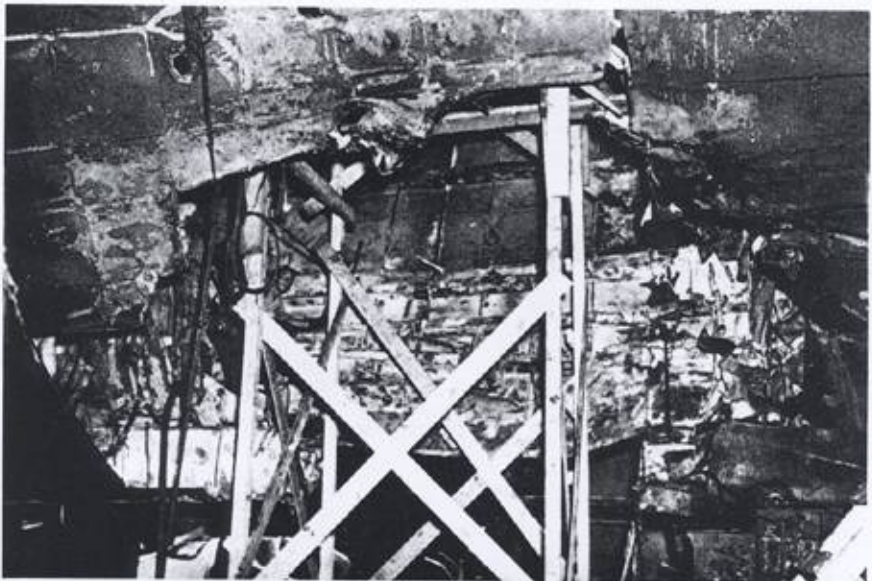
10. Starboard anchor (less chain) was jettisoned. Ground tackle gear and equipment was undamaged.

D.B. RUMAGE.

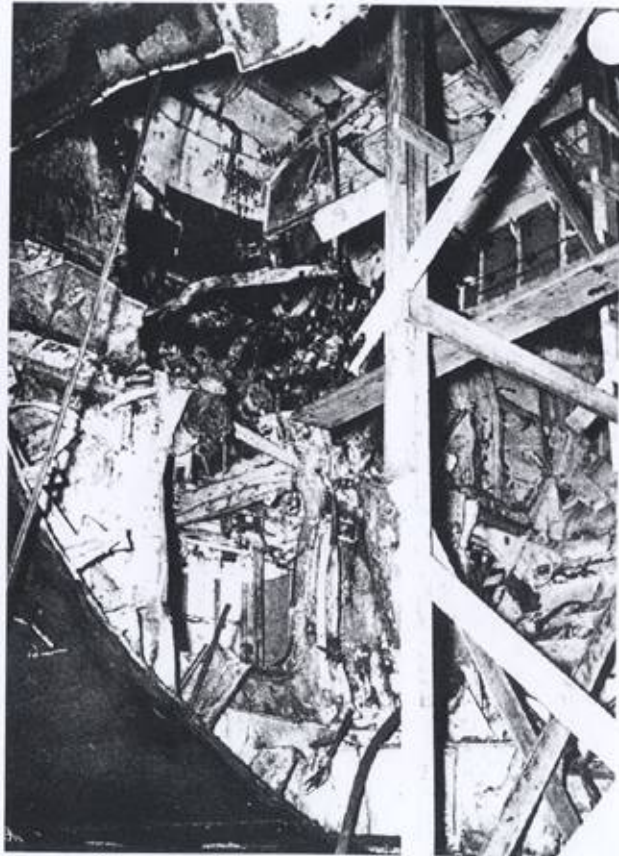
Copies to: CinCPac  
ComFifthFleet  
ComTaskForce 51  
ComServPac  
ComServRonTEN  
ComMinPac  
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Com1stSeaFrontier  
CominRon 20  
CominDiv 60



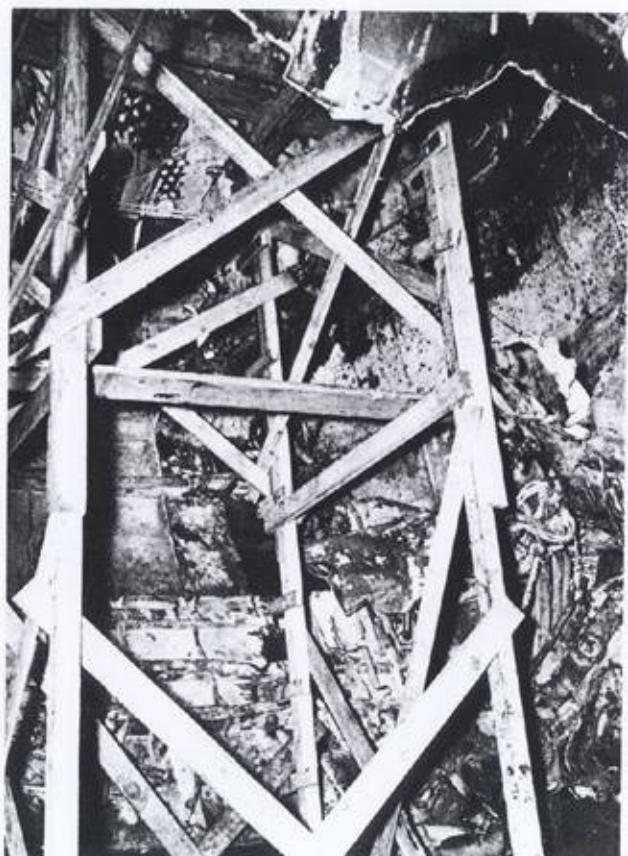
Looking down at frames 40 and 35, starboard side.



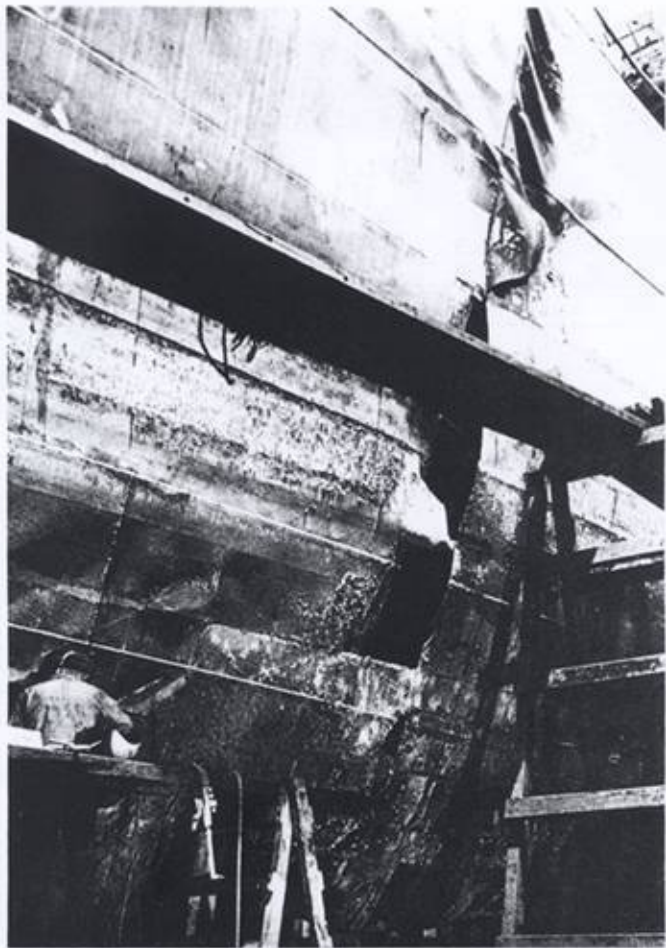
Looking up at frames 40 and 35, starboard side.



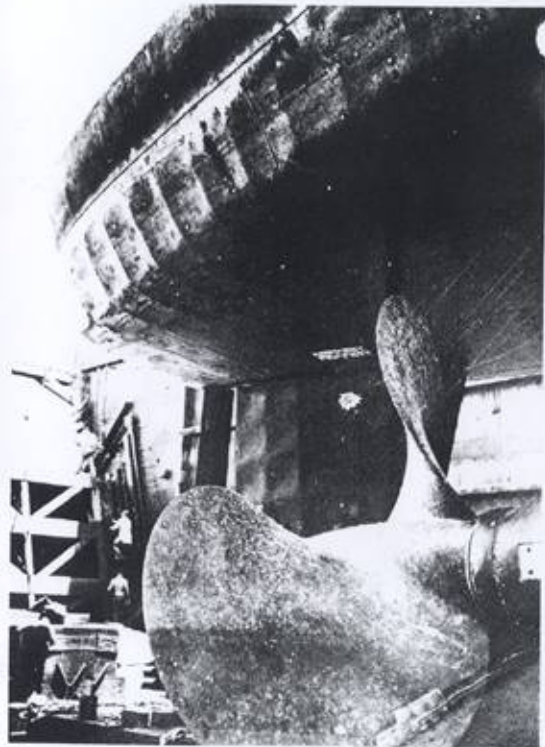
Looking up into frame 40, starboard side.



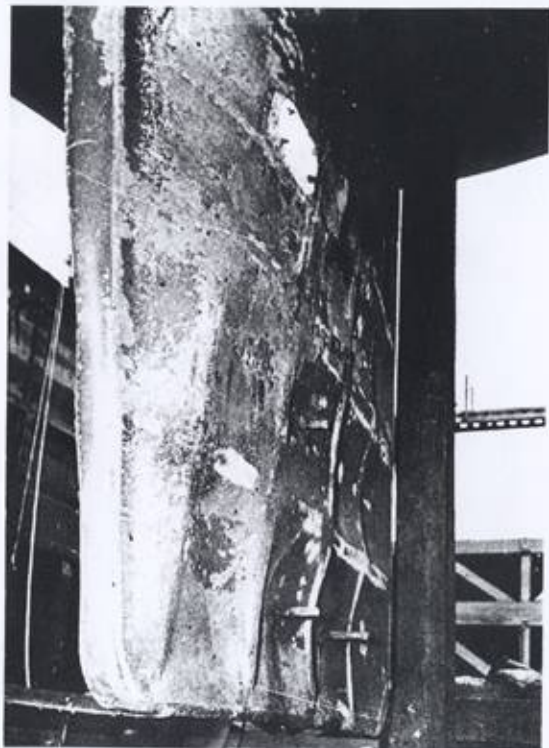
Looking up into frame 35, starboard side.



Frame 30, port side looking aft.



Screw and fantail from starboard side aft.



Rudder from port side aft.