

E. Andrew Wilde, Jr., Editor

**The U.S.S. *Peary* (DD-226) in World War II,  
Manila to Darwin, 12/10/41–2/19/42:  
Documents and Photographs**

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1210 Greendale Ave., #339  
Needham, MA 02192  
July 5, 1997

U.S.S. Perry (DMS-17) Crewmembers,

It is my pleasure to present you with a copy of the booklet I've compiled on your ship. It is the fourteenth such booklet I have completed on destroyer-type vessels from World War II, but it is my first on a minesweeper. In addition to the survivors (all except two of my booklets have been about ships which were sunk) I send copies to about a dozen naval museums/libraries around the country, so the Perry's story will be preserved for future naval historians.

You don't owe me anything for the booklet, but contributions will be appreciated. I'm really more interested in seeing that every survivor gets a copy than I am in breaking even. In the case of the Perry, I'm also sending copies to those who were transferred off just prior to the mining and to those who were aboard during the attack on Pearl Harbor. I'm sorry that I can't supply extra copies, but I hope you'll have copies made at a copying store for your family.

I wish to thank "Mike" Michaels for his early enthusiastic support and the address list he sent me, and Jack Steward, Frank Pogue and Hedy Lynch for the material they sent me. I never would have found the 12-page oral history transcript (at the end of my booklet) if Cdr. Steward hadn't told me about it. Also, Ann Hassinger, the librarian at the U.S. Naval Institute Archives, is responsible for the great maps included in my booklet, so I wish to thank her.

Finally, how can we thank Captain Baldrige enough for his well written narrative about the events on September 13, 1944 and his fine description of minesweeping operations?! I'm not sure about his health - he's now 81 years old - but I sent him the first copy of my booklet in recognition of his gallant efforts to salvage your ship when he commanded the U.S.S. Preble (DM-20). If any of you wish to write him, his current address is: Captain Elward F. Baldrige, USN (Ret.)

1201 Braddock Place, #205  
Alexandria, VA 22314-1669

You may be interested in knowing that I am planning to mail a Perry booklet to the ex-Secretary of Defense, Dr. William J. Perry. He traces his lineage back to Commodore Perry, and he is very interested in the history of all the ships named after his ancestor.

Enjoy my booklet!



E. Andrew Wilde, Jr.  
Commander, USNR (Ret.)



The U.S.S. Perry (DMS-17) in World War II  
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*Any man who may be asked what he did to make his life worthwhile can respond with a good deal of pride and satisfaction, "I served in the United States Navy."*

*- President John F. Kennedy, addressing the new class of midshipmen at the United States Naval Academy on August 1, 1963.*







The "four-piper" destroyer U.S.S. Perry (DD-340) practicing underway refueling alongside the battleship U.S.S. Pennsylvania (BB-38) in 1932. Originally commissioned at Mare Island, California, in 1922, she was decommissioned in early 1923 and then recommissioned in 1930. The Perry was converted to a high-speed minesweeper at Pearl Harbor in 1940 and redesignated DMS-17. (NHC photograph)

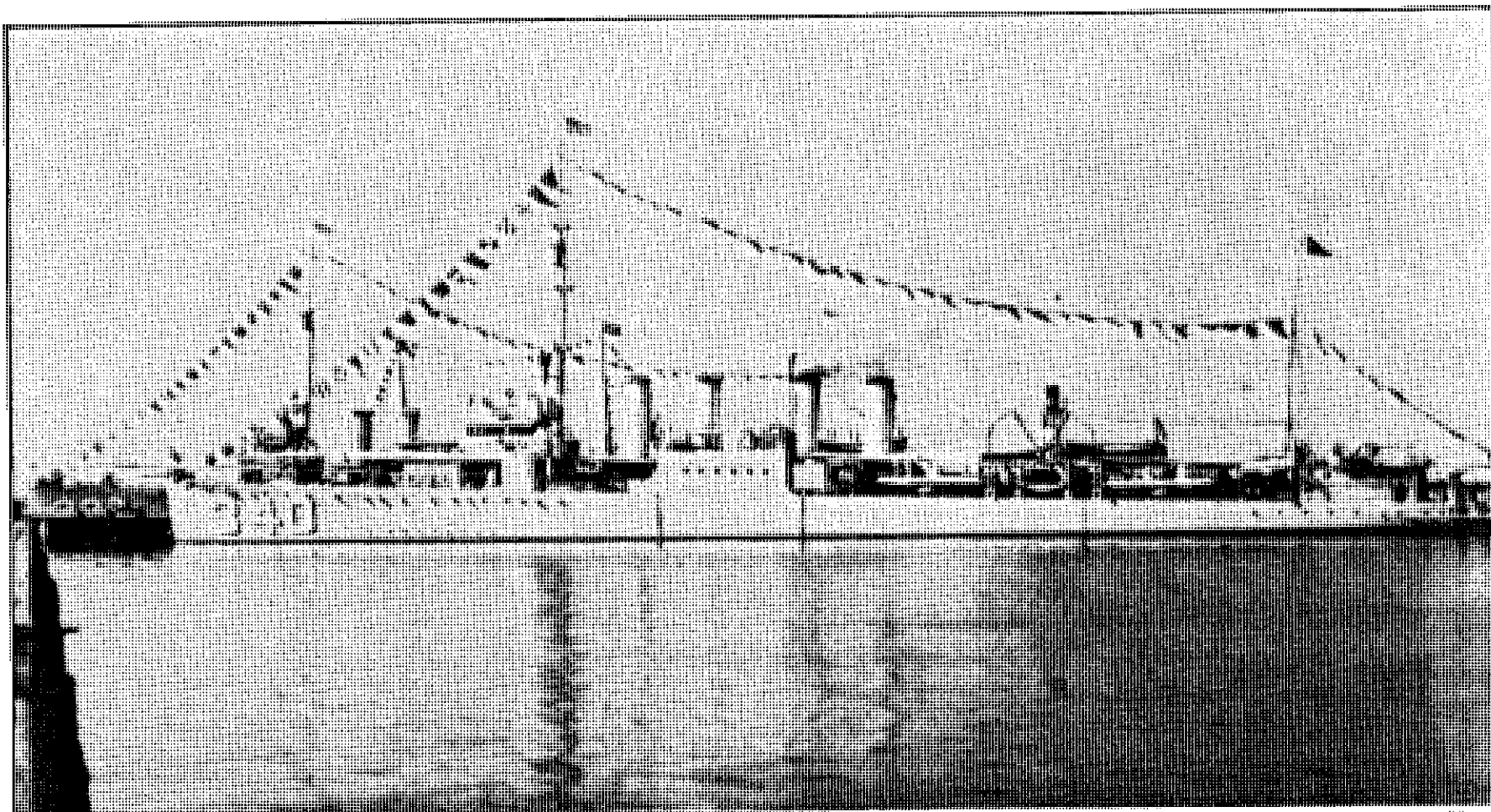


*Perry\**

Commodore Oliver Hazard Perry, born at Rocky Point, South Kingston, R.I., 20 August 1785, was appointed Midshipman 7 April 1799 and served in revenue cutter *General Green* during the Naval War with France. He fought in frigates *Adams* and *Constellation* during the Barbary Wars. In the War of 1812, Perry constructed and commanded a fleet of American warships on Lake Erie. When his flagship *Lawrence* was shattered and sinking in the Battle of Lake Erie, Perry fired her last effective gun, took his battle flag, and rowed across shot-splashed waters to *Niagara* where he fought on to victory, and reported, "We have met the enemy and they are ours. . ." The victory gave the United States control of Lake Erie and enabled Perry and General Harrison to take a large part of Canadian territory which helped American Commissioners at Ghent to negotiate a treaty favorable to the United States. When peace was restored, Perry commanded frigate *Java* in the Mediterranean. In May 1819 he went to Venezuela to seek help in protecting American ships off the northern coast of South America, waters then plagued by pirates. After sailing to the Spanish Main in *John Adams*, he ascended the Orinoco River in *Nonsuch*. At Angostura, Perry succeeded in negotiating a favorable treaty, but contracted fever and died 23 August 1819.

\* Dictionary of American Naval Fighting Ships, Volume 5. Washington: U.S. Naval Historical Center, 1970.





The 1,190-ton Glasgow-class destroyer U.S.S. Perry (DD-340) at Key West, Florida, on July 4th, 1934. She is "fully dressed" for the occasion, with signal flags displayed from bow to stern over the masts and the national colors hoisted at both mastheads. Her armament included twelve 21-in. torpedoes in four triple-tube mounts on the main deck. Her two portside mounts are clearly visible in this view, forward and aft of her boat davits. The Perry was also fitted with four 4-in. deck guns. (U.S. Naval Historical Center.)



History of the U.S.S. Perry (DD-340/DMS-17)\*  
(A 1,190-ton World War I Clemson-class destroyer)

(DD-340: dp. 1,190; l. 314' 5"; b. 30' 8"; dr. 13' 6"; s. 36 k.;  
cpl. 133; a. 4 4", 1 3", 12 21" tt.; cl. *Clemson*)

The third *Perry* (DD-340) was laid down 15 September 1920 at the Mare Island Navy Yard, Vallejo, Calif.; launched 29 October 1921; sponsored by Miss Anne R. Scudder; and commissioned 7 August 1922, Lt. Richard H. Booth in command.

*Perry* operated out of San Diego until 17 January 1923. Then decommissioned, she remained in reserve until recommissioned 1 April 1930. Operations off California were followed in late summer by a cruise to Alaska with members of the US Senate embarked for an inspection trip. Squadron, fleet and joint Army—Navy—Coast Guard exercises in the eastern Pacific, the Caribbean and the western Atlantic filled her schedule for the next decade.

On 2 April 1940, *Perry* departed San Diego for her new homeport, Pearl Harbor. For the next five months she patrolled in Hawaiian waters, then in October, entered the naval shipyard at Pearl Harbor for conversion to a high speed minesweeper. Redesignated DMS-17, effective 19 November 1940, she joined MinRon 2 at Pearl Harbor in January 1941. In late spring, she sailed back to San Diego, whence, on 1 July, she departed to escort *Arizona* to Pearl Harbor.

On 7 December 1941, *Perry* was moored at Pearl Harbor. Promptly after the Japanese attack she got underway and, having already splashed one of the attackers, took up patrol and sweeping duties in the approaches to the harbor entrance. She continued offshore patrols until 31 May 1942, then sailed east to California. Alterations at Mare Island followed and on 31 July, she departed, as convoy escort, for Pearl Harbor. From Hawaii, she steamed to Kodiak to assist in the Aleutian campaign. For the next year, until after the retaking of Kiska, 15 August 1943, *Perry* performed minesweeping and rescue missions and escorted troop and supply convoys in the foggy waters of the north Pacific.

On 8 September, *Perry* departed Adak and sailed south. Stopping first in Hawaii, she continued on to San Francisco for repairs. Back at Pearl Harbor 27 November, she joined the 5th Fleet, then staging for the Marshall Islands campaign. On 31 January 1944, she arrived off Kwajalein and took up antisubmarine station in the transport area. She departed that atoll five days later, escorted troopships to Noumea, conducted sweeping operations in the Solomons, and then, on 3

\* Dictionary of American Naval Fighting Ships, Vol. 5  
(Naval Historical Center, 1970)

April, sailed with MinRon 2 for New Guinea. Three days later, she joined the 7th Fleet at Milne Bay. In mid-month she got underway, with TG 77.3 and, acting as ocean escort and anti-submarine screen, arrived with that group off Aitape on the 22nd. Prior to the assault there, she swept between Tamara and Alli Islands, then took up antisubmarine patrol and shore bombardment duties.

*Perry* remained in New Guinea waters until 6 May, when she steamed east to rejoin the 5th Fleet in the Solomons and prepare for the invasion of the Marianas. Assigned to TG 51.17, *Perry* arrived off Saipan and commenced sweeping operations 13 June—under cover from the battleships of TF 58. Completing sweeping operations the following day, she resumed screening duties in the forward area, maintaining her protective posture over the transports off the assault beaches through the landings and the Battle of the Philippine Sea. On 26 June, she departed Saipan for Eniwetok, whence she sailed, with TG 53.1, for Guam. Between the 14th and the 20th she screened vessels delivering the preinvasion bombardment; then, as troops were landed on the 21st, joined the screen of the fire support units.

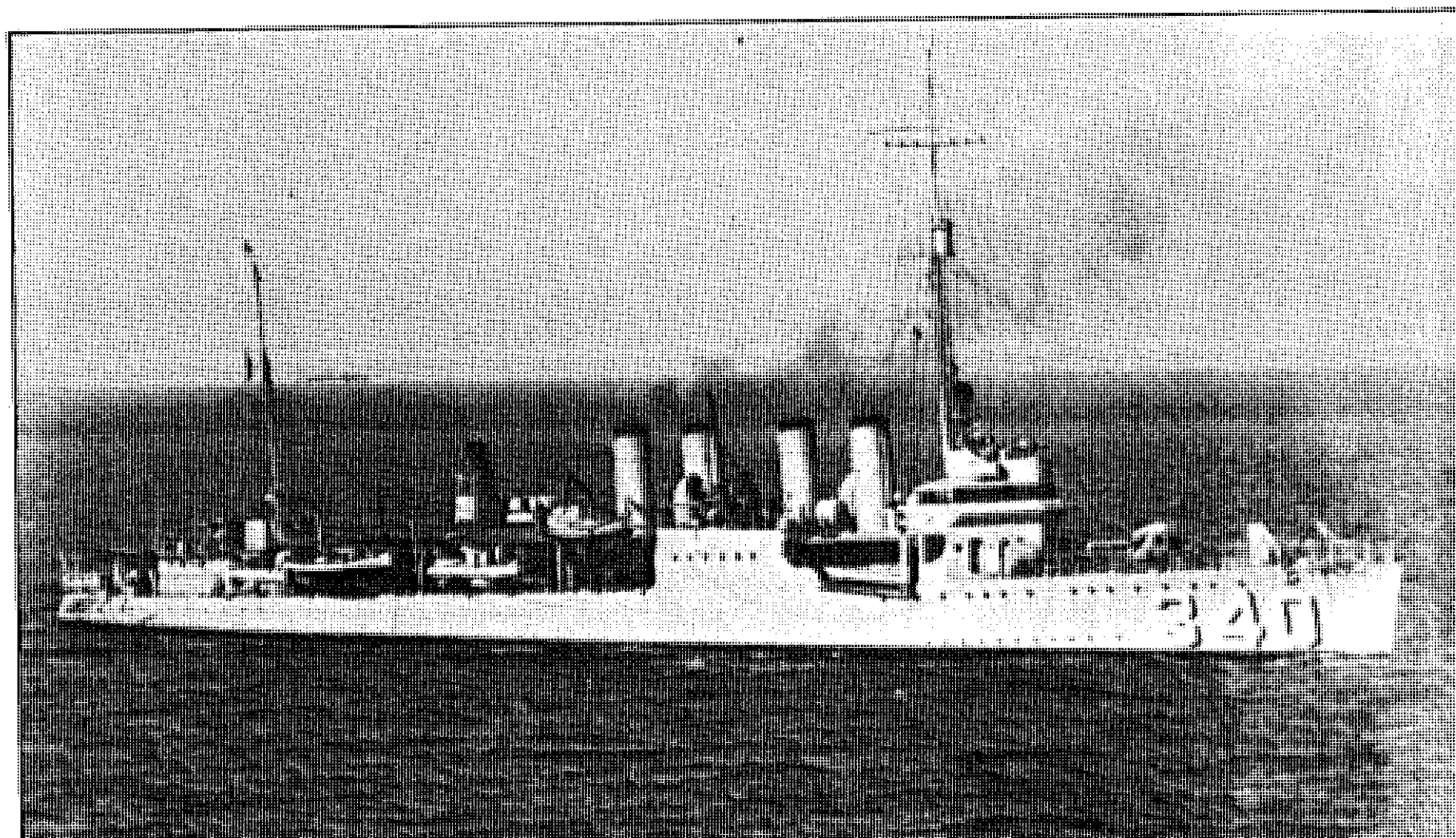
Prior to departing the Marianas, five days later, *Perry* participated in the shelling of Rota, then returned to Guam, whence she sailed, the same day, for Eniwetok in the transport screen. Further exercises in the Solomons preceded her next, and last, assignment, the Palau invasion.

On 6 September MinRon 2 sortied from Florida Island. On the 12th they reached their objective and the units commenced sweeping operations off Pelelieu Island. At 0811, a mine explosion destroyed *Perry's* port sweep gear. By 1028 she had replaced the gear and was back in formation to continue operations until early afternoon. That night she carried out anti-submarine patrols and early the next morning, 13 September, resumed her sweeping mission. At 1418, off Anguar, a violent underwater explosion, starboard side amidships, shook the ship. All steam to her main engines was lost and the forward fireroom was demolished and flooded. Steam and oil sprayed in all directions and the ship took on a 30° list to port. The list increased and, at 1420, the commanding officer ordered "abandon ship". With the aid of *Preble* (DD-345) final attempts to save the vessel were made, but, at 1515, all remaining personnel were ordered off. At 1605, *Perry* capsized. She broke in two at the point of damage and, at 1607, sank in 40 fathoms of water.

*Perry* (DMS-17) earned 6 battle stars during World War II.

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The destroyer U.S.S. Percy (DD-340) underway in the early 1930's before she was converted to a fast mine-sweeper. She was redesignated DMS-17 on November 19, 1940, while at the Mare Island Navy Yard in California. During this conversion her after boiler and stack were replaced by fuel tanks to increase her range, and her three remaining stacks were shortened. All of her hull ports were plated over. Other changes included replacing her 4-inch single-purpose deck guns with 3-inch dual-purpose ones which could be used for antiaircraft protection as well as against surface targets, and the removal of all twelve torpedo tubes to provide space for sweep gear and depth-charge projectors ("K"-guns). (U.S. Naval Historical Center)



Excerpt from Destroyers in Action  
by Richard A. Shafter\*

*"A Lovely Ship"*

*(Copyrighted material deleted in this library copy)*

\* New York: Cornell Maritime Press, 1945





The fast minesweeper U.S.S. Perry (DMS-17) at the Mare Island Navy Yard, California, on July 22, 1942, after changes had been made in her armament to provide better antiaircraft protection. When the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor on December 7th, 1941, the Perry was able to open fire on enemy planes only when they came within range of her machine guns (six .50-caliber and two .30-caliber). After this attack she patrolled the waters around Hawaii for six months and then returned to the States. Following her 1942 refit the Perry participated in the Aleutian campaign for a year, conducting minesweeping operations, performing rescue missions and acting as a convoy escort. (Official U.S. Navy photograph.)



U.S.S. Perry (DMS-17)

Summary of Commanding Officers in World War II:<sup>1</sup>

LCdr. Lermond H. <u>Miller</u> , USN	21 Oct. 1941 - 13 Apr. 1942
LCdr. Bernhart A. <u>Fuetsch</u> , USN	13 Apr. 1942 - 30 Oct. 1943
Lt. Ira G. <u>Stubbart</u> , USN	30 Oct. 1943 - 3 Sep. 1944
Lt. William N. <u>Lindsay</u> , USNR	3 Sep. 1944 - 13 Sep. 1944 <sup>2</sup>

\* \* \* \* \*

1 Source: The ship's deck logs for 1941-1944 at National Archives II, College Park, Maryland.

2 The Perry struck a moored mine and sank on 13 September 1944 while sweeping the waters off Anguar Island in the Palaus.









DMS17/A16-3  
Serial 0234

U.S.S. PERRY (DMS17),  
Pearl Harbor, T.H.,  
December 22, 1941.

~~C-O-N~~ ~~DECLASSIFIED~~  
~~DECLASSIFIED~~

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

Subject: Japanese Air Raid on Pearl Harbor, December  
7, 1941.

Reference: (a) CINCPAC despatch 102102 of December 1941.

1. The following report is submitted in compliance  
with reference (a):

A. Offensive measures:

Commencing at 0759, approximately one minute after the raid began, all machine guns (6 - .50 caliber and 2 - .30 caliber) were manned and opened fire at Japanese planes within range. General quarters was sounded about this time. (Ammunition was kept at the guns in the ready ammunition lockers; was thus immediately available.) Four planes were shot down within range of Mine Division FOUR. Due to the promptness and accuracy with which fire was opened and the high volume of fire that was maintained, at least one and probably more of these planes can be credited to the PERRY.

Some time after the start of the raid, personnel on the after deck house of the PERRY saw a submarine partially surface, heading toward Middle Loch and swinging toward the moorings of the MEDUSA, CURTIS and VESTAL. Number four (4") gun was promptly manned and two shots were fired. The first was well over, then the sights were reset to 300 yards and a second salvo was fired. No one observing the fall of shot saw the splash of this projectile. Unofficially it was reported to have passed through and exploded in the conning tower or hull of the submarine. The MEDUSA was also firing on the same enemy. No more shots were fired by this ship as the MACDONOUGH was seen coming up fast. The submarine may have fired a torpedo at the MACDONOUGH - one was seen to be fired just as the PERRY second shot was fired. She dropped a depth charge beside



DMS17/A16-3  
Serial 0234

U.S.S. PERRY (DMS17),  
Pearl Harbor, T.H.,  
December 22, 1941.

~~C-O-N-F-I-D-E-N-T-I-A-L~~

~~DECLASSIFIED~~

Subject: Japanese Air Raid on Pearl Harbor, December  
7, 1941.

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the sub and narrowly avoided running aground beyond. The submarine disappeared from view.

The Commanding Officer would appreciate the information as to whether, in the conning tower or hull of the submarine sunk off the moorings of the CURTISS, there is a hole made by a 4" projectile. It is believed that no other ship was firing a 4" gun at this enemy target.

B. Damage to enemy.

Partial or total destruction of from one to four enemy planes shot down within range of PERRY guns which were firing.

Possible sinking of one submarine in Pearl Harbor.

C. Own losses and damage.

There were no personnel lost in the PERRY. One casualty occurred when the gun captain of #3 .50 caliber machine gun, J. C. COLE, F.C.3c, USN., received a flesh wound from an enemy machine gun bullet in his throat. He received temporary treatment on board and was later transferred to the Pearl Harbor Naval Hospital for removal of the bullet.

Minor damage to rigging and antennae was sustained from machine gun fire and bomb fragments.

D. Distinguished conduct of personnel.

Too much can not be said for the high order of conduct of all hands, who, totally inexperienced under fire, went about their duties with superb coolness and disregard of danger. To my mind this applies particularly to the men who had jobs giving them no opportunity to shoot back - the ship was ready to get underway 32 minutes



Pearl Harbor, T.H.,  
December 22, 1941.~~CONFIDENTIAL~~  
~~DECLASSIFIED~~  
CONFIDENTIAL-A-LSubject: Japanese Air Raid on Pearl Harbor, December  
7, 1941.  
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after the raid started. The ammunition parties functioned smoothly, efficiently, and quickly. Early in the engagement, when COLE was wounded on #3 .50 caliber machine gun, G. A. CHRISTIAN, F.C.3c, USN., who had been secured from his normal station on the 4" director, quickly ran to the gun and took up the fire.

Ensign G. G. BALL, USN., of the class of 1941, U.S. Naval Academy, got the ship underway, when ordered by the senior officer in the nest, and took the ship to sea, screened the U.S.S. LOUISVILLE, commenced the streaming of the magnetic sweep preparing for a sweep of the vicinity of the harbor entrance and acted as Commanding Officer until the arrival on board, via navy yard boat, of the Captain off the entrance buoys about four hours later. His actions were those of an officer of far greater experience. See paragraph "E" for further remarks on this officer.

I believe these to be but two of many acts worthy of the term distinguished but which go unheard by their similarity.

E. Other items of interest.

When the air raid on Oahu started, Ensign G. G. BALL, USN, class of 1941, U.S. Naval Academy, was having breakfast in the home of his parents, Colonel and Mrs. R.M. Bathurst at Schofield Barracks. At the first bomb burst at Wheeler Field, about 0730, Ensign BALL quickly got out his car and tore for the Pearl City Landing, pursued by enemy strafers firing on the roads. He arrived at the landing and commandeered a boat to the nest and took charge of operations in the PERRY. On board besides himself were two young reserve officers. One of them was senior to Ensign BALL, but deferred to BALL's poised and cool reactions. BALL's conduct deserves the utmost praise. His readiness was due in my opinion, first, to a fine background and second to the training received by him from my predecessor Lieutenant Commander R. E. ELLIOTT, USN., in ship handling and in accepting responsibility. I am proud to have him on board. Incidentally, Ensign BALL





DMS17/A16-3  
Serial 0234

U.S.S. PERRY (DMS17),  
Pearl Harbor, T.H.,  
December 22, 1941.

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~  
C-G-N-F-H-D-E-N-T-I-A-L

Subject: Japanese Air Raid on Pearl Harbor, December  
7, 1941.

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has been Chief Engineer of the PERRY since June 1, 1941,  
filling the bill completely.

I wish to invite attention to the fact that all  
hands in the PERRY went to their battle stations, in  
advance of the sounding of the general alarm.

*L. H. Miller*  
L. H. MILLER.

Copy to:  
Combasefor  
Cominron 2  
Comindiv 4



## LIST OF OFFICERS

Attached to and on board of the U. S. S. PERRY (DMS17), commanded  
by L. H. MILLER, Lieut. Comdr., U. S. N., during the period covered by this Log Book, with date of  
reporting for duty, detachment, transfer, or death, from 1 December, 19 41, to 31 December, 19 41.

[illegible]

Examined and found to be correct.

H. MYERS,  
Lieutenant, USN.

Navigator.



U.S.S. Perry (DMS-17)

Muster Roll of the Crew; 31 December 1941\*

ALEXANDER, Fred Hepler	GM2c	HONE, Lynroid G.	WT1c
BAKER, Robert Dean	S1c	HUNSAKER, Norris Wayland	S2c
BANNON, Andrew George	MM1c	HUNTER, Charles Robert	BM1c
BANISTER, Clarence Edgar	Y2c	JACKSON, Vernon Casmere	MM1c
BARNARD, James Howard	F2c	JOHNSON, Ernest Lester	SC1c
BAYERSDORFER, Frederick S.	WT1c	LARSEN, William Edward	CBM
BELL, William Holden	RM3c	LATTIMORE, Hugh Russell	MAtt2
BLOUNT, James Ernest	S1c	LAWTER, Fred McCoy	F1c
BOYENGA, Harold John	S2c	LEE, George Elvington	MM2c
BRAND, Joseph James	F1c	LISHMAN, Charles Edward	S1c
BREGOLI, Perche (n)	F1c	LYNCH, John Joseph, Jr.	QM2c
CARMACK, Luther Wendell	S2c	LYNN, George Wilson	S1c
CHAPMAN, Roland Roosevelt	MM1c	LYONS, Roy Myron	Cox
CHILDERS, David Oliver	S1c	MAERSHBECKER, Nicolas, Jr.	WT2c
CHMIELEWSKI, Edward Joseph	Y3c	MAGGARD, Joseph Elmo	QM2c
CHLIPALA, Stanley (n)	EM3c	MARTIN, Albert Louis	SC2c
CHRISTIAN, George Avant	FC3c	MAY, Galiland Waldren	COSTd
CLANCY, Edward Joseph	S1c	McMINN, Elwood Sidney	Msmth2
CLARK, Homer Lyle	MM2c	McQUEEN, Harold Edgar, Jr.	S2c
COPLEY, Samuel (n)	BM1c	MILLER, Lee Roy	S1c
COREY, John Arthur	S2c	MILLER, Orville E.	S2c
DECKER, August Jacob	CMM	MITCHELL, Kenneth Otto	RM2c
DETRICK, Harold Lloyd	S1c	NEMETH, John Andrew	SM1c
DONOVAN, Thomas Leonard, Jr.	MM1c	NIELSEN, Ernest Walter	Cox
DREHER, Herbert Frederick	CQM	O'BRIEN, Ralph Daniel	F1c
DU BARD, Melvin Hart	MM2c	PAULI, Lloyd Clark	F3c
EDWARDS, John Hardy	CSM	PETTYJOHN, Jack Ernest	S2c
ELKINS, Carl (n)	EM2c	PHILLIPS, Jack Diamond	S2c
EPPS, Edward Wells	SM2c	RAHN, Jacob Irvin, Jr.	MM1c
FAGUNDES, Edward Anthony	S2c	RAYBURN, Sedgie Eugene	CM3c
FARLEY, Jack Eugene	S1c	RICHARDSON, James (n)	OC2c
FELTHAUS, Bernard Joseph Jr.	GM3c	ROBERTS, Lee Andrew	MAtt2
FITZGERALD, Hollis Boyd, Jr.	S1c	RONYECZ, Joseph Stephen	F1c
FOUCAULT, Leon Phillip	BM2c	ROSS, Herman Shirley	OS2c
FRANKE, Joseph William	CEM	RUDZINSKI, Anthony William	SK1c
GENNETTE, Lawrence (n)	WT1c	SANSON, Lloyd Dale	SC3c
GORMAN, James Mack, III	S2c	SCHULTZ, John (n)	CMM
GOSSARD, Ronald Johnson	F1c	SCULLY, Royal Parry	CMM
GREEN, Norman Miles	WT2c	SEEST, James Monro	F2c
GREENWOOD, Cecil Louis, Jr.	RM3c	SHEETS, Harold Hill	GM3c
GREGORY, Gene Chesnutt	RM2c	SHEROKY, Joseph (n)	S2c
HENDERSON, William Henry	GM2c	SHIELDS, James Albert	MM2c
HENSON, Harry Curtis	GM1c	SINGLETON, Warren Joseph	MAtt1
HEPP, Harold Henry	CPhM	SKUDERA, Daniel George	F2c
HICKMAN, Leonard Grant	F1c	SMITH, Fred George	F2c
HOHNER, Richard Victor	S2c	SMITH, Granville Physic	CWT
HOLMBERG, Emmet Clarence	S2c	SMITH, James Preston	S2c



SPENCER, Jesse William	S1c	TERRANO, Frank Paul	F2c
STANCO, Michael William	F2c	TERRELL, John Junior	S1c
STARCZEK, John (n)	F2c	THOMA, Howard Victor	S2c
STILLION, Donald Douglas	S1c	THOMAS, Richard Dorman	S2c
STORM, Leo Francis	F3c	THOMAS, Roland Louis	S2c
ST. PIERRE, James Russell	F3c	TIMAR, Luke Vincent	F1c
STRACK, Francis John	S2c	TOMPKINS, Paul Otie	S1c
STRANO, Salvador Markery	S2c	TREIBER, John Lewis	F2c
SUDANO, Anthony, Jr.	F2c	TREIBER, Paul Junior	BM2c
SULLIVAN, Harold Hayes	S1c	WINGATE, Randolph Charles	F2c
SWARTZ, Michael Vincent	SF1c	WONDERLY, Alvin Hamilton	WT1c
SYTH, Hallie Arthur	S2c	WOOD, Thomas Walter	EM3c
SZABLEWSKI, Walter Joseph	S1c	YEAMAN, Sam Jones	S1c
TARDO, Salvador (n)	S2c	YOUNG, Charles Estill, Jr.	Y1c
TEMPLE, Demonte William	S1c		

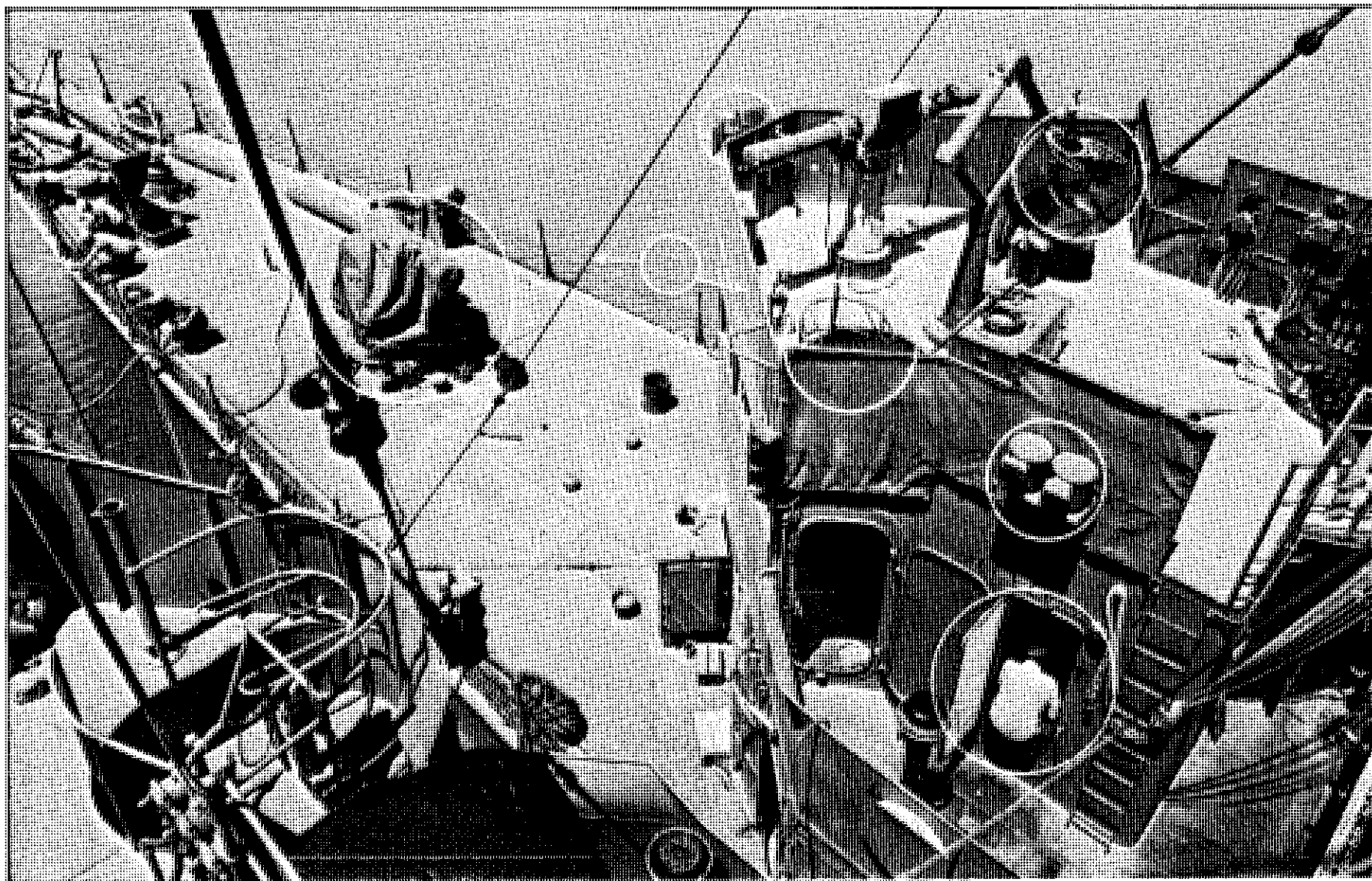
\* \* \* \* \*

\* Source: The ship's personnel diary on microfilm at National Archives II in College Park, Maryland.

Enlisted complement on 31 December 1941: 123

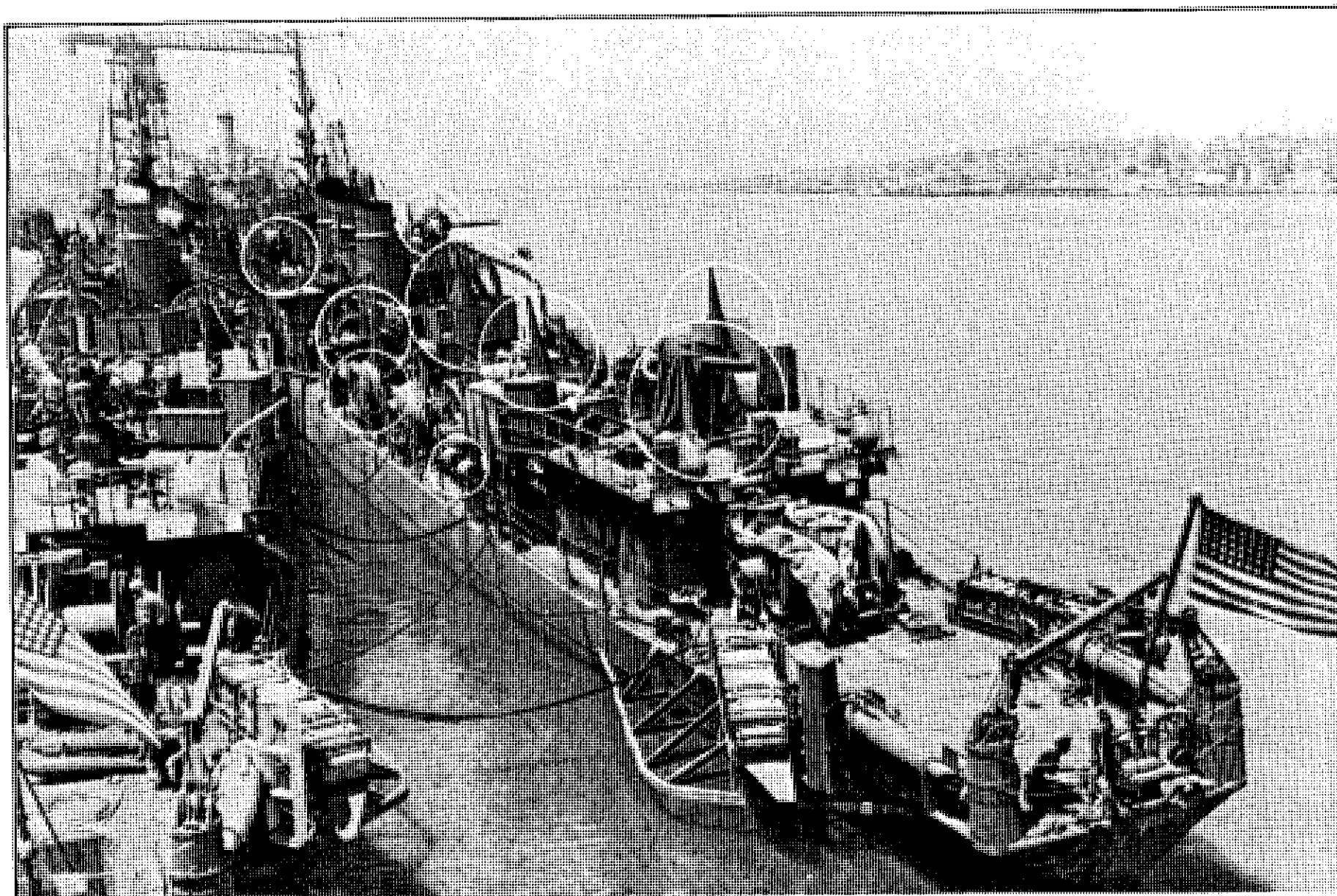






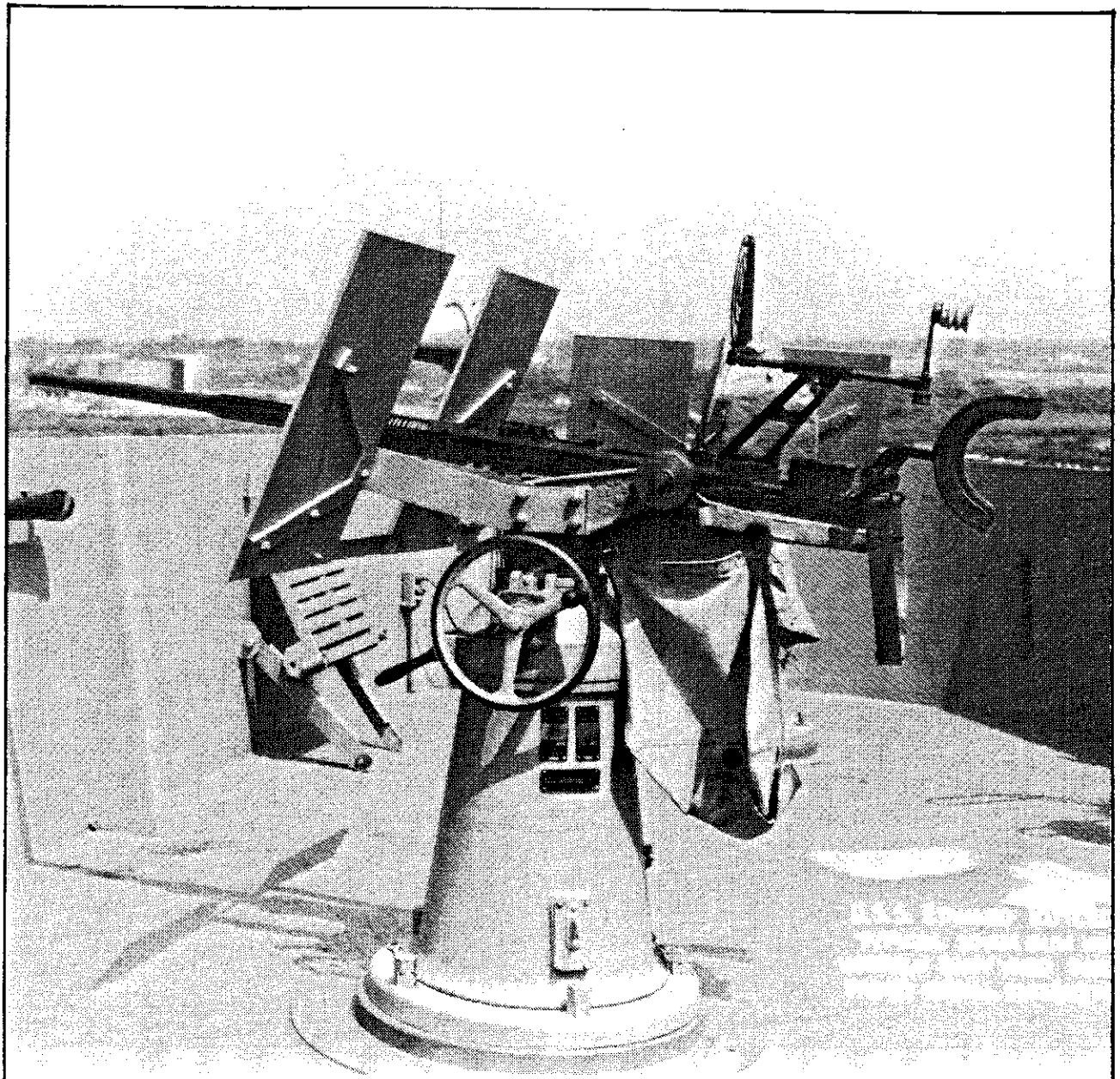
A view of the Perry's facade taken on July 23, 1942, upon completion of a refit at the Mare Island Navy Yard in California, with circles showing the alterations which were made at this time. All four of the Perry's 4-inch/50 single-purpose deck guns were replaced by dual-purpose 3-inch/50 guns which could be used against both air and surface targets. (USN photo.)





Four depth-charge projectors ("X"-guns), two on each side (port-side mounts circled), and new life rafts were added during this refit at Mare Island in July, 1942. This stern view also shows the two additional 20-mm. machine cannons (for a total of five) mounted on the after gun platform forward of the 3-inch/50 dual-purpose gun. The squared-off false stern was added during her minesweeper conversion to support the two sweeping davits. The stern depth-charge tracks were angled at that time to provide room for the sweeping winch and paravane. (Official U.S. Navy photograph.)





*In 1941 the 20-mm Oerlikon air-cooled machine gun began to replace the .50-cal. water-cooled machine gun as the Navy's standard light antiaircraft weapon. (It was also called a machine cannon because it fired explosive shells.) This early Mark 4 version with an open-ring sight required a four-man crew: the gunner, a trunnion operator (to adjust the height of the gun carriage) and two loaders. When fitted with the Mark 14 gyroscopic sight, introduced in 1943, a range setter was also required to enter range data. The Oerlikon had an effective range of 1,600 yards and fired at a rate of 450 rounds/minute. (Official USN Photo.)*



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ORIGINAL

## ACTION REPORT

USS PERRY

DMS 17

SERIAL 09

NO DATE

ACTION REPORT.

[FORWARDS FORM REPORT OF ACTION DURING  
JAP AIR ATTACK ON SHIPPING IN CON-  
STANTINE HARBOR, AMCHITKA,  
15 FEBRUARY 1943.]

47415

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DMS17/A16-3  
Serial 09.

U.S.S. PERRY (DMS17),  
c/o Fleet Post Office,  
San Francisco, Calif.

**CONFIDENTIAL**

From: The Commanding Officer.  
To : The Commander-in-Chief, U.S. Pacific Fleet.  
Via : (1) The Commander, Alaskan Sector.  
(2) The Commander, Task Force EIGHT.  
(3) The Commander, Service Force, U.S. Pacific Fleet.  
Subject: Action Report.  
Enclosure: (A) Action Report of February 15, 1943.  
1. Enclosure (A) is submitted herewith.

B. A. FUETSCH.

Advance Copy to: ✓  
CINCUS.  
Copy to:  
Comseron SIX.

1943 MAR 8 11 01

COMMANDER IN CHIEF  
U.S. FLEET  
RECEIVED



REF ASSIGNED

# ANTI-AIRCRAFT ACTION BY SURFACE SHIPS

Location of ship Constantine Harbor, U. S. S. PERRY (DMS17)  
Anchitka, Alaska - Lying off  
net entrance. Date February 15 1943.

## NOTES

- Repel Attack First—Then collect data for this report!
- Do not "gun deck" this report—if data cannot be estimated with reasonable accuracy enter dash in space for which no data is available.
- These sheets are to be filled out immediately after action is completed with data available from ship's log, memory, and consultation with ship's officers. Information is essential in order that the effectiveness of our equipment can be determined. Where data is of doubtful accuracy fill in with general terms. The obtaining of this information must not be allowed in any way to adversely affect the handling of equipment during action.

- Surprise attack (yes or no) No
  - Method picking plane up (Radar, binoculars, naked eye) Radar  
 (If by Radar state type of set) SC-1
    - Lookout(s) or special equipment detector operator(s):  

<u>BUTLER, Jesse Lorenzo</u>	<u>R.M.20</u>	<u>510-04-61</u>
(Name)	(Rate)	(Service No.)

made initial contact by Radar  
 (sound), (radar), (SMSD), (MAD), (Sight)
  - Range plane was picked up (50 miles, 30 miles, 10 miles, less 5 miles) 17.8 miles.
  - Number of planes Six (6)
  - Type of plane (Fighter, scout, dive-bomber) Float-fighters Type of attack Level Bombing
  - Speed & altitude (High and fast, intermediate and fast, low and fast, high and slow, intermediate and slow, low and slow) Intermediate and slow.
  - Guns firing SPDN 2896 Size 3"/50 Cal Number Four (4)  
 Method of control Local Method spotting Control Officer  
Deflection only.
  - Ammunition expended 36 rounds.
  - Percent service allowance expended 3.00 %
  - Approximate time tracking to first shot 30 seconds.
  - Approximate time of first hits None
  - Approximate time first shot to last shot 4 min.
- # Initial Radar contact made by USS DEWEY and reported to ships present over T.B.S.

Enclosure (A)



CONFIDENTIAL

ORIGINAL

ACTION REPORT

USS PERRY

DMS 17

SERIAL 016

24 JULY 1943

SURFACE BOMBARDMENT OF ENEMY INSTALLATIONS  
ON KISKA ISLAND, 22 JULY 1943 - REPORT OF.

53421

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DESI7/A16-3  
Serial 016.

U.S.S. PERRY (DESI7),  
c/o Fleet Post Office,  
San Francisco, Calif.,  
July 24, 1943.

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

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

Via : (1) The Commander Task Group 16.22.  
(2) The Commander Task Force 16.

Subject: Surface Bombardment of Enemy Installations  
on Kiska Island, 22 July 1943 - report of.

1. This vessel participated in surface bombardment of enemy installations on Kiska Island on the afternoon of Thursday, 22 July 1943, by Task Group 16.22, Rear Admiral R.M. GRIFFIN, U.S. Navy.

2. Throughout the bombardment this vessel was employed exclusively as a screening unit in station sixty (60) degrees on the port bow of the leading battleship, distance four thousand (4,000) yards. This station was maintained throughout the exercise.

3. This vessel expended no ammunition as the bombardment range was in excess of the extreme range of our battery.

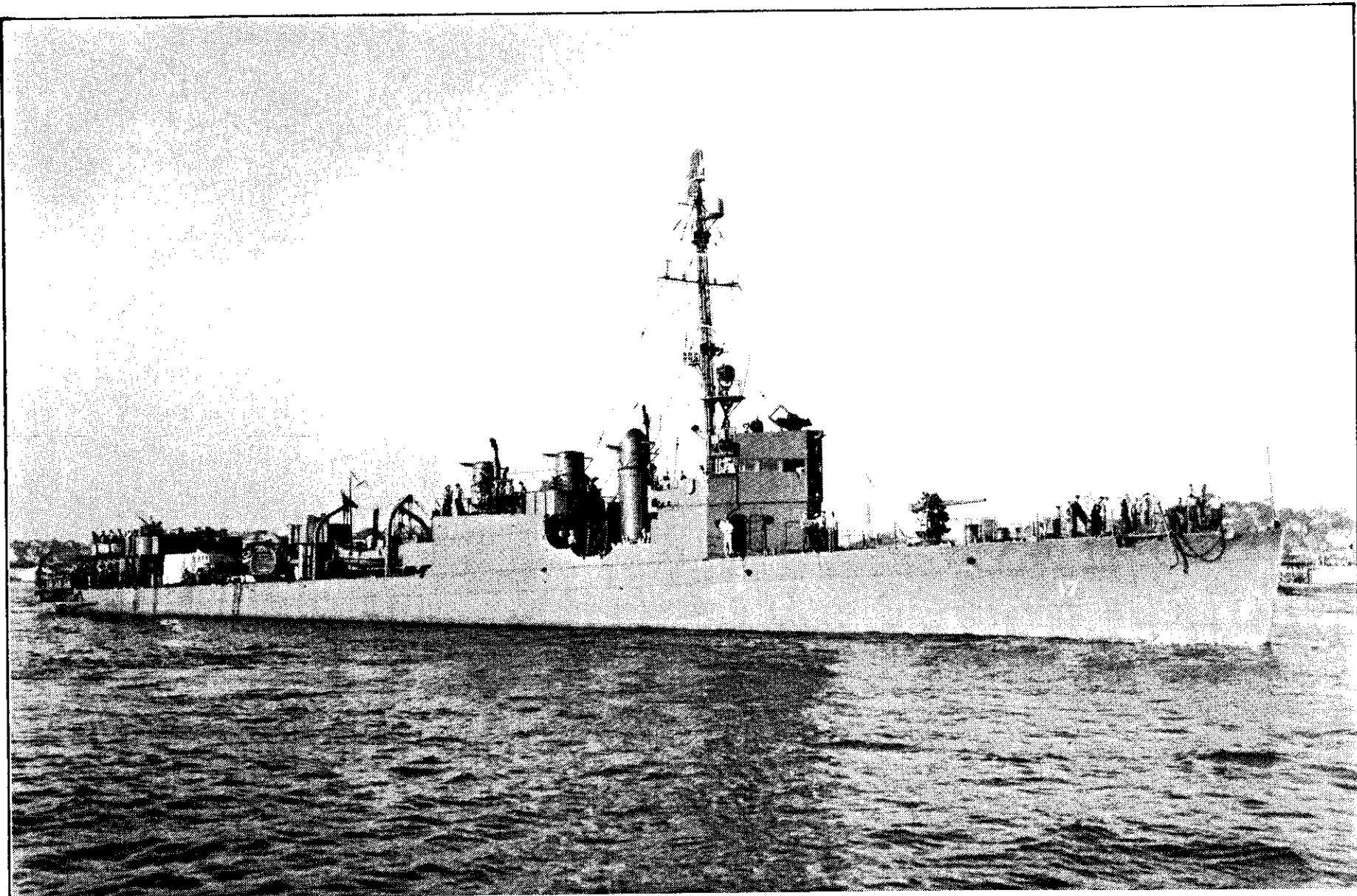
4. There were no casualties to either ship or personnel; no return fire was observed.

5. A very good view was had of the bombardment of Kiska by U.S. Army bombers immediately preceding the surface action. Anti-aircraft fire was commenced well before our planes reached their release points, and initial pattern was considerably ahead of planes but at correct altitude. Bursts moved behind planes but were corrected by drastic spots. It appeared to observers on this vessel that enemy spotting may have been done by remote spotters located in the northern part of the island, who could easily have spotted in deflection for the type of bombing runs made from East to West across North Head. It was particularly impressive to note the rapidity of spots which caused bursts to ~~drop~~ <sup>appear</sup> on and ahead of the planes.

Copies to:  
Cominch (Advance) ✓  
Comsron SIX.  
Comsron TWO.







The fast minesweeper U.S.S. Perry (DMS-17) (Lt. I. G. Stubbart) at the Mare Island Navy Yard, California, on 2 November 1943. Following repairs and a refit she deployed to the southern Pacific where she participated in the Marshall Islands campaign (Kwajalein), the Hollandia (Dutch New Guinea) Operation, the Invasions in the Marianas (Saipan, Tinian and Guam) and finally, the capture of Angaur and Peleliu Islands in the Palau Group. ("Angaur" is also correct.) (Official U.S. Navy photograph.)



Excerpt from Battle Report: The End of an Empire\*

Minesweeping has always been a sweaty, unglamorous - but necessary - business. Before the sleek, powerful ships - those which accumulate the praise and the glory - can move into a newly won harbor, or even before they can nose close to enemy-held shore for bombardment, a safe path of approach must be cleared by the dogged little sweepers.

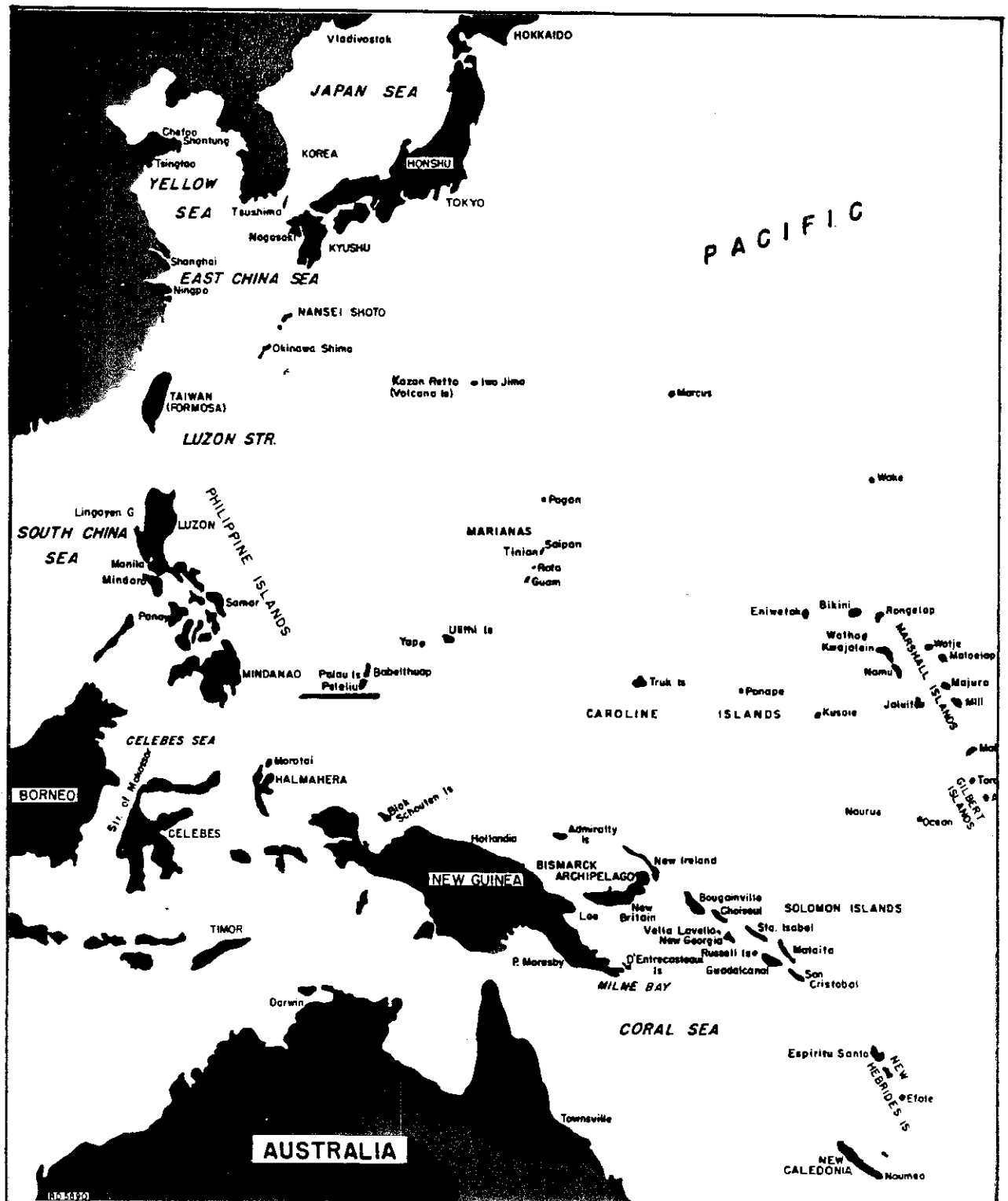
It is always the minesweeps that spearhead an invasion; it is always the minesweeps that open up the vital gap through which the amphibious forces pour their massed weight. And it is almost always a minesweep that gets sunk first.

Back and forth they go, in slow orderly formation, dragging their long tails of magnetic cable behind them, streaming their paravanes to port and starboard, and rattling out sounds like a riveting machine from the trip-hammer mechanism beneath their bows. Thus all kinds of mines - magnetic, contact, and acoustic - are cut from their moorings or detonated.

It is hard work, always nerve-shatteringly noisy, and frequently hull-shatteringly dangerous.

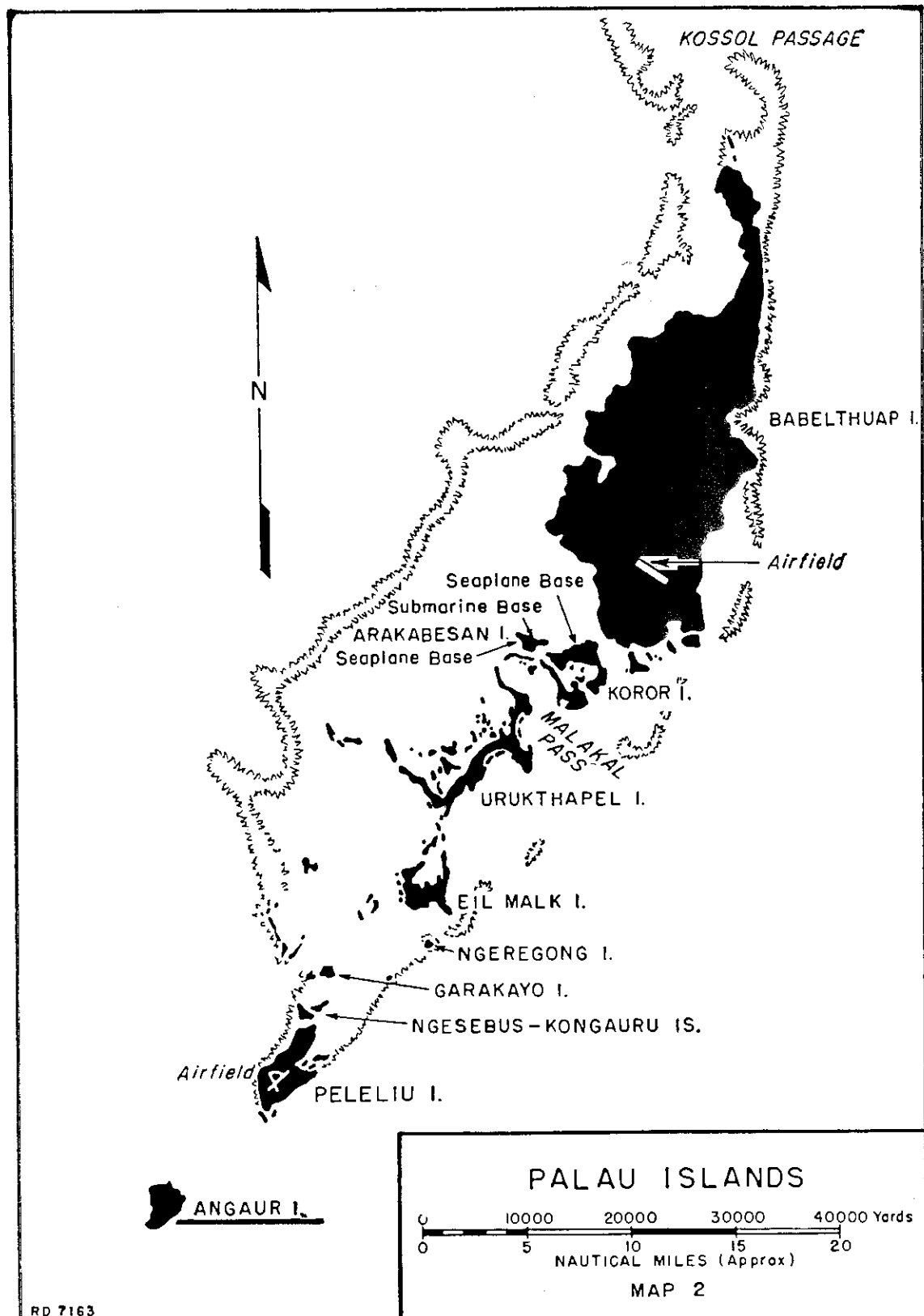
\* By W. Karig, R. L. Harris and F. A. Manson. (New York: Rinehart, 1948), p. 294.





The fast minesweeper U.S.S. Perry (DMS-17) was lost on September 13, 1944 during the invasion of the Palau Islands, 450 miles due east of Mindanao Island in the Philippines. After the islands were captured they were put to use as a staging area for ships and aircraft during the rest of the war. (Map courtesy of the USMC Historical Division)





RD 7163

Capturing Peleliu and Angaur cost the United States about 1,950 killed or missing and 8,500 wounded. A Japanese force remained on Babelthuap Island until the war ended, but it never fired on the ships which used the large anchorage in the Kossol Passage. The U.S.S. *Perry* (DMS-17) sank on September 13, 1944 (D-day minus 2) about 700 yards south of Angaur Island. (USMC map.)







The U.S.S. Parry (DM-17) (center) and the U.S.S. Preble (DM-20) shortly after the Parry was mined on 13 September 1944. The explosion caused an immediate 30 degree list to port and the loss of all power. Both fire-rooms flooded at once, causing the commanding officer, Lieut. William M. Lindsey, USNR, to order "Abandon Ship" just two minutes after she struck the mine. The ship broke in two and sank an hour and forty-five minutes later. Fortunately, casualties were low; 6 killed and 17 wounded out of a complement of 154. This photograph was taken from a floatplane off of the battleship U.S.S. Tennessee (BB-43). (Naval Historical Center)



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ACTION REPORT

ORIGINAL

USS PERRY

DMS 17

SERIAL 038-45

23 SEPTEMBER 1944

ACTION REPORT

[ IN TASK UNIT 32.9 FOR LANDINGS ON ANGAUR  
& PELELIU, PALAUS. REPORT COVERS 13 SEPTEMBER  
1944. ]

91548

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DMS17/A16-3

Serial 038-45

U.S.S. PERRY (DMS17)  
c/o Fleet Post Office,  
San Francisco, Calif.  
September 23, 1944.

**DECLASSIFIED**

From: The Commanding Officer.  
To : The Commander in Chief, U.S. Fleet.  
Via: Commander Task Unit 32.9.4  
Commander Task Group 32.9  
Commander Task Group 32.5  
Commander Task Force 32  
Commander Third Fleet  
Commander in Chief, Pacific Fleet.

Subject: Action Report.

Reference: (a) PacFlt Conf.ltr. 36 CL-42.  
(b) Art 712 (2) (3) US Navy Regulations.

Enclosure: (A) Hull Board Report.  
(B) Photostat copy of Navigational track.  
(C) Copy of Casualty reports to SecNav,  
PART I

1. On September 13, 1944, east longitude date Task Unit 32.9.4 (Lieutenant J.E. BRENNAN, USNR, Commander Mine Division Five, USS SOUTHARD, Flagship) composed of USS SOUTHARD and USS PERRY was engaged in sweeping areas #5 and #6 (CTF 32 OP Plan #501-44 Annex B, Appendix #1) north and east of Anguar Island for enemy mines. At 1418, in column astern USS SOUTHARD, having just completed a sweep on course 210°(T) and while maneuvering to make a final sweep, USS PERRY struck a mine in Latitude 06° 52' 23" N, Longitude 134° 08' 41" E.

2. A large hole was opened in the starboard side below the waterline, both firerooms were flooded, and all power was lost at once. The ship took an initial 30 degree list to port, which continued to increase. Abandon ship was ordered at about 1420. The ship riding to the sunken paravanes was drifting toward the south east coast of enemy-held Anguar Island. Efforts to tow the ship to deep water were fruitless because of the presence of mines endangering nearby ships. The ship capsized at 1605, broke in two at the point of explosion, and sank at 1607 (Zone minus nine time).

3. The surface of the sea was calm with slight swells. Wind from approximately 120° (T), force less than five knots.

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BMS17/4168  
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U.S.S. PERRY (DMS17)  
September 23, 1944.

Subject: Action Report.

PART II

1. USS PERRY left Guadalcanal area on September 6th and with other vessels of Task Group 32.9 (Commander W.R. LOUD, USN, Commander Mine Squadron Two, USS HOVEY, Flagship), and traveled to the objective in company with Task Group 32.5 (Rear Admiral J.B. OLDENDORF, USN, Commander Cruiser Division Four, USS LOUISVILLE, Flagship).
2. In accordance with CTG 32.5 OP Plan 1-44, Task Group 32.9, composed of USS HOVEY, USS SOUTHARD, USS HAMILTON, USS PERRY, USS LONG, USS MONTGOMERY, USS PREBLE, was detached at 0340 to conduct sweeping operations in accordance with Annex "BAKER" to CTF 32 OP Plan 501-44.
3. Sweeping gear was streamed and operations commenced as planned; the initial sweep being of areas #3 and #4 (CTF 32 OP Plan 501-44, Annex B, Appendix #1) on base course 325° (T), ships deployed in 10 degrees echelon to starboard. Order of ships, USS HOVEY, USS SOUTHARD, USS HAMILTON, USS PERRY, USS LONG, USS PREBLE and USS MONTGOMERY acting as mine destruction and buoy planting vessels respectively.
4. Additional sweeps followed, with ships deployed to port or starboard as directed.
5. At 0810 the unit, deployed to port, commenced a sweep along the northeast edge of areas 3 and 4, on base course 085° (T). Almost immediately, the leading ships began cutting mines adrift. Bobbing up in succession, they were close aboard USS PERRY, about one hundred feet to port of the ship's track. Six mines were observed from USS PERRY, and lookouts aft reported that two were swept by USS PERRY. At about 0815 USS HAMILTON'S port float disappeared, and that ship reported via TBS that she apparently had a mine fouled in her port paravane.
6. Expecting that the HAMILTON'S port gear was now dragging astern, and in view of the immediate danger that the fouled mine might free itself and come to the surface directly ahead, USS PERRY took station slightly outboard of USS HAMILTON. At 0820 an explosion occurred off the port quarter of USS PERRY which resulted in the loss of the port paravane, float, and about twenty five feet of sweep wire. Apparently the port paravane, had swept, fouled, and exploded a mine.

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DMS17/A46-3  
Serial 038-45

U.S.S. PERRY (DMS17)  
September 23, 1944.

Subject: Action Report.  
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7. On orders from CTG 32.9, USS PERRY hauled clear and streamed new gear using spare equipment, and at 1028 resumed station with the unit making final sweeps on areas #1, #2, #3 and #4.

8. Upon completion of the day's operations, USS PERRY with other ships of the unit joined T.U. 32.5.3 (Rear Admiral J.B. OLDENDORF, USN, Commander Cruiser Division Four, USS LOUISVILLE, Flagship) formation in the night retirement.

9. Upon return to the area in the morning, CTG 32.9 with USS LONG, USS HOVEY, USS HAMILTON and USS MONTGOMERY having gone to the Kossol Passage area in accordance with instructions, USS SOUTHARD, USS PERRY and USS PREBLE were detached at 0500 to conduct scheduled sweeps as T.U. 32.9.4 (Lieutenant J.E. BRENNAN, USNR, Commander Mine Division five, USS SOUTHARD, Flagship). USS SOUTHARD and USS PERRY sweeping and USS PREBLE acting as mine destruction unit.

10. Sweeps of areas #5 and #6 were made on approximate courses 325° (T), and 145° (T). At 0948 USS PERRY opened fire with main battery at a floating mine previously noted floating well in toward the beach off Cape Ngariois of Anguar Island. Nineteen rounds of #3" 50 Caliber ammunition was expended at a range of 1,000 to 1,500 yards. The mine was bracketed a number of times but not exploded. USS PREBLE later reported destruction of this mine.

11. The sweep of the assigned areas was made on approximate alternate courses 145°(T) and 325°(T) almost to the 100 fathom curve, then the unit proceeding on various courses swept the western portion of area #5 northwest of Anguar Island. A close in sweep carrying to the 100 fathom curve was then commenced from the northwestern part of the island clockwise around to the southern edge of area #6. A turn was made outboard and a northward, then a southward sweep. A turn away from the island to course 030°(T) was signalled. The chart showing the ship's track was badly oil stained and nearly illegible. With much effort a tracing of the track was transferred to a duplicate chart, and photostat copies made, a copy of which is included as enclosure (A) to this report. This chart shows very closely the path followed by USS PERRY during sweeping operations. USS SOUTHARD had

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DMS17A16-3  
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U.S.S. PERRY (DMS17)  
September 23, 1944.

Subject: Action Report.  
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commenced the turn, with USS PERRY in column astern. Just before USS PERRY reached the turning point, a sudden explosion on the starboard side of USS PERRY caused an immediate list to port of about 30 degrees. All power was lost immediately and although an attempt was made to turn away from the island, the drag of the sweep gear resulted in loss of steerage way almost at once.

12. The ship did not recover from the initial list and the list slowly increased. A hole approximately eight feet in diameter, with it's highest point at the water line had been blown in the starboard side, centered approximately at frame #72. Boiler #2 had exploded and starboard fuel oil tank #B-109 and #B-107 ~~located~~ had been ruptured. The force of the explosion had forced live steam and hot oil through ventilation fittings and ruptured hatches, covering everything in vicinity of the galley, port and starboard main deck passages through the superstructure, and well deck. Both firerooms flooded at once, indicating severe damage to the bulkhead between #1 and #2 fire-rooms.

13. The port list might have resulted from the weight of oil in the port side tanks, together with the unbalanced weight of disarranged machinery in the fireroom, but the steady increase in the list indicated further underwater damage to port forward.

14. The fireroom hatches and escape hatches were promptly checked, but in spite of all efforts, including a search with lights through the escape hatch, no trace was ever found of the men on watch in #1 fireroom. Injured persons were reported as few and in the care of shipmates. With only about 12 inches of freeboard remaining to port, "Abandon Ship" was ordered by the Commanding Officer at about 1420.

15. USS PREBLE made an approach to port, trying to shoot a line across to USS PERRY'S forecastle, but USS PERRY was swinging to the sunken paravanes, away from the direction of approach and the line fell short.

16. USS PERRY'S starboard boat had been rigged in to facilitate repairs to planking damaged when transferring paravanes from USS SOUTHEARD the previous afternoon, and due to the list could not be swung out. A jury rig might have accomplished this, but it was felt desirable to retain all weights possible



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Serial 038-45

U.S.S. PERRY (DMS17)  
September 23, 1944.

Subject: Action Report.  
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on the starboard side. The port boat was launched, but had shipped water in launching, and the motor would not start. The boat was paddled and recovered a large number of personnel from the water. Boats from USS PREBLE and later from USS GUEST picked up all persons from the water within twenty minutes of time they left the ship.

17. With the aid of a boat from USS PREBLE, a messenger line from USS PREBLE was brought aboard the fantail. With the aid of two men from the USS PREBLE boat, the line was heaved in. USS PREBLE paid out a 6 inch manila followed by a wire cable, but was slowly maneuvering to avoid mines sighted underwater. The party aboard was unable to heave the manila line aboard, after getting in approximately three fourths of the messenger. The 2 inch messenger line was secured, the paravanes were not cut adrift and the party consisting of The Commanding Officer, Lieutenant J.A. STEWARD, USNR, Executive Officer, Lieutenant (jg) J. TICUSAN, Jr., USNR, Communication Officer, Ensign M.J. CAVANAUGH, Jr., USNR, Engineer Officer, Ensign C.N. STEPHENSON, USN, Ass't Engineer Officer, and R.A. HENDERSON, FClc, USNR, plus the two men from USS PREBLE, were ordered forward to await the success of USS PREBLE'S maneuvers.

18. The bridge and wardroom was searched for remaining confidential material and all found were bundled up and taken to the forecastle. The chart, service records, pay accounts and most of the confidential material had already been removed. Health records in sick bay on the second platform deck forward were not obtained because of the precarious situation of the ship.

19. At a time between 1500 and 1515, the ship was down by the head and the main deck at the well deck was awash on the port side; it was felt that the ship was on the verge of capsizing, and all remaining personnel were ordered off. A boat from the USS GUEST picked up the party, including the Commanding Officer, from the water and took them to USS GUEST.

20. It was later learned that shortly afterward a party from USS PREBLE in charge of Ensign THOMPSON, USS PREBLE and including FOUCAULT, L.P., 201-54-10, CBM, USN, USS PERRY came aboard, cast off the line to USS PREBLE and attempted to drop the ship's anchor to prevent her drifting onto the beach.

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~  
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DMS17/116-3  
Serial 038-45

U.S.S. PERRY (DMS17)  
September 23, 1944.

Subject: Action Report.  
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This proved impracticable because of the lack of power and the heavy list of the ship.

21. The party then ripped out and dropped the sound gear over the side, fired 45 caliber slugs into all radar gear, removed the SC-I receiver unit and put it in the boat, later transferred to USS GUEST. As the list became very heavy, the party was forced to leave the ship which capsized at 1605 and sank at 1607 in 40 fathoms of water in Latitude 06° 52' 45" N. Longitude 134° 08' 40" E.

#### PART III

1. Because of complete loss of power, damage control efforts were greatly hampered. No use was made of handy-billy pumps for reasons given in Part IV.

#### PART IV

1. A copy of the hull board report to the Commanding Officer is included as enclosure (A) to this report.

2. The immediate and increasing list to port indicated extensive damage to stowage spaces on the port side forward. A disarrangement of machinery in the damaged spaces would have caused a list but equilibrium would have been reached. Reports indicated no water or leakage on the second platform deck. Since the ship continued to swing toward the beach of Anguar Island less than 1,000 yards distant, which island was not scheduled to be assaulted until D Plus 1 day (three days later) all efforts were made to tow the ship out to deeper water where pumps and facilities of a large ship would be available and where deep water would provide security if the ship did sink.

3. A line was passed to the fantail from USS PREBLE, but due to maneuvering because of mines sighted close aboard, USS PREBLE subsequently had to let go the line. USS GUEST after narrowly missing a mine, had been ordered to stay outside 200 fathom curve.

#### PART V

1. In the opinion of the Commanding Officer USS

DECLASSIFIED  
Serial 038-45

U.S.S. PERRY (DMS17)  
September 23, 1944.

Subject: Action Report.  
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PERRY, Lieutenant Commander BALDRIDGE, USN, Commanding Officer, USS PREBLE exhibited extraordinary skill in bringing his ship in close to the scene of the casualty in an endeavor to get a line aboard USS PERRY. Because USS PERRY was swinging away, the gun line would not carry, but later a boat from USS PREBLE carried the line across. His actions brought USS PREBLE'S boats to the scene much sooner than would have been otherwise possible. By his careful and skillful ship handling in an area known to be mined, he avoided damage to his own vessel while rendering the maximum possible assistance, undoubtedly preventing additional loss of life.

#### PART VI

1. The performance of personnel aboard USS PERRY was in accordance with the highest Navy traditions. Panic was not at all in evidence. Through the prompt efforts of the responsible personnel, service records, pay accounts, ship's service funds, registered publications and navigation records were recovered.

2. All injured people were promptly and efficiently taken in charge by shipmates and given all possible assistance. These efforts, which prevented injury or loss of life beyond those resulting from the original explosion, are impossible to commend individually in that they were so generally the effort of all hands.

3. Enclosure (C) is forwarded herewith.

*W. N. Lindsay, Jr.*  
W. N. LINDSAY, Jr.

Copies to:

ComServRon SIX.



U.S.S. PERRY (DMS17)  
c/o Fleet Post Office  
San Francisco, Calif.  
September 18, 1944.

From: The Hull Board, U.S.S. PERRY (DMS17).  
To : The Commanding Officer, U.S.S. PERRY (DMS17).  
Subject: Structural damage sustained by U.S.S. PERRY from striking a Japanese mine while engaged in mine-sweeping operations off Anguar Island, Palau Islands - preliminary report of/

1. THIS report is not intended to be a complete summary of the structural damage suffered by the U.S.S. PERRY as it is based on the observation of only a part of the survivors.

2. B-101 - Forward Fireroom.

(a) It is believed that the mine struck the ship on the starboard side somewhere between the turn of the bilge and the keel, approximately on a line with the forward edge of #2 boiler. A violent explosion occurred which lifted the ship bodily out of the water.

(b) Boiler #2 and the main steam lines were ruptured emitting great volumes of steam from the stacks, blower trunks and all the fireroom hatches, which were blown open by the explosion. A large quantity of fuel oil was also blown out through the trunks and blowers, covering the port and starboard passageways and the well deck.

(c) A hole was blown in the starboard side of the ship opposite the forward edge of #2 boiler. This hole was approximately six to eight feet wide and extended from slightly above the keel to about three or four feet above the water line. The side plates were curled up from the hole for approximately two or three feet indicating that a part of the force of the explosion was directed outward in that area.

(d) Boiler #2 was moved on its foundation, and most of the machinery and piping in this compartment was damaged. So far as can be ascertained, no damage was sustained on the port side of the ship.

(e) This fireroom flooded immediately to approximately the level of the steam drum causing the ship to list about 20° to port. This list slowly increased until the main deck edge was awash when the ship went down.

3. B-102 - After Fireroom.

(a) The bulkhead between the firerooms was ruptured and this fireroom flooded to the same level as #1 fireroom. Water may also have entered from the opening in the hull if it extended back this far. There is doubt among observers how far aft the vent extended. As was also the case in #1 fireroom

all the hatch covers were blown off. Steam and oil were also blown out the blower trunks. The main deck above both firerooms was bulged, especially so in the drum room. Although it is not known for certain at this time, the galley deck was believed to have ruptured and steam from the boilers to have escaped through this opening.

4. C-102 - Forward Engineeroom.  
(a) The only casualty here was a number of small water leaks from the after fireroom.
5. C-103 - After Engineeroom.  
(a) No known damage. From the after engineeroom all the way aft the only known casualty was a break in the steam line to the steering engine.
6. The cofferdam (A-118) held up satisfactorily, although there were a number of small leaks. A small quantity of water and oil were present on the half-deck and in the wardroom. The files and desk in the Chief Engineer's room were blown from the bulkhead to which they had been bolted. The magazines, storerooms, CPO quarters and sound room were not entered, but they and the rest of the ship forward are believed to have been undamaged.
7. Topside damage was noticed as follows:  
(a) The starboard bulwark on the galley deck house around #1 20mm gun was blown outward and back.  
(b) The ladder on #1 stack to the whistle and siren was blown to the well deck.  
(c) The steam line to the whistle and siren was collapsed.  
(d) The coppers in the galley were blown off their supports, and steam lines to them ruptured.
8. The ship listed to port until the main deck edge was awash. Shortly thereafter she turned over to port and began to sink by the bow. She then broke in two at the forward fireroom and both sections sank. As the ship turned over observers saw that there was a long rent on the starboard side near the keel extending from the hole in the forward fireroom to approximately #1 gun on the forecastle. The side plates were curled outward from this rent.

Respectfully submitted,

Lieutenant J. A. STEWARD, Senior Member.

Lieut. (jg) H. T. EMERSON Jr.

Ensign M. J. CAYANAUGH Jr.

Hull Board, U.S.S. PERRY (DMS17).

FILE

FC1-1/A16-3

COMMANDER BATTLESHIP DIVISION TWO  
c/o Fleet Post Office,  
San Francisco, California.

Serial 040

14 January 1945

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~  
~~DECLASSIFIED~~

TRIP ENDORSEMENT to  
PERRY (DMS17) ltr.  
DMS17/A16-3, Ser. 038-45  
of 23 September 1944.

From: Commander Battleship Squadron ONE  
(Commander Task Group 32.5).  
To : Commander in Chief, United States Fleet.  
Via : (1) Commander Amphibious Group FIVE, Pacific Fleet  
(Commander Task Force 32).  
(2) Commander in Chief, U.S. Pacific Fleet.  
Subject: U.S.S. PERRY (DMS17) - Action Report.

1. It is considered that the loss of the U.S.S. PERRY was entirely due to enemy action; that the actions taken by the commanding officer in endeavoring to salvage were correct but owing to the location of the damaged PERRY in a minefield, were doomed to failure; that the conduct of the officers and crew were in accordance with the best traditions of the Naval Service and that no blame attaches to any officer or man for her loss.

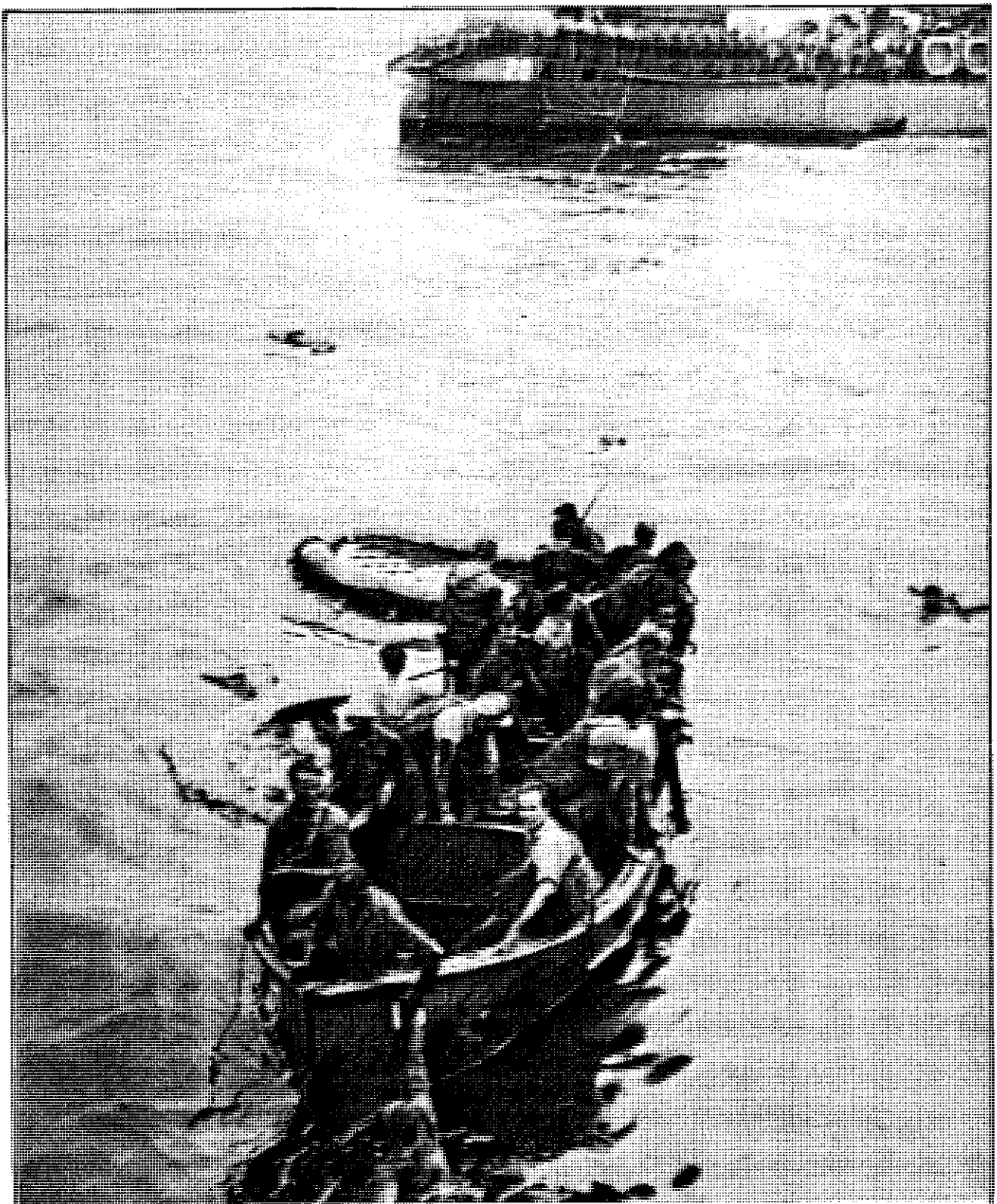
2. It is therefore recommended that no further action be taken.

  
J. B. OLDENDORF.

Copy to:  
CO PERRY.







When their whaleboat's motor wouldn't start Perry survivors attempted to paddle their way to the light minelayer U.S.S. Preble (DM-20). A rescue boat from another ship in the area soon towed them to the Preble as that vessel attempted to pass a towing hawser and tow the Perry clear to safer water. (A Thomas G. Koch photograph, courtesy of Jack A. Steward.)



Zone description -9

Position	0800	1200	2000
Lat.	06-56 N	06-56 N	
Long.	134-08 E	134-07 E	

# OPERATIONAL HISTORY 0000000000

00 - 04

Steaming in company with TG 32.53 on course 080 T and (pgc) and 177 (psc) at speed of 15 knots, acting as unit of anti-submarine screen, in station #5 (6060). Boilers #1 and #2 in use. Ship darkened and in condition of readiness 3. Materiel condition Baker set. Fleet guide in U.S.S. IDAHO; O.T.C. in U.S.S. LOUISVILLE. 0000 CTG 32.9 in U.S.S. HOVEY, with U.S.S. LONG, U.S.S. HAMILTON, U.S.S. MONTGOMERY released from screening duties, proceeded to carry out mine-sweeping exercises. Av. Steam 250; Av. RPM 177.

*T. G. BAGGOT*  
T. G. BAGGOT  
Lieutenant, USNR.

04 - 08 Steaming as before.

0443 Changed speed to 10 knots. 0500 Released from screening duties, left with U.S.S. SOUTHARD and U.S.S. PREBLE to carry out minesweeping operations. Proceeded on various courses and at various speeds to point "X-Ray". ComMinDiv 5 O.T.C. in U.S.S. SOUTHARD. 0540 Changed speed to 7 knots, steadied on course 160 T and (pgc) and 157 (psc). Commenced streaming S-type minesweeping gear and acoustic minesweeping gear. 0544 Changed course to 325 T and (pgc) and 324 (psc). 0608 Completed streaming minesweeping gear and acoustic minesweeping gear. Set Condition II and Materiel condition Affirm. 0611 Executed echelon formation 200 on port quarter. Guide in U.S.S. SOUTHARD. 0633 Changed course to 328 T and (pgc) and 327 (psc). Changed speed to 14 knots. 0659 Changed course to 355 T and (pgc) and 357 (psc). Formed column astern of U.S.S. SOUTHARD. 0706 Changed course to 145 T and (pgc) and 147 (psc). Changed course to 130 T and (pgc) and 127 (psc). Av. Steam 250; Av. RPM 115.

*H. T. EMERSON Jr.*  
H. T. EMERSON Jr.  
Lieutenant (jg), USNR.

08 - 12 Posit: 06-56 N; 134-08 E.

Steaming as before. 0800 Mustered crew on station, no absentees. Made daily inspections of magazines and smokeless powder samples, conditions normal. 0800 Changed course to 330 T and (pgc) and 329 (psc). 0824 Executed echelon formation 200 on starboard quarter. 0845 Sighted floating mine off Cape Ngariois. 0900 Changed course to 350 T and (pgc) and 349 (psc), executed formation on line of bearing astern. 0906 Changed course to 148 T and (pgc) and 145 (psc), executed echelon formation 200 on starboard quarter. 0920 Sounded General Quarters. 0948 Commenced firing at floating mine. 0949 Ceased firing, having expended 19 rounds of 3"50 cal. ammunition. No casualties. 0952 Changed course to 128 T and (pgc) and 125 (psc), executed column formation astern. 0959 Changed course to 330 T and (pgc) and 329 (psc). 1048 Changed course to 238 T and (pgc) and 235 (psc). 1056 Executed echelon formation 200 on starboard quarter. 1110 Changed course to 255 T and (pgc) and 254 (psc). 1115 Changed course to 060 T and (pgc) and 057 (psc). 1136 Executed echelon formation 200 on starboard quarter. 1140 Changed course to 040 T and (pgc) and 037 (psc). 1146 Changed course to 240 T and (pgc) and 238 (psc). Av. Steam 250; Av. RPM 165.

*J. TICUSAN Jr.*  
J. TICUSAN Jr.  
Lieutenant (jg), USNR.

12 - 16 Posit: 06-56 N; 134-07 E.

Steaming as before. 1200 Executed formation echelon 200 on starboard quarter. 1215 Changed course to 260 T and (pgc) and 257 (psc). 1218 Changed course to 285 T and (pgc) and 286 (psc). Formed column astern of U.S.S. SOUTHARD. 1222 Changed course to 080 T and (pgc) and 077 (psc). Executed echelon formation 200

Approved:

*W. H. LINDSAY Jr.*  
W. H. LINDSAY Jr., Lieutenant, USNR.

Examined:

*J. C. STEWARD*  
J. C. STEWARD, Lieutenant, USNR.



Wednesday 13 September 1944  
(Day) (Date) (Month)

Zone description -9

Position	0800	1200	
Lat.	06-04 N		2000
Long.	134-08 E		

**OPERATIONAL REMARKS**  
(REMARKS)

on starboard quarter. 1250 Changed course to 135 T and (pgc) and 134 (psc). 1258 Changed course to 210 T and (pgc) and 208 (psc). 1307 Changed course to 145 T and (pgc) and 144 (psc); executed column formation astern. 1316 Changed course to 328 T and (pgc) and 327 (psc). 1326 Changed course to 335 T and (pgc) and 333 (psc), executed echelon formation 20° on starboard quarter. 1330 Changed course to 010 T and (pgc) and 008 (psc) by ship's movement. 1332 Changed course to 300 T and (pgc) and 299 (psc). Took station 290° relative to U.S.S. SOUTHARD. 1344 Changed course to 210 T and (pgc) and 209 (psc), formed column astern of U.S.S. SOUTHARD. 1352 Changed course to 180 T and (pgc) and 179 (psc). Took station 200° relative to U.S.S. SOUTHARD. 1355 Changed course to 210 T and (pgc) and 209 (psc). 1400 Secured from General quarters, set condition II, material condition AFIRM. 1407 Changed course to 230 T and (pgc) and 228 (psc), executed column formation astern. 1411 Changed course to 255 T and (pgc) and 253 (psc). 1414 Formation changed course to 030 T and (pgc) and 029 (psc). 1418 Latitude 06°-52'-23" N; Longitude 134°-08'-41" in 70 fathoms of water a violent explosion occurred starboard side amidships. Lost all steam to main engines and both firerooms flooded. Ship took 20° list to port increasing slowly. 1420 Commanding Officer ordered abandon ship. About 1425 boats from U.S.S. PREBLE and U.S.S. GUEST commenced recovering survivors from the water. U.S.S. PREBLE close aboard to port attempted to shoot a line across forecastle. Line fell short. Ship drifting slowly northwestward toward beach. About 1438 Boat from U.S.S. GUEST PASSED a line from U.S.S. PREBLE to fantail. Line heaved in and secured. Depth charges set on safe. Ship listing 45° to port. 1515 Last personnel and Commanding Officer left ship in boat from U.S.S. GUEST. 1525 Ensign THOMPSON of U.S.S. PREBLE and FOUCAULT, Leon Phillip, CBM, USN, volunteered to board the U.S.S. PERRY. 1600 Party left ship having destroyed both SC1 and SF1 man equipment, radar gear, SCR equipment, and sound gear. 1605 Ship sank, breaking in two at point of damage. Latitude 06°-52'-45"; Longitude 134°-08'-40" East in 40 fathoms of water, 700 yards off Southeast tip of Anguar Island, Palau Group.

*J. Ticusan Jr.*  
J. TICUSAN JR.  
Lieutenant (Jg), USNR.

Approved:

*W. N. Lindsay Jr.*  
W. N. LINDSAY JR., Lieutenant, USNR  
Commanding Officer.

Examined:

*J. A. Steward*  
J. A. STEWARD, Lieutenant, USNR  
Navigator.



PERS-53211-HEB-m  
16 JANUARY 1945

FROM: CO USS PERRY (DMS17) (PACIFIC)  
ACTION: BUPERS  
DATE: 4 NOVEMBER 1944

THE FOLLOWING MEN WERE KILLED BY EXPLOSION OF ENEMY MINE ON 13 SEPTEMBER 1944 AT 1418. THESE MEN WERE ON BOARD THE USS PERRY, WHICH WAS SWEEPING FOR ENEMY MINES OFF THE SOUTHEAST COAST OF ANGUAR ISLAND, PALAU GROUP, CAROLINE ISLANDS, WHEN THEY STRUCK AN ENEMY MINE WHICH EXPLODED UNDER #1 FIRE ROOM WHERE THESE MEN WERE. IT IS BELIEVED THAT THE FIVE MEN WERE INSTANTLY KILLED BY THE FORCE OF THE EXPLOSION. ALL MEANS OF ACCESS TO THE SPACE WERE CHECKED. STEAM AND RISING WATER MADE ESCAPE IMPOSSIBLE. LAST MAN ABANDONED SHIP AT 1355 AND SHIP SUNK AT 1605. IN THE OPINION OF THE COMMANDING OFFICER, ALL FIVE MEN WERE INSTANTLY KILLED, AND THEIR BODIES LIE WITH THE SHIP. IF DIVERS ATTEMPT TO REACH SHIP THEY SHOULD BE INSTRUCTED TO SEARCH FOR THE BODIES OF THESE MEN AS IT IS FELT THAT THEY WILL BE FOUND ABOARD.

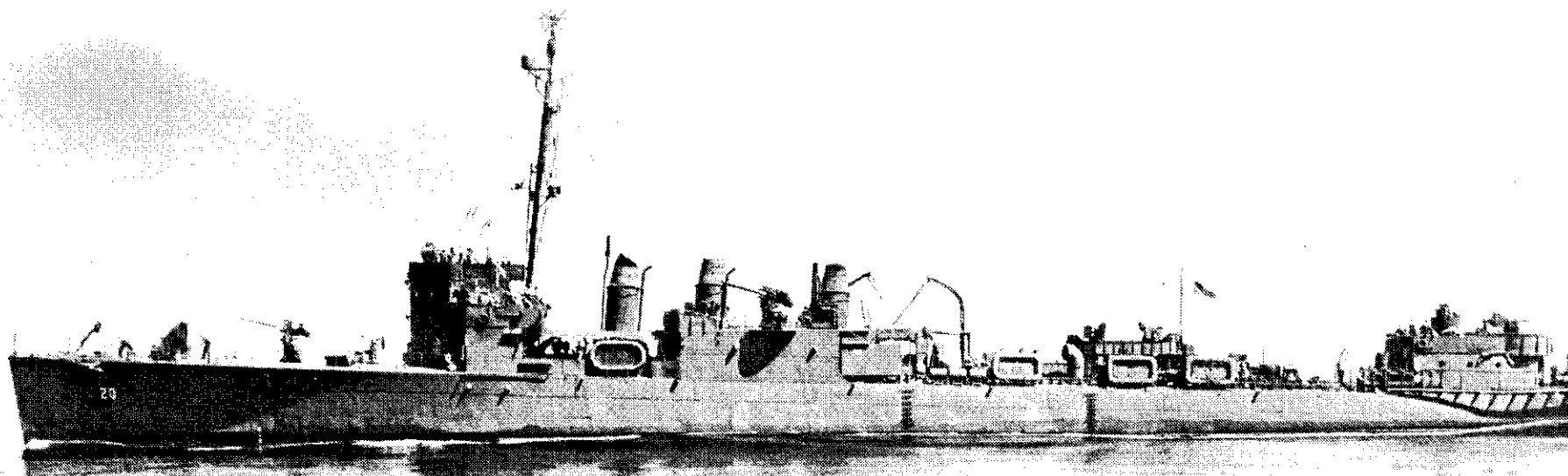
1. BRAND, Joseph James WT1/c 223-61-97 USN
2. SCHIEBER, Arthur William F1/c 870-11-90 USNR
3. JOPLIN, Ottice Canon F1/c 828-71-92 USNR
4. EDGELL, Henry Clark F1/c 755-90-53 USNR
5. WERSEBE, Dan Jesse WT2/c 624-85-06 USNR

REFER LOG # 15425-X-5

LOG 3 19159-N-5







The light minelayer U.S.S. Preble (DM-20) (LCdr. Elward F. Baldrige) was operating with the Perry when that vessel struck a mine on 13 September 1944. Just seven minutes after the explosion the Preble's motor whaleboat began recovering survivors. Whaleboats from other destroyers joined in the rescue effort, so that all of the Perry's survivors were rescued within twenty minutes of when they abandoned ship. Ninety-six survivors were taken aboard the Preble. LCdr. Baldrige was awarded the Bronze Star for his rescue operation and for his valiant attempt to tow the Perry clear of the minefield. (U.S. Naval Institute Collection)



**CONFIDENTIAL**

ORIGINAL

# ACTION REPORT

USS PREBLE

DM 20

SERIAL 0100

5 OCTOBER 1944

USS PREBLE, REPORT OF RESCUE OF SURVIVORS AND  
ATTEMPTED SALVAGE OF USS PERRY (DMS 17), 13 SEP-  
TEMBER 1944.

COVERS ACTION WHILE OPERATING IN TASK  
UNIT 32.9 FOR LANDINGS ON ANGAUR & PELELIU,  
PALAU ISLANDS.

90594



DECLASSIFIED

DECLASSIFIED - OPNAV INST 5500.30  
BY *[Signature]* DATE *3-16-61*

DM20/A16-3

Serial 0100

o/o Fleet Post Office  
San Francisco, California  
5 October 1944.

From: The Commanding Officer, USS *PREBLE*  
To : Commander-in-Chief, U.S. Fleet.  
Via : (1) Commander Mine Division FIVE (C.T.G. 32.9.4).  
(2) Commander Mine Squadron TWO (CMT.G. 32.9).  
(3) Commander Mine Squadron ONE.  
(4) Commander Battleship Division TWO (C.T.G. 32.12).  
(5) Commander Cruiser Division FOUR (C.T.G. 32.5).  
(6) Commander Task Force 32.  
(7) Commander Task Force 31.  
(8) Commander THIRD Fleet.  
(9) Commander-in-Chief, Pacific Fleet.

Subject: USS *PREBLE* report of rescue of survivors  
and attempted salvage of USS *PERRY* (DM317),  
13 September 1944.

Reference: (a) U.S. Navy Regulations, 1920, Art. 712(b).

Enclosure: (A) Memorandum from Ensign James L. THOMPSON, USN,  
(B) Chief Pharmacists Mate report of casualties.-

1. At approximately 1420 ITEM, on 13 September, 1944 the USS *PERRY* (DM317) while engaged in minesweeping operations off the southeast coast Angaur Island of the Palau group, struck a mine and subsequently sank. The USS *PREBLE* (DM20) rescued 96 members of the *PERRY* crew and attempted to salvage the ship.

2. The USS *PREBLE* as part of Task Group 32.5 (Mine Support Group, Rear Admiral J.B. OLDENDORF, U.S.N., Commander Cruiser Division 4, USS *LOUISVILLE*, Flagship) proceeded to Palau in company, arriving dawn 12 September, 1944. At this time *PREBLE* became a part of Task Group 32.9 (Fast Minesweeping Group, Commander W.R. LOUD, U.S.N., Commander Mine Squadron 2, USS *HOVELY*, Flagship) and operated as mine disposal and Dan Buoy laying ship, being equipped with 25 Mark VI drill mines for this purpose. On 13 September 1944, *PREBLE* joined Minesweep Unit 1 Baker, consisting of USS *SOUTHARD* (DM310) (C.T.G. 32.9.4 - ComminDiv 5, Lieut-Comdr., H.L. THOMPSON, U.S.N.), USS *PERRY* and USS *PREBLE*. At the time USS *PERRY* was mined the formation was in starboard echelon formation, *SOUTHARD* leading, (with port and starboard gear streamed), distance 1,000 yards, speed 14 knots. *PREBLE* was at general quarters, material condition Afirm set, in position astern of *PERRY*. Approximate course 215° T. Sea calm, wind force 2 from S.S.E., no swell, visibility unlimited.

DM20/A16-3

Serial (0100)

c/o Fleet Post Office  
San Francisco, California  
5 October 1944.

Subject: USS FREELY (DM20) report of rescue of survivors  
and attempted salvage of USS PERRY (DD517),  
13 September 1944.

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At 1119, C.T.G. 32.9.4 informed C.T.G. 32.12 in TENNESSEE (Angaur Fire Support Group operating in near vicinity, Rear Admiral H.F. KINSMAN, U.S.N.) by TBS, that one more minesweeping pass was necessary before P.G. 32.12 could close Angaur. C.T.G. 32.12 was advised to keep clear of the 100 fathom curve. Immediately after this transmission the PERRY was mined, approximately in Latitude 06°-53'-20" N, Longitude 134°-09'-34" E, or about 750 yards from the beach. She appeared to lift bodily several feet and then take a 10 - 12° list to port, the amidships section being enveloped in a cloud of white smoke and steam.

3. The USS FREELY was rigged for towing and to be towed. A tentative "Survivors Rescue Bill" had been drawn up previously and all crew members instructed in it. In addition, practice drills had been conducted during general quarters in carrying out its provisions. This bill was based on one developed by USS TERRY (DD513), during the Solomons campaign. A self inflatable rubber life raft had been obtained for use with this bill to be thrown to survivors in the water. Upon seeing the PERRY strike the mine the FREELY was ready, materially and psychologically, to go to her aid, and did so, closing at 15 knots.

4. In evaluating the situation, the Commanding Officer felt that he had two alternatives; 1) lay FREELY alongside PERRY, make fast and tow her clear, rendering assistance meanwhile, or 2) stay clear and send boat to rescue survivors and then attempt salvage. Since this class ship is provided with but one motor whaleboat, it was considered that the time necessary to accomplish both objectives by the second alternative would be excessive and probably result in the loss of both the ship and considerable survivors, now appearing in the water to starboard of PERRY. Having determined to lay alongside it only remained to decide which side. Since PERRY was listing to port, the starboard side seemed favorable, however the numerous personnel and rafts to starboard plus the knowledge that the remainder of the mine field would be to starboard and that after coming alongside, the ships would likely drift into the field and toward the enemy beach, the choice of her port side seemed the logical one. Then too, the water to this side had been swept by the starboard sweep gear of SOUTHARD.

DECLASSIFIED

DM20/A16-3

Serial (0100)

c/o Fleet Post Office  
San Francisco, California  
5 October 1944.

Subject: USS PREBLE (DM20) report of rescue of  
survivors and attempted salvage of USS PERRY  
(DM317), 13 September 1944.

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5. Upon approaching within 100 yards her port quarter, some trepidation was felt should PERRY capsize on PREBLE while alongside. All engines were stopped and a close examination made through glasses. At this time the self inflatable rubber raft was thrown over to some survivors who had swum out toward PREBLE. Examination revealed that the PERRY's port motor whaleboat was being lowered, filled with men, and about 10 - 15 more in the water close aboard the ship. Since to lay alongside would mean certain death to those in the water and in the boat, that part of the plan was discarded. PREBLE veered to port and ranged alongside about 50 yards distant. It was seen that there were one or two officers on PERRY's bridge who were hailed and told that if PERRY was in no immediate danger of sinking or capsizing, PREBLE would come alongside and tow her clear. Meanwhile PREBLE's boat had been readied for lowering. Word was received to save the men in the water first so PREBLE's boat was lowered with instructions to pick up the injured and tow the rafts back to the ship. Orders were given to stand by to tow PERRY. Three PREBLE life rafts were dropped to assist men in the water. It was planned to go ahead slowly, pass over the towing hawser from PREBLE's stern to PERRY's bow and then tow her clear through the swept water of SCUTHERD. At this time instructions were received by TBS from C.T.U. 32.9.4 for PREBLE to render all possible assistance to PERRY but not to get inside the 100 fathom curve. A quick check on the fathometer showed PREBLE already in 50 fathoms. Reply was made that PREBLE was complying, that she was already within the 100 fathom curve, and that she was going to tow PERRY clear. Orders to the contrary were not received so plans to tow proceeded. On reaching a favorable position a line throwing gun was used but disappointingly fell a few yards forward of PERRY's bow. Before another shot could be fired the Executive Officer USS PREBLE, standing on the starboard wing of the bridge, sighted a moored mine about two fathoms beneath the surface not more than 20 feet from the ship and abreast No. 1 gun mount. The sighting of this mine was quickly confirmed by the Commanding Officer. Even the horns were plainly visible in the clear water. As PREBLE was in imminent danger of striking this mine herself, all engines were backed full and a position again taken up abreast PERRY. Orders were then issued to transfer the towing hawser to PREBLE's fore-castle and pass it to PERRY over the bow and PERRY was so informed.

DECLASSIFIED

DM20/A16-3

Serial (0100)

c/o Fleet Post Office  
San Francisco, California  
5 October 1944.

Subject: USS FREELE (DM20) report of rescue of survivors  
and attempted salvage of USS PERRY (DMS17),  
13 September 1944.

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Maneuvers were commenced to twist FREELE in place in order to get the bows closer to facilitate passing the hawser. Meanwhile PERRY's boat became waterborne but apparently was damaged and could not be started. Survivors commenced coming over FREELE's side and PERRY commenced drifting toward the beach. When preparations were sufficiently complete, and with about a 60° angle between the ships, FREELE approached and heaving lines were thrown, however, the wind had freshened and PERRY's bow fell off and the lines failed to reach. Preparations were made to fire the line throwing gun again, a new cartridge and line having been obtained, when it was decided to make a further effort to get closer, since by now PERRY was by observation abandoned except for about four officers and one or two enlisted men on the forecastle. It was realized that this would be insufficient manpower to haul on board any very great length of hawser. By twisting FREELE again and by the assistance of a boat from USS GUEST the messenger was passed and made fast to the fantail bitts on PERRY through the stern chock. By now PERRY had swung through about 120° and was headed bows on for the beach, and 20 fathoms now recording under FREELE. It became apparent that both ships were in peril of striking further mines as neither were longer in swept water.

6. During the period consumed by these operations, C.T.G. 32.12 directed USS GUEST to close the scene and render assistance, which she did, sending her two boats which were of invaluable assistance. GUEST tried to remain clear of the field, but it is the opinion of this Commanding Officer that the field was laid diagonal to the coast, i.e., along the contour of the 50 fathom curve, and GUEST had mines to the south of her, i.e., on her quarter, as FREELE sighted one there later when backing clear. GUEST's boats towed several life rafts and PERRY's disabled motor whaleboat to our port side while FREELE boat delivered some along the starboard side. As each boat delivered survivors it was sent out in search of more, including the SOUTHWARD boat, which had by now delivered a Medical Officer, Pharmacists Mate, and additional medical supplies.



DECLASSIFIED  
DM20/3

Serial (0100)

c/o Fleet Post Office  
San Francisco, California  
5 October 1944.

Subject: USS FREELE (DM20) report of rescue of survivors  
and attempted salvage of USS PERRY (DM317),  
13 September 1944.

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This was greatly appreciated since FREELE has no Medical Officer. While injured and non-injured survivors came over the side, the ship was immobilized and drifting so request was made by FREELE to C.T.G. 32.12 for more boats so that men could be taken out of the water and the FREELE, now bows on to the beach, back clear. USS BATHURNE, it is believed, closed for this purpose, however, the two GUEST boats now took the remaining survivors to GUEST and at 1530 FREELE commenced backing slowly clear on one engine paying out eventually a total of 200 fathoms tow line composed of 3 inch manila messenger, 6 inch manila hawser, and 20 fathoms anchor chain. All hands were directed to keep a sharp lookout for mines. Almost immediately one was reported to port abreast the galley deck house, visually confirmed by the Commanding Officer as a moored horned type, about two fathoms under the surface and only 10 - 15 feet from the ship. Since we were backing slowly anyway no special maneuvers were undertaken except to speed up the starboard engine. Upon clearing this mine another was sighted close aboard to starboard similar to the one just mentioned. This mine was also avoided by use of engines and twisting the ship carefully, and again FREELE commenced slowly backing clear. About this time the forecastle reported the messenger had parted at the bitts on PERRY fantail without taking strain there having been insufficient personnel on board PERRY to heave in the tow line. Since FREELE's boat was busy during this time picking up survivors it was impossible to send over a line handling party. Shortly thereafter the remaining officers and men on board PERRY were removed by a GUEST boat. The fact that the tow line had parted was communicated via TES to C.T.U. 32.9.4 and FREELE requested if it was desired for her to return and recommence the towing operation. A negative reply was received. A mine was sighted off our port quarter when we had backed abreast of GUEST a few seconds later and the ship stopped and lay to heaving in the towing hawser by anchor windlass. During this period FREELE could neither back nor go ahead (due to tow line over bow) and drifted down on GUEST, who finally managed to get her survivors on board and clear, with a few yards to spare. Some concern was felt about the tow line fouling the mines while heaving it in, but miraculously none did.

DECLASSIFIED

DM20/A16-2

Serial (0100)

c/o Fleet Post Office  
San Francisco, California  
5 October 1944.

Subject: US3 FREELE (DM20) report of rescue of survivors  
and attempted salvage of USS PERRY (DM517),  
13 September 1944.

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7. At 1550 orders were received by TBS from C.T.C. 32.12 as to the disposition of survivors and at 1705 FREELE transferred the ten most seriously injured to TENNESSEE by boat. At 1720 FREELE went alongside CLEVELAND and transferred 76 men and received a moderate amount of welcome fresh fruit and ice cream from the larger ship. At 1733 cleared CLEVELAND and transferred by RATHBONE boat ten survivors to MINNEAPOLIS. See enclosure (A) for details of injuries. The exact number of survivors rescued by GUEST is unknown to this command, however it is believed to be in the neighborhood of 55.

8. The Commanding Officer desires to make special mention of PETZER, Floyd William, EM2c, V6, USNR, attached to this ship, and Ensign James L. THOMPSON, U.S. Navy, serving on board this ship under temporary duty, in connection with Hydrographic survey work for this operation.

In response to a TBS message from C.T.U. 32.9.4. after FREELE cleared, directing that the remaining personnel on board PERRY be instructed by FREELE to try and anchor her to prevent her grounding off the enemy held beach, Commanding Officer FREELE ordered PETZER, who was acting as coxswain of FREELE boat, to close PERRY and deliver the above orders. At this time it was not known by the Commanding Officer that PERRY was completely abandoned. Although PETZER knew she was abandoned, he instantly closed and boarded the PERRY, then with forecastle awash and listing at a steep angle, and endeavored to connect the chain to the anchor and drop it. Perceiving his difficulty and believing the PERRY might still be saved the Commanding Officer FREELE determined to send an additional party in the SOUTHEARD's boat, which had reported for orders. Ensign THOMPSON volunteered to lead this party direct anchoring operations, and destroy radar equipment in case efforts to anchor were unsuccessful. These parties were unable to let go the anchor although they worked heroically under several feet of water and at the risk of their lives within a few hundred yards of the enemy beach. While awaiting the assistance of the second party, PETZER covered himself and his group with Tommy gun fire from the forecastle.

DECLASSIFIED

DM20/A16-3

Serial (0100)

c/o Fleet Post Office  
San Francisco, California  
5 October 1944.

Subject: USS PREBLE (DM20) report of rescue of survivors  
and attempted salvage of USS PERRY (DM317),  
13 September 1944.

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Since the bending shackle was in the paint locker, already flooded, an attempt was made to pass a wire strap instead, however, the ship capsized before this could be completed, FETTER and Ensign THOMPSON and party crawling over the ship's side as she turned, jumping into the water. Ensign THOMPSON's party destroyed the SF radar and removed the SC radar and SCR-610 radio and other items which were subsequently delivered to PERRY Commanding Officer in QUEST.

The Commanding Officer PREBLE believes that the courage, leadership, fearlessness and resolution displayed by FETTER both as Coxswain of PREBLE boat where he personally administered morphine and first aid to the badly burned and injured and as leader of the first boarding party, and by Ensign THOMPSON as leader of the second party, was in accordance with the highest traditions of our service and recommends them by separate correspondence for the Silver Star Medal. The other men who composed the boarding parties are recommended for Letters of Commendation which will also be covered by separate correspondence.

The capable, cool, and competent manner in which USS PREBLE's Chief Pharmacist Mate Michael Francis CARTMILL (PA), U.S.N., performed his duties, administering blood plasma, morphine, and first aid to the injured, is deserving of the highest praise, as affirmed by the Medical Officer, USS SCOUTER, when he arrived. CARTMILL sorted out the injured cases, diagnosed and treated them, tagging each casualty so that when they were transferred to THUNDERBOLT information of the treatment given each one was instantly accessible. By separate correspondence CARTMILL is recommended for advancement to Ensign (HC), U.S. Navy.

9. Uninjured survivors were stripped of their oil soaked clothing, cleansed, and furnished by PREBLE personnel with clean clothes and in some cases, shoes, so that all were transferred in almost complete uniform. All personnel of the USS PREBLE performed their duties in accordance with highest traditions of the Naval Service during this trying operation, wherein the slightest relaxation in vigilant lookout for mines, in the working of the engines, or in ship handling might have caused the sinking of PREBLE as well as PERRY. The Executive Officer and Chief Quartermaster USS PREBLE were of invaluable aid to the Commanding Officer in this respect.

DECLASSIFIED

DM20/A16-3

Serial (0106)

c/o Fleet Post Office  
San Francisco, California  
5 October 1944.

Subject: USS FREELE (DM20) report of rescue of survivors  
and attempted salvage of USS PERRY (DM17),  
13 September 1944.

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10. It is now the opinion of the Commanding Officer, had the tow line not parted, PERRY would at that time have been beyond salvage anyway, however, had FREELE been able to lay alongside in the early stages, which she was prevented from doing by reason of the motor whelboat and swimmers between the two ships, that salvage would have been possible.

E.F. BALDRIDGE.

Copy direct (Air Mail) to: Cominch  
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CG USS PERRY (1)  
ComMinDiv 2 (1)  
ComServRon 6 (1)  
ComServFor (1)  
Bulld (1)  
Board of Awards (5)  
(under separate cover)

DECLASSIFIED

U.S.S. FREELE (DM20)

18 September 1944.

MEMORANDUM FOR COMMANDING OFFICER, USS FREELE:

At about 1540 on 13 September 1944, I left the USS FREELE with a party of men to attempt to anchor the USS PERRY which had struck a mine off Angaur Island, Palau Islands. About fifteen minutes later I came alongside the starboard side of the PERRY, which was listing badly to port, and with my party disembarked and gave orders to the SOUTHARD's and FREELE's motor whaleboats to lay off. Upon going aboard the PERRY, the party was split into two sections, Chief Boatswain's Mate MEIER and three men going to the forecastle to attempt letting go the anchor, myself and two men going to the bridge to destroy Radar equipment and to look for any classified material that may have been left aboard the PERRY at the time of her abandonment.

Upon reaching the bridge, the Radar Shack was entered and steps were taken to demolish the Radar gear with a sledge hammer; meanwhile another man entered the Pilot House, removed an SCR-610 radio and passed it into the motor whaleboat which was called alongside. The DF Radar was smashed; the SC Radar was also smashed, but became loose from its' moorings and was picked up and passed into the motor whaleboat.

About this time the PERRY began slowly to keel over so the party was forced to abandon her. While crossing the signal bridge, several books and pamphlets, the titles and contents of which were not noted, were picked up and thrown into the motor whaleboat.

About thirty seconds later the boarding party left the side of the PERRY, she was seen to keel over, apparently break her back and sink, bow and stern visible last above the water.

While returning from the PERRY to the USS GUEST, Chief Boatswain Mate MEIER informed me that attempts to let go the anchor failed due to the absence of a bending shackle on the anchor chain. Further attempts to let go the anchor by passing a wire pendant through the jaws-harp and anchor chain were unsuccessful due to sea conditions and depth of water over the forecastle.

(Enclosure A)

18 September 1944.

DECLASSIFIED

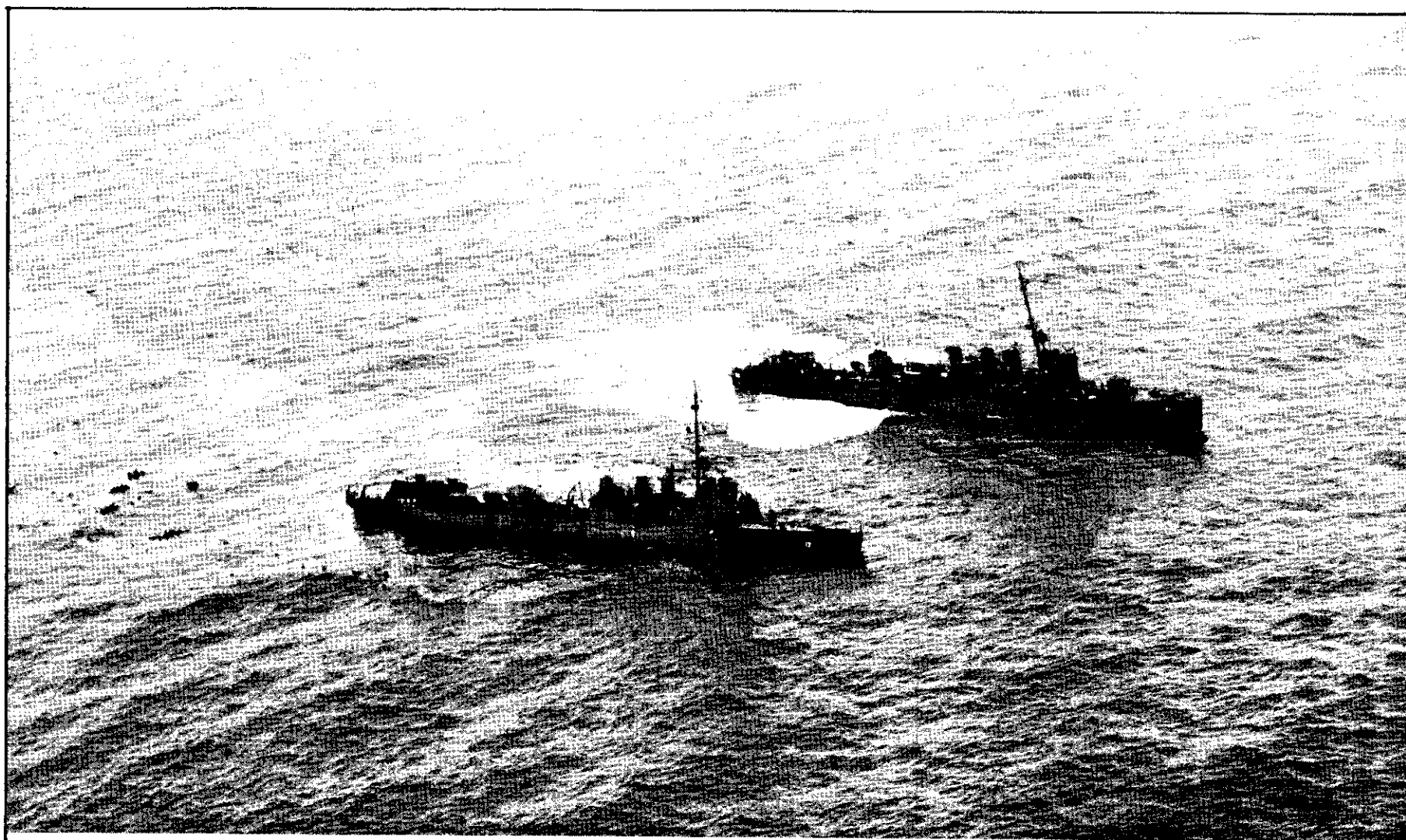
MEMORANDUM FOR COMMANDING OFFICER, USS PREBLE: (Cont'd)

Upon reaching the USS GUEST I was informed that the Commanding Officer of the PERRY was aboard. I then informed him of the action taken aboard the USS PERRY by the boarding party and gear removed before leaving.

I then returned to the motor whaleboat, shoved off from the GUEST, returned to and reported aboard the PREBLE. The Coxswain of the motor whaleboat was then instructed to report to the USS MINNEAPOLIS for transfer of PERRY survivors and salvaged gear.

Respectfully,

J.L. THOMPSON  
Ensign, U. S. Navy



The U.S.S. Preble (DM-20) (LCdr. E. F. Baldrige), at right, maneuvering with her engines to pass a towing hawser to the bow of the stricken minesweeper U.S.S. Perry (DMS-17) off Angaur (also Anguar) Island in the Palaus on 13 September 1944. In LCdr. Baldrige's own words, his salvage attempt, ". . . was in many ways a comedy of errors." He first had to rescue the survivors, who had already abandoned ship, and his task was made perilous by the moored mines they sighted while maneuvering, close aboard both to port and starboard. Also, as the two ships drifted onshore they came under small arms fire from the enemy-held beach only 1000 yards away. More details of this rescue/salvage saga are revealed in a narrative written by Captain Baldrige around 1961 when he became the Senior U.S. Naval Advisor to Argentina - included in the back of this booklet. It is well written and very informative.

(Naval Historical Center)





THE SECRETARY OF THE NAVY

WASHINGTON

The President of the United States takes pleasure in presenting the GOLD STAR in lieu of a second BRONZE STAR MEDAL to

ELWARD FRANCIS BALDRIDGE, LIEUTENANT COMMANDER

UNITED STATES NAVY

for service as set forth in the following

CITATION:

"For distinguishing himself by meritorious achievement on 13 September 1944 as Commanding Officer of a light minelayer during operations against the enemy in the PALAU ISLANDS. On that date a ship in the same group struck a mine and was seriously damaged in an enemy mine field closely adjacent to an enemy held beach. Despite the dangers, Lieutenant Commander Baldrige kept his ship within a short distance of the damaged vessel, sent a working party aboard, and had secret equipment removed. His seamanship, in maneuvering without damage in the mined waters, was outstanding; and his performance of duty throughout was in keeping with the highest traditions of the Naval Service."

Lieutenant Commander Baldrige is authorized to wear the Combat "V".

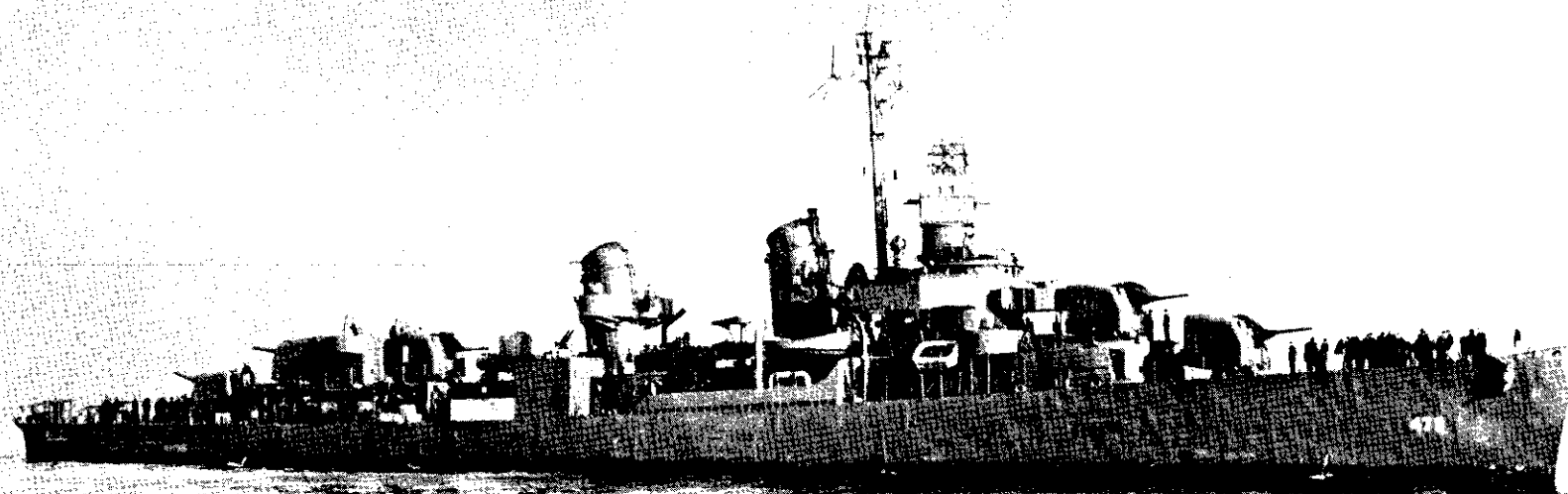
For the President,

Secretary of the Navy.

Typed from a draft citation on an index card at the NHC/Washington Navy Yard. This medal was awarded by COM3RDPHIBFOR letter dated 7 JUN 45.

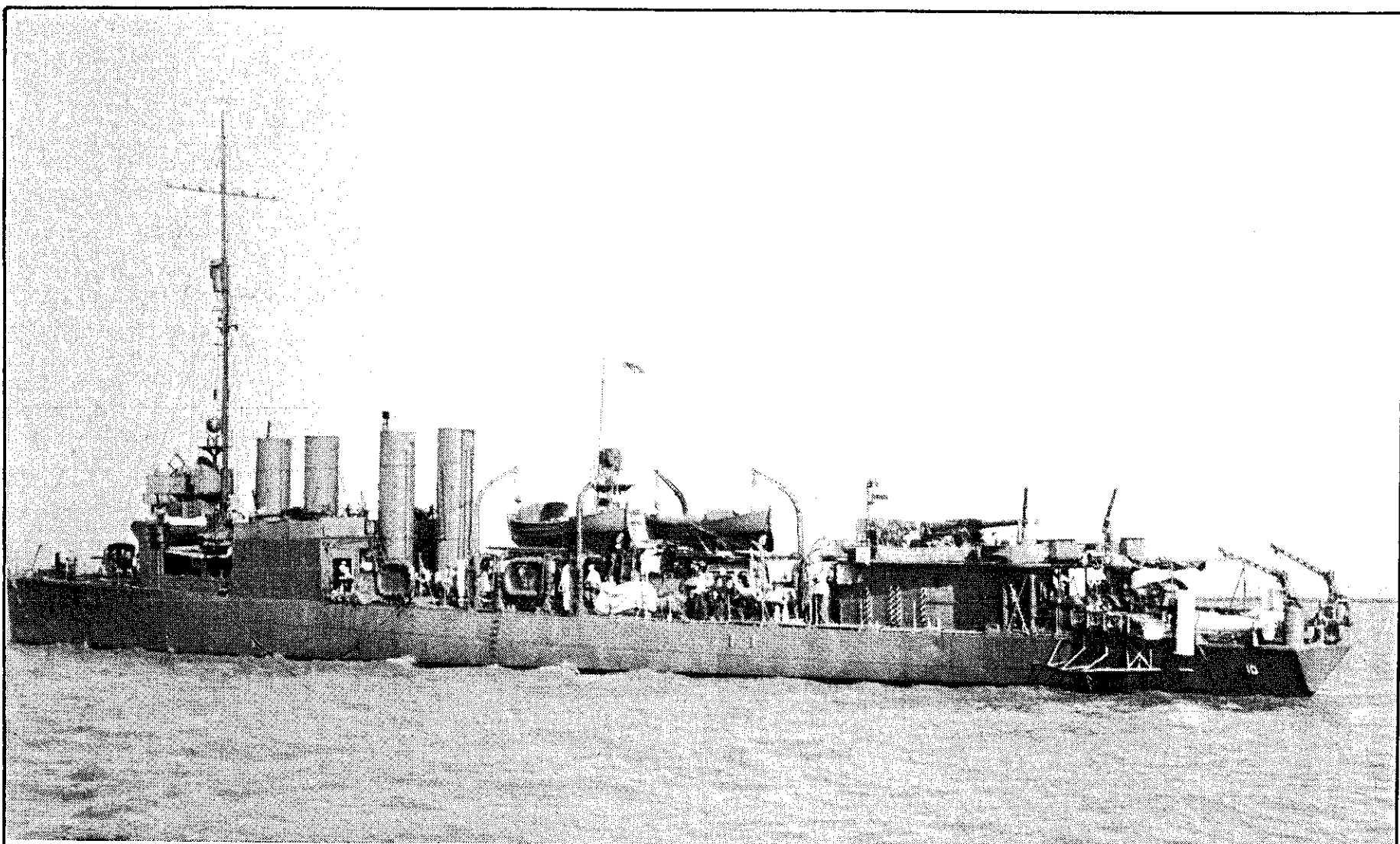
E. A. Wilde, Jr.  
November, 1995





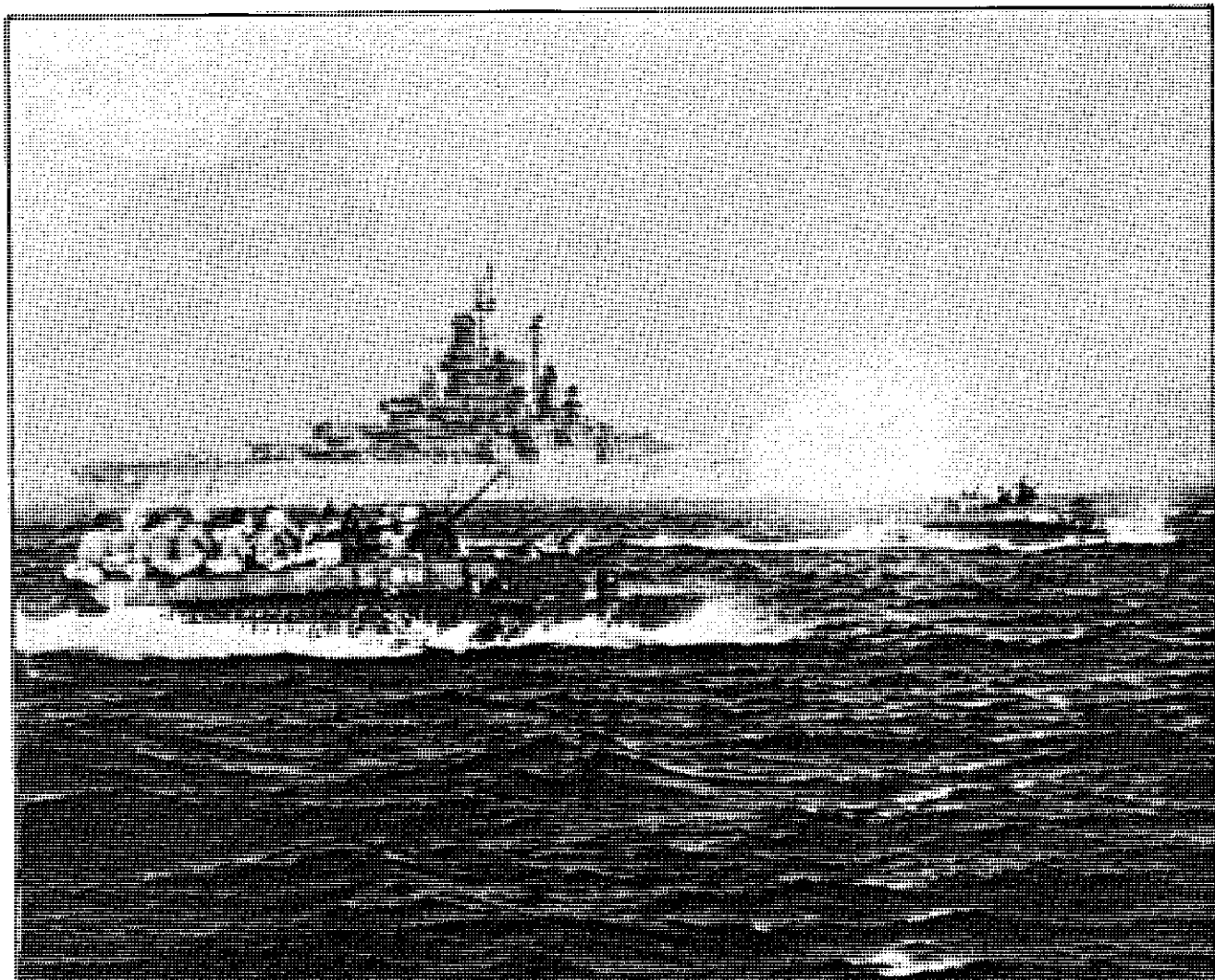
The Fletcher-class destroyer U.S.S. Guest (DD-472) rescued 52 Perry survivors, including the Commanding Officer and the Executive Officer, while firing on the beach with her 40mm's and 5-inch main battery to cover the rescue effort. One of her two motor whaleboats passed the Preble's towline to the Perry in a futile effort to tow the damaged ship out of the minefield. (Official U.S. Navy photograph.)





The Perry's sister ship, the U.S.S. Southard (DMS-10) off Mare Island, California, on June 9, 1942. The two ships were operating together when the Perry struck a mine off Angaur Island, in the Palaus, on September 13, 1944. Although the Southard did not take aboard any Perry survivors, one of her motor whaleboats assisted in the rescue effort, and she delivered medical supplies, a pharmacist's mate and a medical officer to the primary rescue vessel, the U.S.S. Preble (DM-20). Earlier in the war she sank an enemy submarine off San Cristobal, in the Solomons, with depth charges and her 4-inch guns. She was lost when grounded by a typhoon at Okinawa on October 9, 1945. (Official U.S. Navy photograph.)





The battleship U.S.S. Tennessee (BB-43) providing close-in gunfire support with her 14-in. guns for the landing at Okinawa on 1 April 1945 as she had previously done at the invasion of Peleliu and Angaur in the Moloes on 12-15 September 1944. After the Perry struck a mine off Angaur on 13 September ten injured survivors were received on board the Tennessee, and dramatic photographs of the sinking minesweeper were taken from one of the battleship's float planes.

(Print from Real War Photos.)





~~CONFIDENTIAL~~  
~~DECLASSIFIED~~

U.S.S. TENNESSEE

Subject: Fire Support, U.S.S. TENNESSEE - Period 1-30 September  
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12 September 1944 (D - 3 Day)

In the early morning, TU 32.12.2 proceeded to the Westward of Angaur Island and TENNESSEE, in company with TU 32.12.1 approached Angaur from the Eastward. TU 32.12.1 was formed in column in the order TENNESSEE, MINNEAPOLIS, CLEVELAND. At 0630, TENNESSEE commenced firing with main and secondary batteries in accordance with Commander Angaur Fire Support Group Bombardment Schedule. The principle missions were the destruction of enemy installations and covering fire for mine-sweeping operations. TU 32.12.1 was maneuvered by simultaneous turns by Commander Fire Support Unit I, maintaining a track parallel to the Eastern coast of Angaur, the range was varied between 10,000 and 4,000 yards. The bombardment schedule on this day and succeeding days was divided into four periods. Between scheduled periods heavy ships of fire support units recovered, reserviced and relaunched aircraft which were employed for gunnery observation during all firing periods. During bombardment periods, a speed of 12 knots was maintained. 1459 Ceased firing for the day, having expended ammunition as follows:

14"/50 E.C.-----29  
5"/38 A.A.C.-----175  
40mm H.E.T.-----78

At 1700 Fire Support Units I and II joined and retired for the night to the Southwestward of Angaur. The disposition during the night retirement was a circular disposition with heavy ships spaced equally on circle 2 with TENNESSEE at the fleet center as guide.

Positions: 2000  
06° 24' N.  
133° 47' E.

13 September 1944 (D - 2 Day)

At 0505, Fire Support Unit I commenced approach on Angaur and launched aircraft. At 0625 commenced firing with main and secondary batteries and conducted scheduled bombardment as on D - 3 Day. During brief periods of this day's bombardment the range was closed sufficiently to permit the use of the 40mm battery on the beaches. At 1418 the FERRY, while engaged in mine-sweeping operations about 2000 yards off the Southeast shore of Angaur, was observed to strike a mine and sink about two hours later. At 1715 TENNESSEE received on board 10 injured survivors from the FERRY. The GUEST, PRESLE and RATHBURN assisted in rescuing FERRY Survivors and then distributed them to the various heavy ships in company. At 1514 ceased firing for the day having expended ammunition as follows:



## The Sinking of USS PERRY

by John J. Lynch, 1990\*

On the morning of that fateful Wednesday, September 13, 1944, Water Tender First Class Joseph J. Brand remarked, "This breakfast is the same as we had on Pearl Harbor Day." He didn't know, nor did we, that it would be his last breakfast. Before the day would be over "J.J." and seven other shipmates would be blasted out of this life. In the early afternoon a mine would strike our starboard hull, terminating the life of the ship as well as the lives of eight crewmen and initiating a series of unusual happenings for those who survived.

Our ship was the USS PERRY, DMS 17, a World War I four-stack destroyer converted to a Destroyer Minesweeper for service in World War II. Actually, we performed more destroyer duty than minesweeping, such as convoy escorting and offshore patrolling, but today we were sweeping mines off the coasts of Peleliu and Anguar of the Palau Islands in the South Pacific.

Only two ships of our Squadron participated in this operation: PERRY and Squadron Leader USS SOUTHARD, DMS 10. Offshore, battleships and heavy cruisers poured a heavy and ceaseless bombardment on the islands. Shells constantly whistled over our heads. During a heavy bombardment such as this, a vein of empathy seems to connect the crews of different ships. We, on our part, empathized with the gun crews of the battleships for their back-breaking toil in sweat-drenching heat, loading those heavy shells. Later, we learned that they had similar empathy for us, being so vulnerably close to the enemy shoreline.

The morning sweep, streaming our minesweeping gear in a two-ship formation, was uneventful. At about noon we spotted a floating mine close to the shore of Anguar. Our Captain, Lt. William N. Lindsay, Jr., USNR, was heard to say, "Where there's smoke, there's fire," and he permitted our sharpshooters to break out rifles and get some target practice. This illustrated the difficulty of hitting a bobbing object, even at close range. They all missed.

At about 1400 hours (2:00 P.M.) our mission was completed. We retrieved our minesweeping gear and waited for new orders. The Captain secured us from General Quarters to Condition Two watch, which meant that half the crew would remain on duty and half were relieved. This prompted a steady stream of half-clad sailors trudging astern to the showers, carrying soap, towels, and razors.

A dispatch was received for our next maneuver, and Lt. Jack Steward, the ship's Navigator, motioned for me to follow him into the chartroom. Squeezing into the tiny cubicle, we hung our steel helmets and life jackets on the bulkhead behind us, then got out the chart for the area.

Lt. Steward had barely laid his parallel rulers on the chart when a muffled explosion knocked our ship upward and sideways to port.

"Whatinell was that?" asked Steward.

"Damfiknow!" I responded.

Simultaneously, we were frantically reaching for helmets and life jackets. Within seconds we exited the chartroom.

On the slanting deck of the bridge I heard screams, rasping and staccato. I had never heard screams like those - "gasps" to be more accurate - agonized, as if depending on a burst of air. I looked down from the bridge to the well deck

\* John Lynch was a Quartermaster First Class when his ship, the fast minesweeper USS PERRY (DMS-17), was sunk in 1944. He died in 1995, but his widow, Hedy, has graciously allowed me to include his narrative in my booklet. I am indebted also to his shipmate, Francis C. Pogue (a Seaman First Class in 1944) for bringing John's work to my attention and for assisting in some minor editing.

and saw a slender figure I recognized as Paul Ray Burnette, a teen-age rookie, now a silhouette profile drenched in scalding black fuel oil, bent slightly forward from the waist, mouth agape, forearms extended. His screams continued. He had been en route sternward to the showers and had entered the passageway above the fire room when the explosion blasted the deck under his feet and burst the fuel tank, drenching him with a flood of superheated oil. Probably by instinct, he had stepped back onto the well deck.

Quickly, he was surrounded by helpful shipmates who tried to make him comfortable. One fellow attempted to wipe the oil from his eyes, but his eyelids came off with the cloth. He died later.

On the bridge, I heard calls from the wheelhouse. It was the helmsman, Francis Pogue, calling for someone to fetch him his life jacket. It was nearby, but he wouldn't leave his station to retrieve it. I tossed it to him, and then I heard the Captain's command to abandon ship.

"Abandon ship - starboard side!" was the command.

There was an exodus off the port side. It was easier that way - just slide down into the water. Perhaps they hadn't heard the second part of the command; conceivably, the loudspeaker system had been knocked out. The "starboard" command puzzled me at first, but I quickly realized the Captain's reason - the ship had careened so sharply to port that there was danger she might go into a full capsize. If this happened, the rigging would drag all in the water to certain death.

Although some had yielded to the easy slide, there was no panic. Specific men had specific duties, and throughout the ship they carried them out.

Gunner's Mate Harold Boyenga, who was knocked off his gun mount and suffered a fractured hip, made his way aft with Machinist's Mate Charles Rowan, and together they set all depth charges on "safe."

There were also some variations. Back aft, Storekeeper Glenn Lamoreux dashed down to his locker, stuffed his wallet containing \$100 into it, slammed it shut and locked it, then ran topside and overboard. Roland ("Yardbird") Thomas gave his life jacket to a fellow who had forgotten his, then plunged overboard because, as he said, "I could swim faster than them fishes!"

I walked uphill to the starboard wing of the bridge and looked overboard, downward at the damage. There was a cavernous hole in the hull, and inside were the remains of Joseph J. Brand, Dan Wersebe, Henry Edgell, Ottice Joplin and Arthur Schieber. Then I noticed that the hole was above the waterline. Sea water that had flooded into the ship's belly had now ceased, and she incredibly stabilized at that ungainly tilt.

My battle station as Quartermaster was to scrap confidential charts to prevent them from falling into enemy hands. A large canvas envelope was kept in readiness to stuff the charts into it, and lead weights were nearby.

As I pulled these charts from the chest my glance fell on the chronometers, and for a fleeting moment I had the irrational thought of keeping one for a souvenir. I had developed a fondness for these instruments. There were three, each wound at precisely the same time every day, but never reset. Thus, all kept different times, but a log was maintained keeping a continuous record of their variances. Each day a radio beep from the Naval Observatory would signal noon, Greenwich Mean Time, and I would punch a stopwatch. I would then match the stopwatch with each chronometer as the seconds slipped by, and using simple arithmetic determine the variance and enter it into the log. Thus, exact Greenwich Time could be pinpointed each time the Navigator took a star sight with his sextant, measuring the angle of the star above the horizon at dawn or dusk (those times when it is dark enough to see the stars and

also bright enough to see the horizon).

I brushed aside my irrational thought and concentrated on stuffing the charts into the canvas envelope. Although lead weights were available to assure sinking, the envelope became so heavy, it was all I could do to hoist it to the rail. A final push, and it went over and down. I watched it plummet to the water -- and horrors! -- it landed flat on the surface and floated like a cork. I kept my eyes glued to it, hoping against hope it would sink. It floated close to the motor whaleboat which was delayed in shoving off due to engine trouble.

"Hey, Saint!" I shouted down to Jim St. Pierre, one of the boat's occupants. He looked up.

"Grab that sack!" I shouted. "Haul it in!"

Jim did, and I gave a sigh of relief.

"You better go, too, Lynch."

It was the Captain's voice. I needed no prompting. I returned to the starboard wing, grabbed the logbook, and descended to the well deck to slide down the incline to the water. The final entry in the log read, "1418: Struck a mine starboard side midships. 1420: Captain gave command abandon ship." My intention was to keep the book high and dry and tread water with one hand, but it didn't work. The thick scum of oil soiled it a bit, but I felt it would still be legible, and I handed it up to St. Pierre. With both the logbook and charts now ensconced in the boat, I felt they would reach the proper authorities.

I also started to climb aboard the boat, but I saw that it was full, and I backed off. As I dropped into the water I caught a glimpse of the fellows caring for Burnette. I didn't know then about the eyelids. I never saw him again.

I had no qualms about being adrift in the water. I was fully clothed, even to shoes and steel helmet, the water was comfortably warm, and my life jacket kept my head above the filthy scum of oil. Besides, the Fleet was already sending in rescue boats. I could just idly wait, lazily treading water.

Somehow, though, this seemed unreal. All around was the incessant bombardment, shells whistling overhead, some guys still scrambling off the sinking ship. Under the water's surface -- was it safe or infested with sharks? Sharks! Would all the commotion scare them off or attract them? And depth charges! When they descended to a specified level they would detonate and crush the life out of any swimmer within range. Unaware at this time that they were on "safe," I considered myself to be in perilous waters.

Up to this point I had been following prescribed procedures, more or less routine, but now I was on my own in a spot that had no precedent. The graveness of the situation struck in a frightening way, and I heard myself blurt out, "Not two in six months!"

My parents had already lost one son to the war. My younger brother, Brendan, a Lieutenant with Merrill's Marauders, had been killed in Burma only six months before. My older brother, Frank, was somewhere in Africa with the Seabees.

I forced myself now to focus full concentration on survival. My only recourse seemed to be to swim out of this area. A sister ship, USS PREBLE, DM20, was standing close by. I could reach it! But the distance was deceptive and also, PREBLE was drifting. Though lying dead in the water, momentum continued to carry it forward. The starboard bow was already out of reach, but broadside beckoned and I aimed for it. There were crew members standing at the rail peering out at me. I knew they wanted to help if they could. It was up to me to swim to them.

I got closer, but the drift continued, and broadside became out of the question. Then I targeted the starboard quarter. I was closing in -- but not fast enough to outpace the driftage. The stern offered a chance. PREBLE was still

dead in the water, no propeller motion, but the continuing drift carried the stern away. That left only the starboard propeller guard. It was my last hope - risky, but no other choice; a chance to climb up on the protruding guard and step onto the deck.

I stopped swimming long enough to cup my mouth with my hands and yell to the crew at the stern, "Tell the bridge 'Don't turn the screws over!'" Perhaps they heard me, perhaps not. It didn't matter, because suddenly there was a wild thrashing of the propellers - a full speed backdown! Almost within reach of the overhanging guard, I was also dangerously close enough to be sucked into those slashing blades. I reversed my course and swam with all my strength to get away from that suction. I made it!

Now I was back where I began, but fortunately, much closer to the ship. As I idled in the water, I watched PREBLE go by in full speed reverse. First the stern, then the starboard quarter, and now I was abreast the starboard beam. Men were still at the rail. Could they help? They did! Suddenly a beautiful sight streaked through the air. It was a heaving line with dead aim on me - that slim rope with a sphere at the end. A heaving line is slightly thicker than a clothes line and the sphere is slightly larger than a baseball, a special sailor's knot called a "monkey's fist." It is normally used when approaching a dock to give dock workers a line to haul in the mooring hawsers.

The monkey's fist sailed straight and true, only inches over my head. All I had to do was reach up and grab the line. Once on hold, I wouldn't let go. The speed of the ship's backdown, plus the muscled towing by the crew at the rail, dragged me through the water at a rapid rate. I hung on for life. I was over water, then under water - I heard music and wondered if this was a prelude to death, but I hung fast. Then the line suddenly went slack, and I was bumping against the side of the ship. Willing hands reached down and helped me climb aboard, murmuring encouraging words and inquiring about certain buddies on the PERRY. I regretted that I could only answer, "I don't know," to their questions. I knew how anxious they were for information about their friends.

They led me aft to the showers. I stripped and dumped my clothes - already there was a pile of oil-sodden garments. PREBLE had been active from the moment of the explosion, rescuing guys from the water and transporting them aboard, where an emergency medical center had been set up. Wounded survivors were treated and prepared for transfer to the more extensive medical facilities on the larger ships. Some were sent to USS TENNESSEE, some to USS MINNEAPOLIS and some to USS CLEVELAND.

PREBLE had also attempted a salvage effort but was forced to abandon it, because going alongside PERRY would have meant certain death to the men in the water.

Other ships also joined in picking up survivors - USS GUEST, USS SOUTHARD, and USS RATHBURNE.

I bathed three times. First with kerosene, then a shower with strong pumice soap, and finally a shower with regular bath soap.

When I stepped out of the shower somebody gave me a fresh-laundered shirt and dungarees - even a pair of shoes. I accepted them gratefully; they were personal belongings from one sailor to another.

My first move was to go to the bridge to see my friend and counterpart, the Quartermaster.

"I almost got run over by your screws," I said.

"Was that you?" he gasped. "We thought that guy was a goner!"

Then he explained that a loose mine had been about to brush against the PREBLE's bow.

"We had no choice," he said, "It had to be full speed backdown!"

I noticed that other PERRY survivors were lying on the well deck. One was Ensign Wyeth Ramsey, who suffered a badly broken leg. He had been walking through the starboard passageway and was right above the spot where the mine struck. The explosion knocked his shin bone into the knee joint. Although sedated, he gave me a broad smile.

I returned to the stern with a sudden yen for a souvenir - my binoculars, which I had been wearing all through the soaking. I rummaged through the messy clothes and found them. Later, I cleaned the instrument but not the strap - I wanted to retain the oily scent as an unforgettable reminder. I have the souvenir to this day. The strap has never been washed, but the oil and smell eventually wore off, and now it is just an ordinary canvas strap. In cleaning the prisms, I jarred them out of position, and now if you sight through them you will come away cross-eyed.

I walked around the after deckhouse to the starboard side so that I could see the PERRY and all the activity around her. There were several rescue boats in the area picking up guys.

Then my attention was drawn to another survivor hobbling toward me. It was Carpenter's Mate Sedgie Rayburn. He had a broken foot and was still in shock, judging from his glassy eyes and lopsided grin.

"I got blown over the side!" he boasted like a little child.

I asked him how it felt to be blown through the air.

"All I know," he replied, "I was on the gun deck and heard a low whir-r-r, and then I was thirty feet under water."

He was soon taken by the crew to the emergency medical station.

Rescue boats were rounding up survivors to transport them to a central location among the Task Force ships. One boat came alongside, and I jumped into it. All the occupants were PERRY survivors, stunned and silent - except one. Donald Stillion, Signalman, was in a good mood.

"What makes you so happy?" I joshed.

He explained that the Pharmacist's Mate in the boat that picked him up had a bundle of mini-bottles for medicinal purposes.

"Nobody wanted any," Don said, "so I drank 'em all!"

Another boat had picked up my fellow Quartermaster, Tom Koch. Tom was our official "unofficial" photographer. With the war winding down, permission had been granted to allow photography. Tom and several buddies had rigged up a dark-room and had developed some prints. Today, as he bobbed up and down in the water, he had held the camera high and snapped continuous shots of the sinking ship. When he was picked up he handed his camera gingerly up to the coxswain and said, "Take good care of this!"

The coxswain snapped it from his fingers and flung it into the bilge. Tom was infuriated, then uncontrollably despondent. Film that could have been historical was irretrievably lost.

Our boat pulled alongside the cruiser MINNEAPOLIS. A boarding net (or was it a landing net?) had been rigged along the ship's side. Most of us had no experience with this, but we had no trouble clambering up - except Stillion. He got himself tangled and untangled, sometimes with his back to the hull, but he made it to the top, giggling all the way.

Under the broiling tropical sun we perspired profusely. When I reached the top I was soaked. I took off my shirt and was startled to find it saturated with oil. What had been a clean shirt only a short time ago was now just an oily rag. Then I looked at my flesh and stifled an exclamatory "Wow!" The perspiration oozing from my pores was jet black! That oil scum had run deep. A shower with strong

soap got rid of it. Thankfully, there were no recurrences.

Now, all unwounded survivors were together. We learned that two more shipmates had been lost. One was a rookie named Donald O. Schomer who, like Burnette, had been in the same passageway when the deck exploded, and he had been scalded with steaming water from a burst galley tank. The other was Steward's Mate Frank Byrd, who was missing - possibly blown over the side and drowned. His body was never recovered.

Quickly, we saw a systematic procedure at work. A row of tables had been set up, staffed by experienced personnel, and we were invited to place our claims for lost cash and valuables. We were also offered a carton of cigarettes apiece. I opted for cigars, and received just one. We jested that the cost of a tax-free carton of cigarettes seemed to be equal to the value of that single cigar. Adding to the amusement I felt, the cigar was stale and dried out -- completely unsmokable. This brought a spontaneous string of jokes from the guys. The key word was "butt"; they had the butts to smoke and I was the butt of their fun. This light-hearted respite helped to ease the tenseness we still felt.

During this exchange we were issued new uniforms and dungaree work clothes. Then we were assigned berths in various spots throughout the large ship. Mine was an army cot on the fantail.

Although it was refreshing to lie down, I had trouble getting to sleep. The aftershock had hit. Suddenly, my left arm went out of control. It shot straight up and wouldn't come down. With my right hand I pulled it down, but it sprang right up again. These spasms repeated several times, then ceased. After a while I finally dozed off to a jumpy slumber - until something jarred my cot and I bolted to my feet. It was a sailor trudging a garbage can through that crowded deck for midnight dumping off the stern. It was wartime routine to dump garbage only once daily, usually at midnight, to avoid the possibility of frequent dumpings leaving a trail for enemy spotters.

This jarring incident had a pacifying effect on me. Perhaps it was contact with routine that caused this feeling, after a day of strictly unroutine activity. Whatever the reason, I plopped onto the cot and drifted into a deep and peaceful sleep.

Next day we assembled in uniform for the solemn ceremony of burial at sea for Burnette and Schomer. Their bodies were sewn in canvas and heavily weighted at the feet. Each was placed, one at a time, on a board mounted on a fulcrum at the railing. An Honor Guard of eight sailors manned it, four on each side. We stood at attention, silent in that unmatchable silence of mourning while a Chaplain offered prayers.

We came to a sharp salute as the Honor Guard slowly began the tilt of the board. The body slid, then hesitated. This brought a catch to my throat, and I could sense that I was not alone in emotion. Gradually the Guard completed the tilt, and the body's slide accelerated to a plunge. In that quiet stillness the plunging splash was the only sound to be heard.

This silence stayed with us as we regrouped for a meeting with our captain. He gave a brief but impressive talk, complimenting us on our behavior through the crisis and wishing us luck in whatever our new assignments might be. This had been his first command, and it had lasted only ten days, but in that ten days he had won the respect and admiration of the entire crew.

It was time now to wonder what our next step would be. Our wounded were hospitalized on the TENNESSEE and MINNEAPOLIS. The rest of us seemed to be at loose ends.

The Fleet was westward bound for the climax of the war, and we were to



be left behind, hopefully to latch onto a ship sailing east. It seemed, though, that there were none. We were splintered into small groups. If any eastbound ships materialized small groups might be accommodated. Each group was on its own, thankfully with an officer or two.

The group I was with hitched a ride on USS McCALL, an old destroyer which seemed modern when compared with PERRY. We were not homeward bound yet, but McCALL was headed southeastward to Manus, an island in the Admiralty Group, off the northeast coast of New Guinea. Here we debarked.

Our new atmosphere was familiar - a rough and ready camp being whipped into shape by Seabees, reminiscent of our Aleutian days where we watched island after island developed by Seabees, one at a time converted from desolate tundra until the chain was a series of military installations. It had been commonplace for us to gaze at these structures and remark, "Boy, the Seabees sure built this place up!" We remembered a humorous later incident when steaming into San Francisco Harbor, one of our guys stood on deck looking up at the magnificent buildings and exclaimed, "Boy, the Seabees sure built this place up!"

Here on Manus we were absorbed into the helter-skelter environment. We had no duties; this place was something of a way station, with guys just waiting for transportation out. Each day the three biggest events were breakfast, lunch and dinner. The chow line was a string of misfit outfits; name the uniform if you could. We had no idea who these fellows were, but we had one thing in common - when do we get out of here?

Our quarters were a makeshift bunkhouse with outdoor showers and facilities. We felt that the only hill was chosen so that gravity could provide water pressure. When we pulled the chain for a shower, we prepared for the shock we knew would come. A grizzled white-haired Seabee was fond of bellowing, "You never get used to this. You just put up with it!"

We had movies every night. It was typical of the Navy to provide first run films wherever a projector could be set up, and this post was no exception. An outdoor quasi-amplitheatre was set up, with wooden benches arranged in a semicircle. One evening an S.P. (Shore Patrol) making his rounds with a flashlight spotted a pair of bare feet.

"Hey, sailor," he said. "You're out of uniform!"

It was no sailor. It was a Jap soldier who had been left behind when the Japanese evacuated the island. We chuckled over this, and speculated whether he had also infiltrated the chow line.

On a somber note, a Hospital Ship was moored alongside the dock. In the evenings it would pull out to open ocean for a solemn rite - burials at sea.

After a few days a Victory Ship transport pulled into the harbor. Empty, it provided homeward bound transportation for our small group. We had this large ship practically to ourselves. Besides the crew, there was a Sick Bay with one nurse and one patient, a wounded Marine. He was immobilized but comfortable and was glad to have our company.

It was a novelty to have all this free space. Normally, a naval vessel is crammed. Our two officers decided to give us work assignments, but discontinued this after a day or so. There was no need for the discipline of a work party. We were just pleased to be headed home.

The ship took us directly to Pearl Harbor. Here all of the unwounded PERRY survivors were reunited. It amazed me then, and still amazes me today, how the Navy was able to keep track of our scattered groups and bring us all together again.

Finally, we were transferred to the USS CLEVELAND for the trip back to the States. As we gazed somberly out on the seascape we brought to mind our final glimpse of the stricken PERRY, drifting slowly away and, as reported by an aircraft, breaking in half and sinking in two parts.

This old ship had been our home. From the bombing of Pearl Harbor to the finality of her sinking, fighting the war with guns, depth charges and minesweeping gear; while freezing in the Bering Sea, broiling in the South Pacific and zigzagging across the Pacific Ocean she had housed us. During long and lonely stretches at sea, isolated from the world but never with a feeling of being imprisoned, we had maintained a warm family spirit.

Now our home was lost, personal belongings within it. Gazing at the empty seascape and reliving our memories, it seemed to be like -- indeed! -- like watching your home burn down.

FINIS

Bibliography:

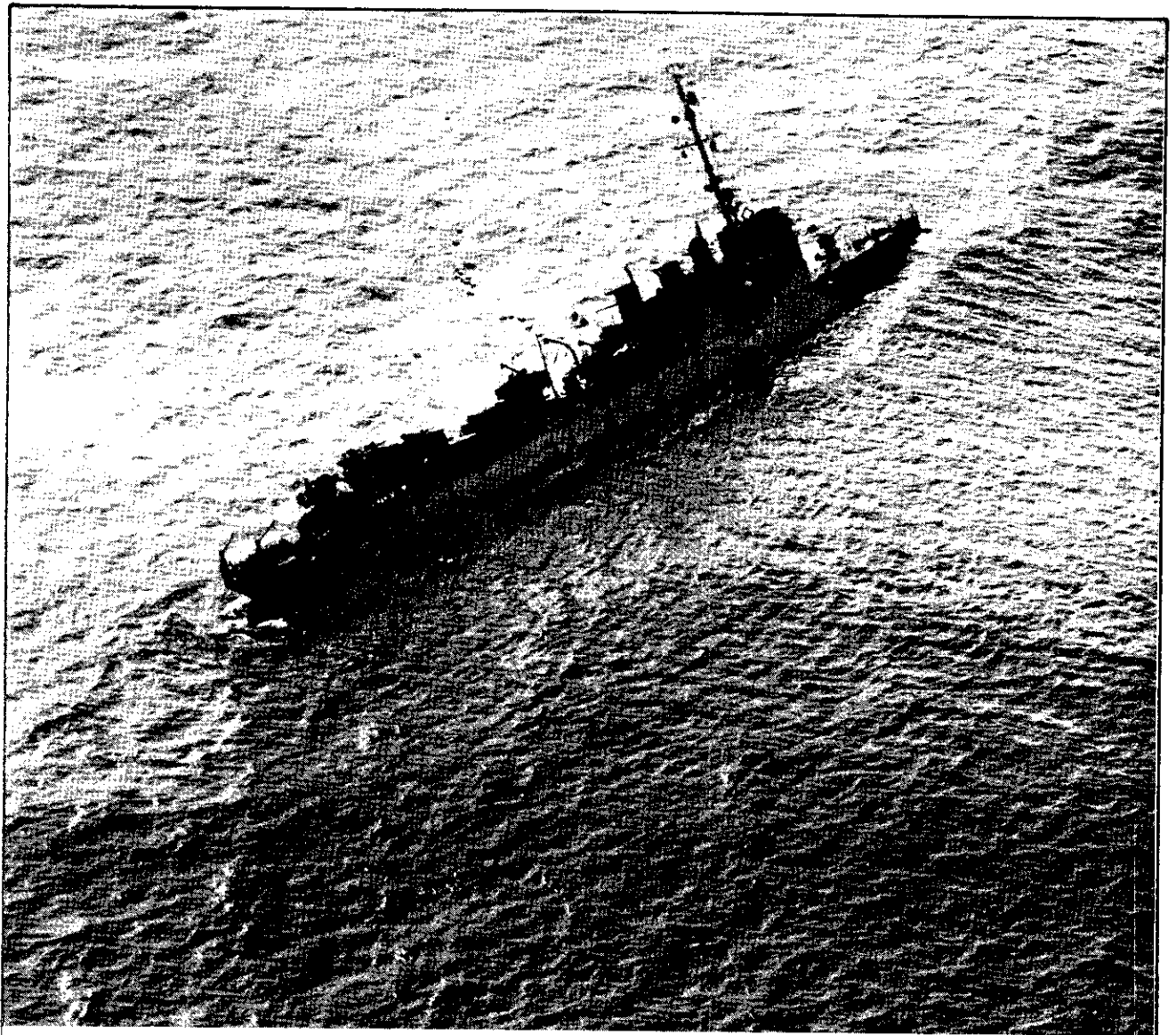
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Action Report, USS PREBLE (DM-20), 5 October 1944. Rescue and Attempted Salvage of USS PERRY (DMS-17), with enclosure: Chief Pharmacist's Mate report of casualties, 13 September 1944.

Casualty Report, USS PERRY (DMS-17) to the Bureau of Medicine and Surgery, 2 October 1944.

Deck Logs, USS MINNEAPOLIS (CA-36), 13-16 September 1944.

\* \* \* \* \*



The Perry's logs, service records and pay accounts were removed before the ship went down on 13 September 1944. The final entry in the Deck Log was: "1605 Ship sank, breaking in two at point of damage. Latitude 06°-52'-45" (North); Longitude 134°-08'-40" East in 40 fathoms of water, 700 yards off southeast tip of Anguar Island, Palau Group."  
(Naval Historical Center photograph.)



U.S.S. Perry (DMS-17)

List of Officers, 13 September 1944<sup>1</sup>

<u>Lindsay, William N., Jr.</u>	Lt.	USNR	Commanding Officer
<u>Steward, Jack A.</u>	Lt.	USNR	Executive Officer
<u>Baggot, Thomas G., Jr.</u>	Lt.	USNR	Engineer Instructions
<u>Ticusan, John Jr.</u>	Lt.(jg)	USNR	Communications Officer
<u>Emerson, H. T., Jr.</u>	Lt.(jg)	USNR	First Lieutenant
* <u>Sowder, Robert W.</u>	Lt.(jg)	USNR	Gunnery Officer
<u>Cavanaugh, M. J., Jr.</u>	Ensign	USNR	Engineering Officer
* <u>Ramsay, Wyeth T.</u>	Ensign	USNR	Ass't. First Lieutenant
<u>Ennis, C. L.</u>	Ensign	USNR	Ass't. Gunnery Officer
* <u>Stephenson, Cameron N.</u>	Ensign	USNR	Ass't. Engineering Off.
<u>Clark, Ronald W.</u>	Ensign	USNR	Ass't. Communications

\* \* \* \* \*

<sup>1</sup> Compiled from the List of Officers for 31 August 1944 filed with the Deck Logs, updated to show Lt. Lindsay as C.O. vice Lt. Cdr. Ira G. Stubbart, USN.

\* Wounded when the ship struck a mine and sank on 13 September 1944 according to the machine-generated casualty report prepared by the Bureau of Naval Personnel c. 1946. (National Archives)

E. A. Wilde, Jr.  
March, 2001



U.S.S. Perry (DMS-17)

Muster Roll of the Crew; September 13, 1944<sup>1</sup>

AHERN, Gerald Joseph	205-34-44	MM3c
BANNON, Andrew George	228-13-21	CMM
BARNES, George Palmer	613-37-54	WT3c
BEZILE, Harold Doyle	623-83-74	F1c
BINDE, Harry Edgar	224-88-59	S2c
BLACK, Richard Service	652-95-44	WT3c
BONIN, Ernest Dennis	645-12-22	S1c
*BOYENGA, Harold John	321-61-35	GM1c
**BRAND, Joseph James	223-61-97	WT1c
BURGESS, Russel William	311-70-55	MM2c
**BURNETTE, Paul Ray	641-91-28	S1c
BURTON, Lawton (n)	612-99-89	S2c
BUTTS, Earl Witt	576-06-83	PhM1c
**BYRD, Frank Louis	855-70-08 <sup>2</sup>	StM1c
*CHAMPAGNE, Raymond Noel	862-10-25	S1c
CHANDLER, Thomas Andrew	359-96-76	CGM
CHESTNUT, Jerry Bernard	811-49-58	StM1c
CHISM, Johnie Ray	896-62-94	S1c
COLLINS, Paul Leo	250-87-30	S2c
COWETTE, Raymond Anthony	201-78-65	RM2c
*CRIST, Robert William	890-51-89	F1c
CURRY, Paul Laverne	301-22-78	F1c
DANNHORN, Douglas Arthur	301-21-37	S1c
DEMPSTER, Russel (n)	859-45-01	F1c
DEUNK, Howard Whyler	615-19-57	MM3c
DICKINSON, Walter (n), Jr.	671-24-69	RM3c
**EDGEELL, Henry Clark	755-90-53	F1c
EINERSEN, Eldon Keith	377-89-63	SM3c
ELLIS, Dale Huband	884-83-30	RdM3c
ELLIS, Glenn (n)	965-87-21	F2c
EWART, Harold Ervin	851-02-82	S1c
FOUCAULT, Leon Phillip	201-54-10	CBM
*GASTON, Rufus (n)	853-57-60	StM1c
GENRETTE, Lawrence (n)	341-79-31	CWT
GILES, Francis Edward	708-36-85	S1c
GODFREY, James Clement	634-68-28	MM3c
GONIA, Edward George	868-61-86	S1c
GOTT, Harley Lorin	576-78-76	GM3c
GRIGGS, Earnest Lenon	896-63-00	F2c
GUSEMAN, Orville Card	725-61-68	S1c
HANSEN, Lloyd Fredrick	306-14-14	SC3c
HENDERSON, Robert Ashley	662-19-64	FC1c
*HILDERBRAND, Clement Philip	659-22-52	S1c
*HOFSTEDE, Albert William	413-29-82	B1c
HOHNER, Richard Victor	337-57-94	MM1c





HOUSE, Irven Burton	721-19-42	RT1c
ILLE, James "M"	848-80-20	S1c
JACKSON, Ellsworth Herbert	868-95-80	Y3c
JENSRUB, Hilmer Julian	377-81-32	SoM2c
JOHNSON, Francis Nathaniel	882-44-33	F1c
JOHNSON, Page Ward	827-89-87	MM3c
*JOPLIN, Ottice Cannon	828-71-92	F1c
*JOYCE, Richard Michael	761-67-66	MM3c
KAESER, Wallace Rainhardt	662-52-41	SoM1c
KASNER, Earl (n)	890-53-67	S1c
KELLY, Elwyn Eugene	632-03-35	MM1c
KENNEDY, Francis Ernest	202-87-76	WT3c
KIRKBRIDE, James Howard	827-89-85	MM3c
KOCH, Thomas Charles	877-55-65	QM3c
*KOPACZ, Andrew Joseph	667-35-93	S2c
KOUTUXIDES, Lester (n)	807-91-59	GM3c
KOZAK, Joseph (n)	725-53-77	RM2c
LAKE, Donald Byron	570-04-48	RM2c
LAMBERT, Jacob Wilmer	852-45-50	S1c
LAMOREAUX, Harold Glenn	725-61-90	SK2c
LAMSON, John Floyd	844-28-16	F1c
LUCAS, Walter Sherwood	808-99-10	EM3c
LUGO, Walter James	565-12-56	RM3c
LYNCH, John Joseph, Jr.	646-01-27	QM1c
LYNN, George Wilson	262-22-85	BM1c
MADDUX, Johnny Barnard	848-55-90	S1c
MARTIN, Albert Louis	337-09-99	CCS
MATTHEWS, John William	811-33-30	F1c
McLEOD, Charles Thomas	940-03-88	S2c
Mc NALL, Donald Andrew	368-51-30	MM1c
MILLER, Lee Roy	385-88-62	BM1c
MILLER, Orville "E"	311-55-76	MM2c
MITCHELL, William Kipling	840-63-56	RdM3c
MORRIS, Harold Edward	829-01-74	S1c
MORTON, Fred William	726-58-40	S1c
OTTS, Peter Raymond	238-62-72	MM1c
*PARKER, George Edward	615-74-28	M1c
PERDUE, Willis Edgar, Jr.	660-05-31	BM2c
PETTYJOHN, Jack Ernest	346-93-14	SM2c
POGUE, Francis Calvert	338-35-99	S1c
PROFFITT, William Howard	828-19-98	S1c
RAY, Dennis "J"	274-36-73	CEM
*RAYBURN, Sedgie Eugene	274-36-85	CM1c
RICHARDSON, James (m)	272-08-79	CK1c
ROLLINS, Richard Oscar	576-89-26	S2c



ROSOL, John Mitchel	852-61-61	F1c
ROWAN, Charles Wesley	654-31-46	MM2c
RUDY, Ancel Jubert	868-76-91	F1c
SAEWERT, Leonard Kent	757-72-25	F1c
SCHEMPP, Edward Joseph	852-61-77	S1c
<b>**SCHIEBER, Arthur William</b>	870-11-90	F1c
SCHLOBOHM, George Mirador	886-64-40	F1c
SCHMIDT, Paul Herman	852-63-24	S1c
<b>**SCHOMER, Donald Otto</b>	871-90-34	S1c
SCHOTT, Orville Lee	377-90-98	S2c
SCHUENEMANN, Raymond Robert	726-44-69	F1c
SHIELDS, James Albert	368-27-62	CMM
SHIPLEY, Everett Russell	654-22-45	MM2c
SHUEY, Howard Dan	654-22-79	MM2c
SLAUGHTER, Clyde Earman	346-85-69	F1c
SMITH, Everette (n)	846-11-04	S1c
SMITH, Frederick Lee	725-61-95	GM3c
STILLION, Donald Douglas	283-30-47	SM1c
ST. PIERRE, James Russell	202-63-40	MM1c
TARDO, Salvador (n)	274-63-56	GM1c
TAYLOR, John Winfield	272-79-79	BM2c
TERRANO, Frank Paul	223-86-05	MM1c
THOMA, Howard Victor	311-55-03	WT1c
THOMAS, Ivory (n)	846-92-50	StM2c
THOMAS, Roland Louis	212-63-06	WT2c
TREIBER, John Lewis	385-92-86	MM1c
<b>*TRUMP, Joner (n)</b>	654-07-69	Y2c
TUNKS, Marion Lloyd	648-04-91	SC2c
TURNER, Pearel Edward	832-79-06	EM3c
TURNGREN, Robert Gust	890-17-14	WT3c
WATSON, Walter Jackson	624-77-25	SF2c
WEATHERHOLT, Robert James	753-25-51	S2c
WENNES, Carl Junior	322-09-25	S2c
<b>**WERSEBE, Dan Jesse</b>	624-85-06	WT2c
WESCOAT, Herbert Jacob	956-47-79	S2c
WEST, Leo Jasper	951-61-59	S2c
WETSELL, Harold Everett	225-57-35	S2c
WHITE, Alfred Evans	225-43-29	S1c
WILLIAMS, David William	871-46-76	S2c
<b>*WILLIAMS, Denzil Wright</b>	939-78-66	S2c
WILLIAMS, Joseph Elmer	723-61-68	S2c
WILLOUGHBY, Frank (n)	942-33-80	S2c
WIRTH, Thomas Martin	382-88-08	Cox
<b>*WISINSKI, Clarence Edward</b>	944-36-90	S2c
WOFFORD, Silee (n)	624-75-22	WT2c



WOLSFELD, Geral George	727-20-62	S2c
WOLVERTON, Royce Mac	722-12-64	S1c
WOOD, Hugh Alonzo	944-04-06	S2c
WOOD, Thomas Walter	274-48-85	EM2c
WOODALL, Wayne (n)	923-93-91	S2c
WORLEY, Robert "E" Lewis	845-17-63	S2c
WORTHINGTON, Mavis (n)	624-77-37	SC3c
*WRIGHT, Harvey (n)	923-93-02	S2c

\* \* \* \* \*

Notes:

- 1 Source: The ship's personnel diary on microfilm at the National Archives. Report Of Changes sheets through 9/6/44 were examined, and the muster roll for the quarter ending 6/30/44 was updated to reflect transfers, men received and changes in rate.
- 2 The service number for BYRD, Frank Louis, StM1c, appears as 855-70-03 in two different casualty reports, but it clearly ends in "-08" according to two entries in the personnel diary.
- \* Wounded (\*\* Killed) when the ship was mined on 9/13/44 according to a machine-generated casualty report at the National Archives prepared by the Bureau of Naval Personnel after the war.

Summary of Casualties:

	<u>Killed</u>	<u>Wounded</u>	<u>Not Wounded</u>	<u>Complement on 9/13/44</u>
Officer	0	3	8	11
Enlisted	<u>8</u>	<u>14</u>	<u>121</u>	<u>143</u>
TOTALS	<u>8</u>	<u>17</u>	<u>129</u>	<u>154</u>

E. A. Wilde, Jr.  
June, 2000



*U.S.S. Perry (DMS-17)*

*Honor Roll*

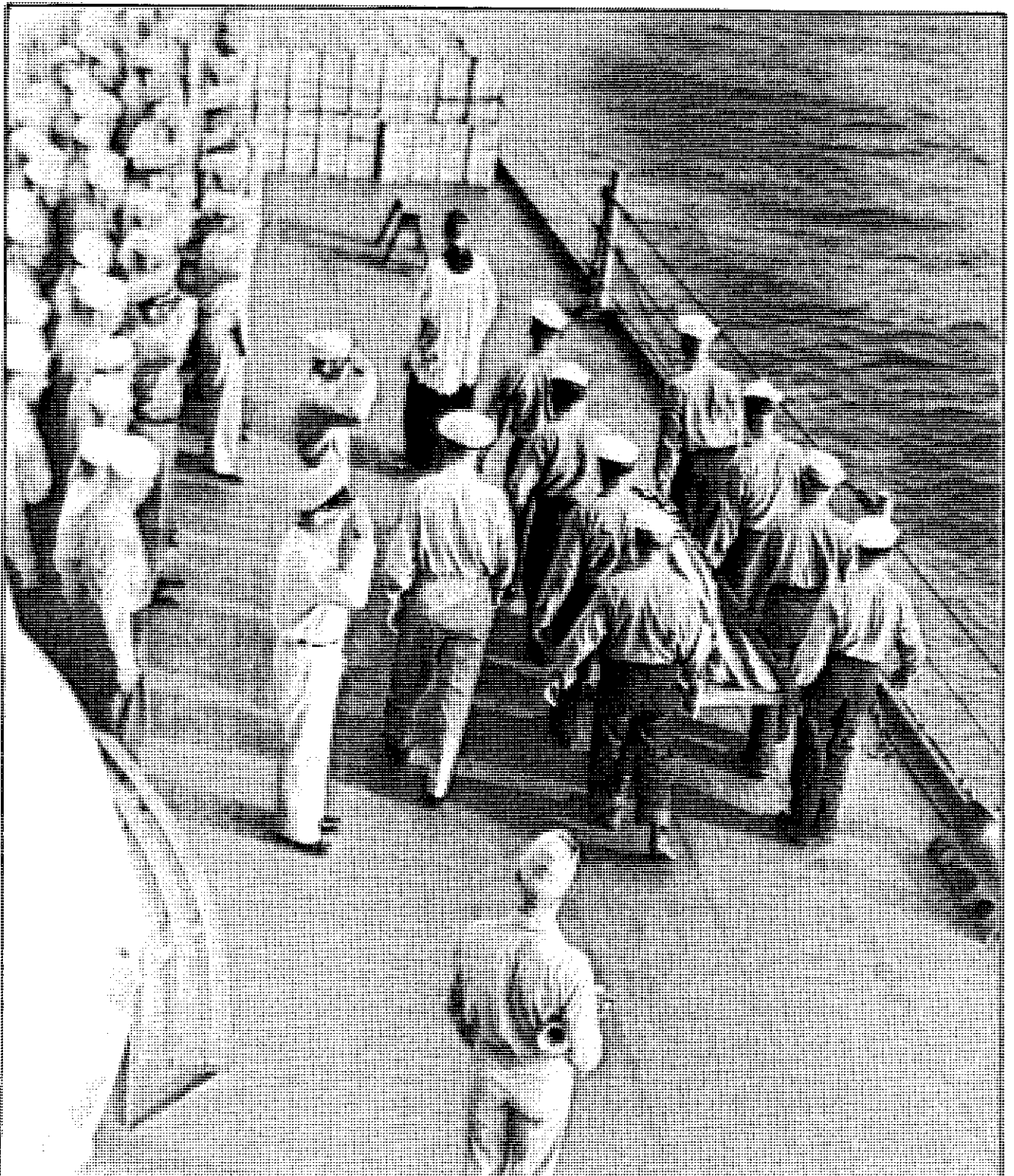
*Killed due to enemy action on September 13, 1944, when the Perry struck a mine while sweeping during the invasion of the Palau Islands in the Southwest Pacific:*

<i>Joseph James <u>Brand</u></i>	<i>Water Tender 1st Class</i>
<i>Paul Ray <u>Burnette</u></i>	<i>Seaman 1st Class</i>
<i>Frank Louis <u>Byrd</u></i>	<i>Steward's Mate 1st Class</i>
<i>Henry Clark <u>Edgell</u></i>	<i>Fireman 1st Class</i>
<i>Ottice Cannon <u>Joplin</u></i>	<i>Fireman 1st Class</i>
<i>Arthur William <u>Schieber</u></i>	<i>Fireman 1st Class</i>
<i>Donald Otto <u>Schomer</u></i>	<i>Seaman 1st Class</i>
<i>Dan Jesse <u>Wersebe</u></i>	<i>Water Tender 2nd Class</i>

*E. A. Wilde, Jr.  
February, 1997*

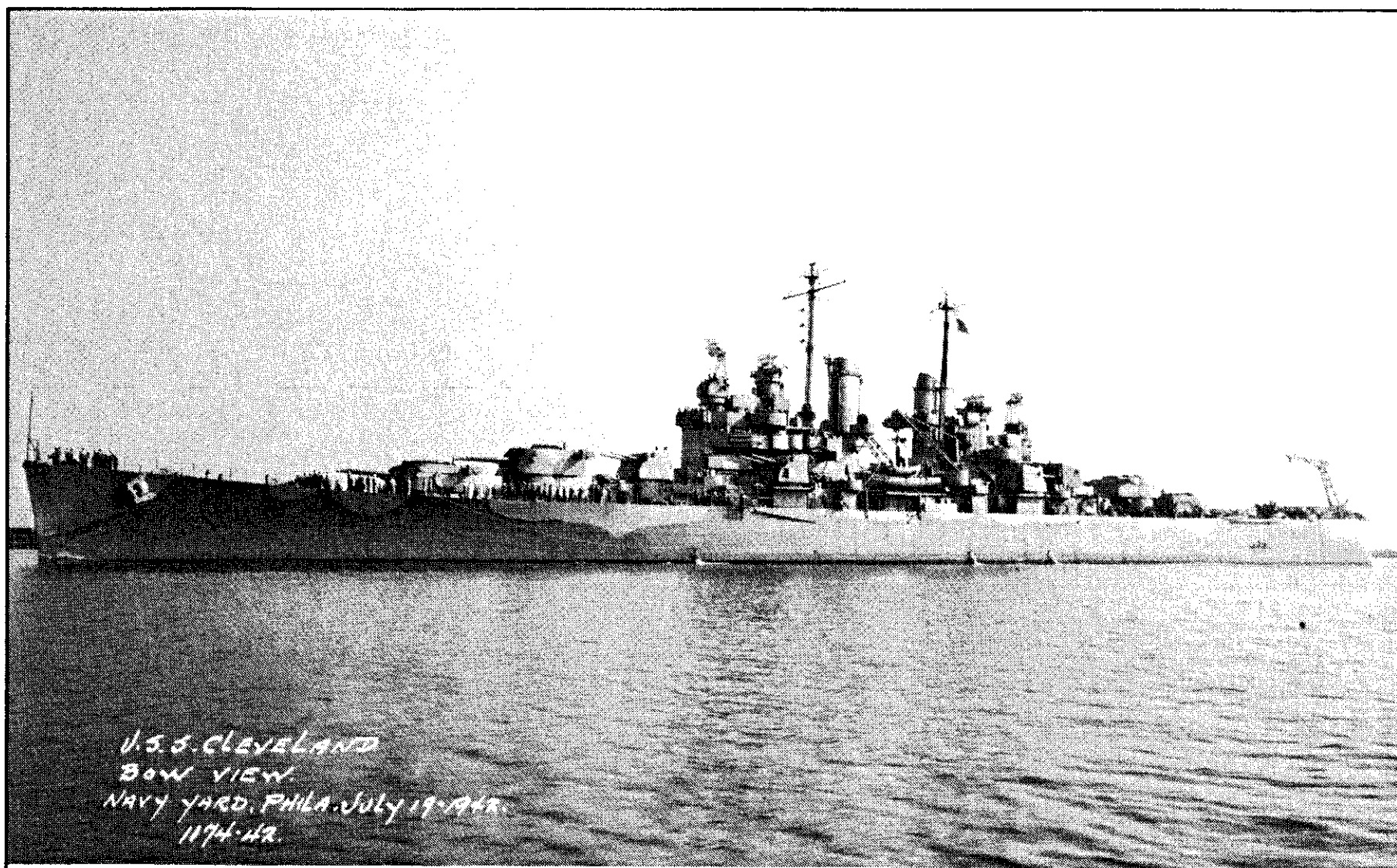






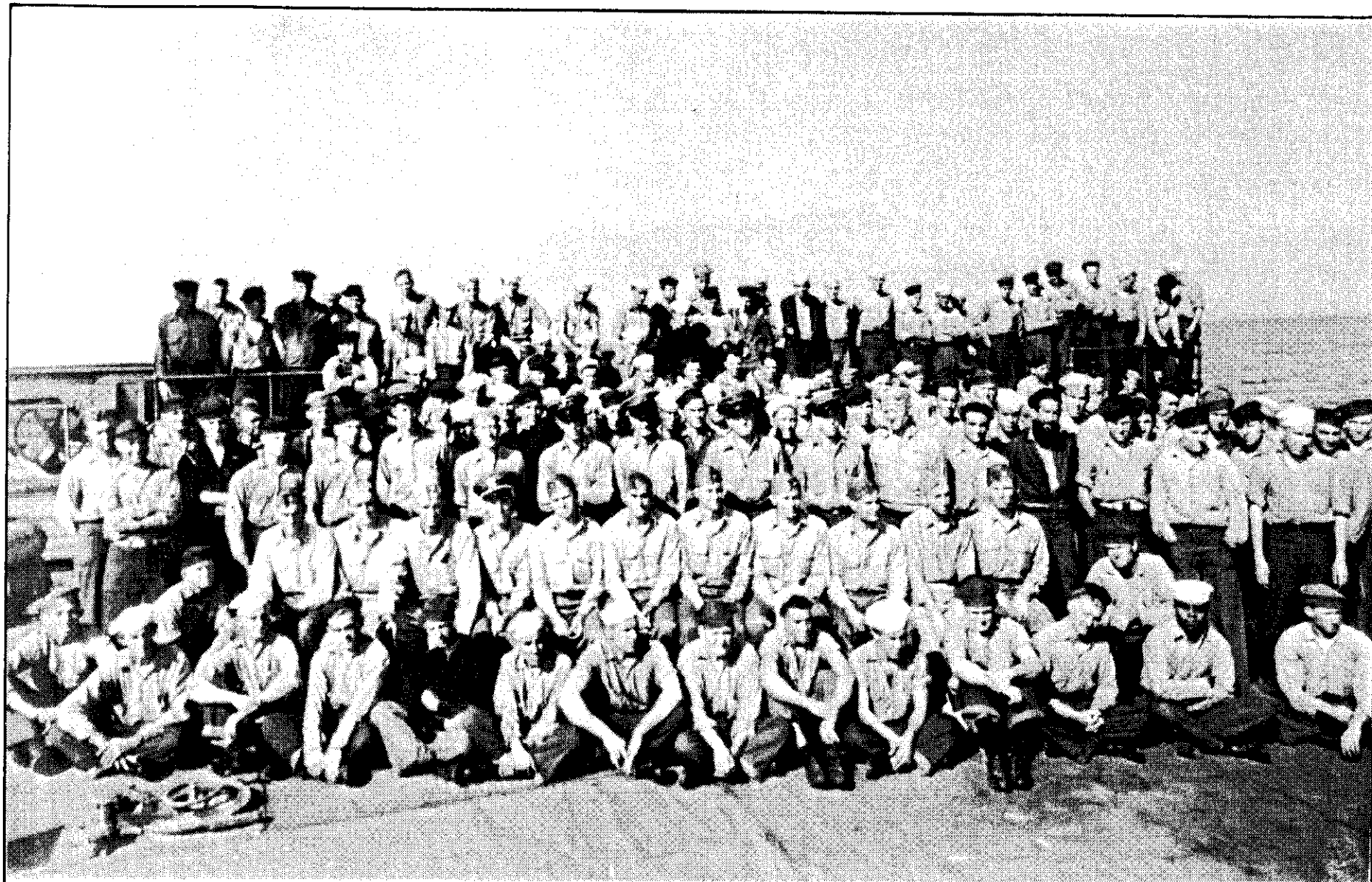
Burial services were held aboard the heavy cruiser U.S.S. Minneapolis (CA-36) for two Perry crew members who died of wounds shortly after being transferred from the U.S.S. Sugat (DD-472): Paul R. Burnette, Sfc, and Donald C. Schomer, Sfc. The colors were lowered to half mast, and the ship's chaplain conducted a brief service before their bodies were committed to the deep. Both men had been badly burned by escaping steam and fuel oil when the Perry struck a mine on September 13, 1944. (Courtesy of Jack A. Steward; photographer unknown.)





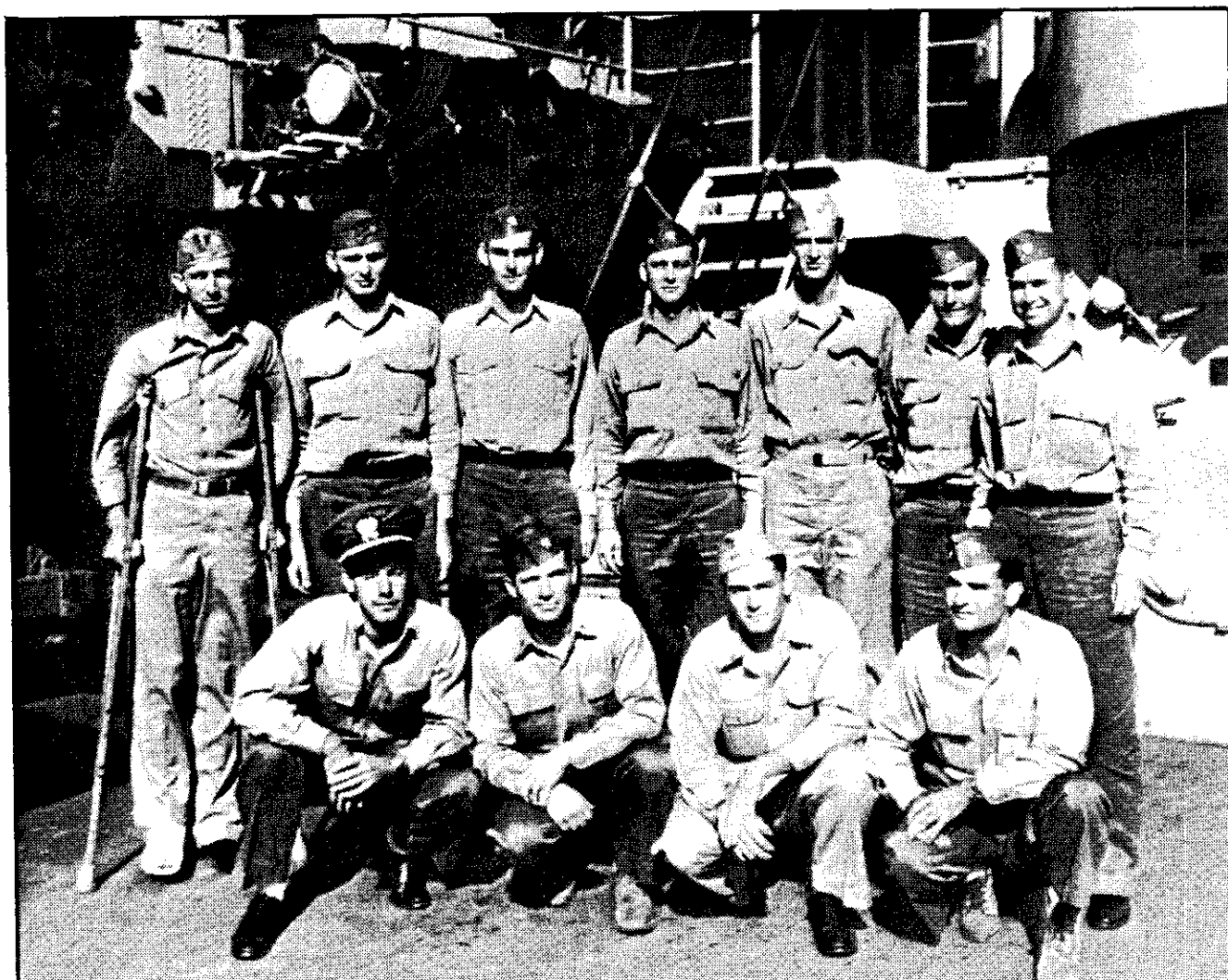
The light cruiser U.S.S. Cleveland (CL-55) in July, 1942. After the Perry was sunk on September 13, 1944, many of her survivors were transferred to this ship, and later, all of the unwounded survivors boarded the ship at Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, for their return trip to the States. The Cleveland was the class leader for thirty of these 10,000-ton ships which were laid down from 1940 through 1944. They were 608 feet long and had a main battery of twelve 6-inch/47 guns in four turrets. (Official U.S. Navy photograph.)





Homeward bound! Survivors of the U.S.S. Perry (DMS-17) aboard the light cruiser U.S.S. Cleveland (CL-55) enroute Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, to Terminal Island (Port of Los Angeles), California, in late 1944. After their ship was sunk during the invasion of the Palaus on September 13, 1944 they were dispersed to nearby bases for several weeks awaiting transportation. Finally, the unwounded survivors were reunited at Pearl Harbor for their trip back to the States. (Photograph courtesy of Lt. Francis C. Pogue, USN (Ret.))





The officer complement of the U.S.S. Perry (DMS-17) aboard the U.S.S. Cleveland (CL-55) after their ship was sunk on 13 September 1944: (front, L to R) Lt.(jg) H. T. Emerson, Jr., Ens. C. N. Stephenson (?), Ens. R. W. Clark (?), Lt.(jg) J. Ticusan, Jr.; (standing) Ens. W. T. Ramsay, Lt. J. A. Steward (X.O.), Lt. T. G. Baggot, Jr., Lieut. W. H. Lindsay, Jr. (C.O.), Ens. C. L. Ennis, Ens. M. J. Cavanaugh, Jr., Lt.(jg) R. W. Sowder. (All of the Perry's officers were USNR.)  
(Photograph courtesy of Lt. Francis C. Pogue, USN (Ret.))

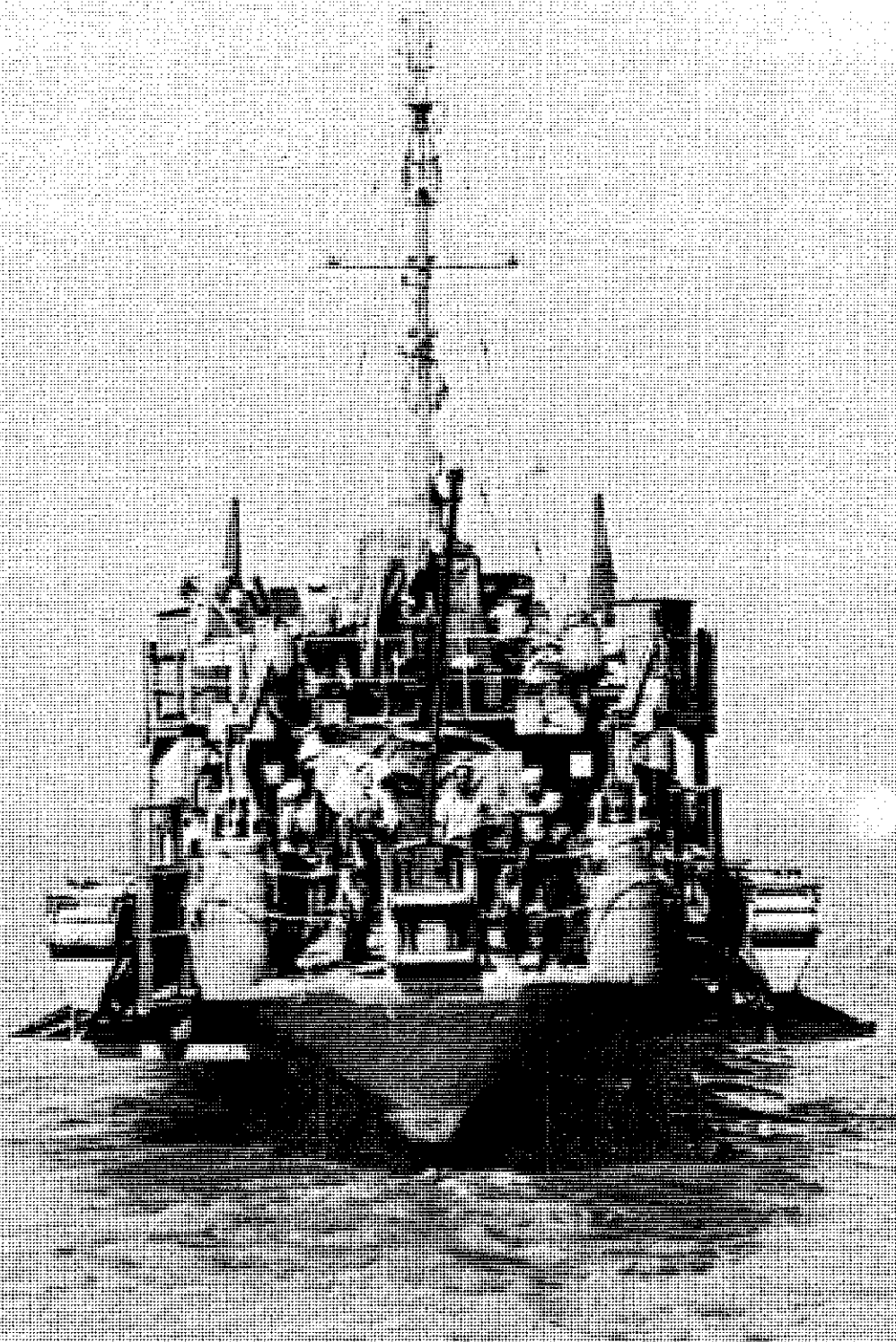




*"They fought together as brothers in arms; they died together and now they sleep side by side. To them we have a solemn obligation - the obligation to insure that their sacrifice will help make this a better and safer world in which to live."*

*- Fleet Admiral Chester W. Nimitz, USN, at The Surrender on board the U.S.S. Missouri (BB-63) in Tokyo Bay, 2 September 1945.*





The U.S.S. Perry (DMS-17) earned six battle stars in World War II:

Pearl Harbor Attack	December 7, 1941
Aleutian Campaign	April-August 1943
Marshall Islands Operation	January 1944
Hollandia Operation	April 1944
Marianas Operation	June-July 1944
Western Caroline Islands Operation	August-October 1944



Editor's Note:

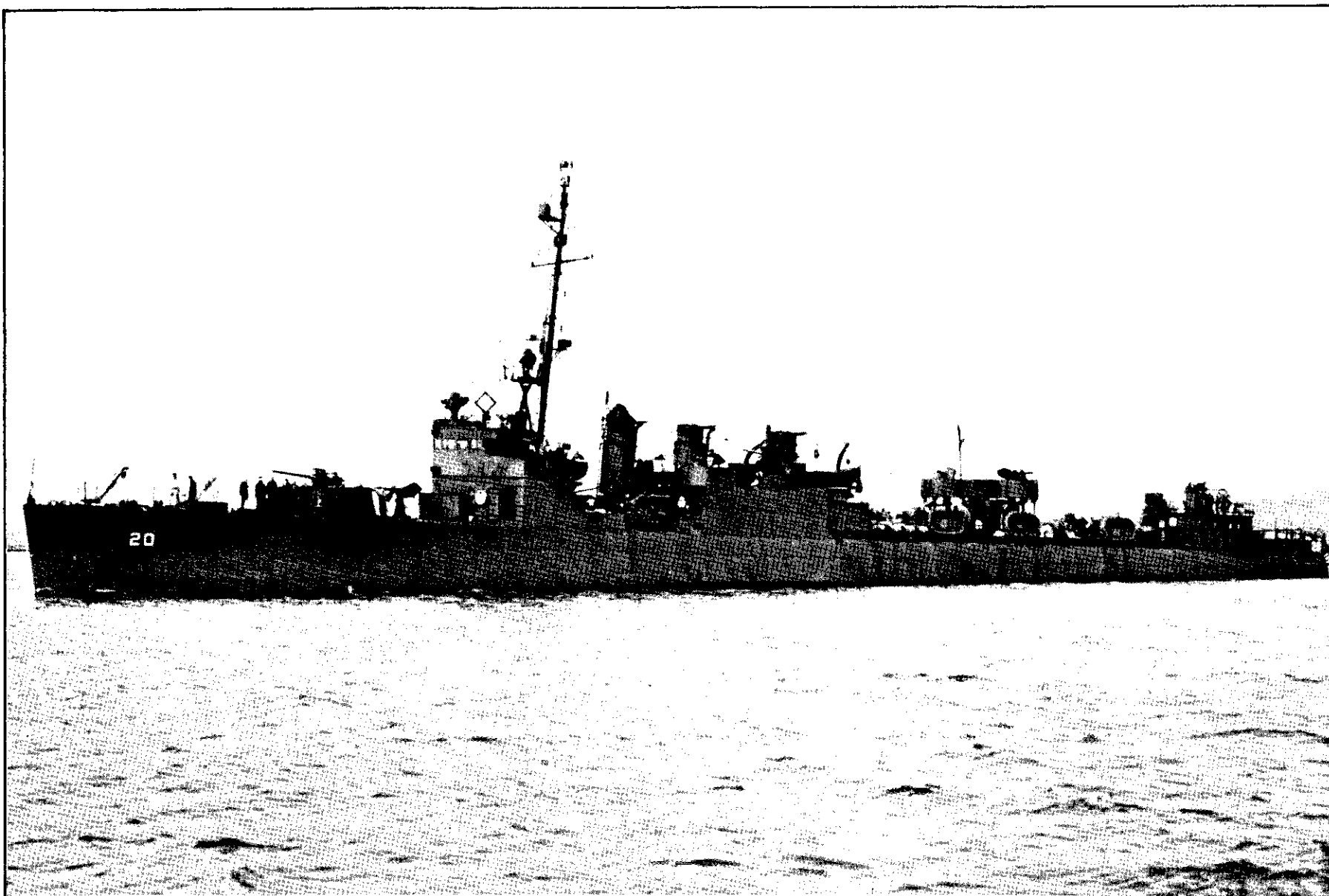
I'm including the following 24-page narrative as sort of an appendix to my booklet on the U.S.S. Perry (DMS-17) in World War II. It was probably written by Captain Elward F. Baldrige, USN, around 1960-61. It is not dated, but that is when he became the Naval Advisor to Argentina according to the Archives Division at the U.S. Naval Academy's Nimitz Library. Captain Baldrige is now 81 years old. He remembers many of the details of his hazardous attempt to salvage the Perry after she was mined, but he doesn't remember writing this narrative.

Readers will be rewarded with a better understanding of the events which occurred on September 13, 1944, and they will learn a great deal about moored mines and about how minesweeping operations are performed. I never even considered not including Captain Baldrige's narrative in my booklet!

I have searched for the final page of this narrative at the U.S. Naval Historical Center/Washington Navy Yard, Ships' Histories Branch, without success. Fortunately, it appears that only a few words may be missing.

E. A. Wilde, Jr.  
February, 1997





*The light minelayer U.S.S. Preble (DM-20) at Mare Island, California, on 17 November 1943. (Note that she has been fitted with a splinter shield around her forward 3-inch/50 gun.) When the Perry struck a mine on 13 September 1944 the Preble was operating with her and the U.S.S. Southard (DMS-10) as a mine destruction and dan buoy-laying ship. These temporary buoys enabled the two minesweepers to conduct an effective area sweep by marking the boundaries of each swept path.*

*(U.S. Naval Institute Collection)*





Captain Elward F. Baldrige, USN  
Senior U.S. Naval Advisor to Argentina  
Navy Department  
Washington 25, D.C.

About 6000 words

".....in harm's way"

by

Captain Elward F. Baldrige, USN

- I -

The action report of the PREBLE on 13 September 1944 shows,  
"at approximately 1420 ITEM ..... the USS PERRY (DMS 17) while  
engaged in minesweeping ..... off the south east tip of Angaur

- 1 -

Island of the Palau Group, struck a mine and subsequently sank. The USS PREBLE (DM 20) rescued 96 members of the PERRY crew and attempted to salvage the ship".

After noon meal that day PREBLE had formed up with SOUTHARD (DMS 10), with COMINDIV 5 embarked, and PERRY to conduct a sweep along the southern shore of Angaur Island. Here a shoal extended seaward some 1500 yards and was thought to be mined. Because the bombardment ships needed to move into hammer the whole island, it was necessary to sweep it even though the invasion beaches were on the northern side of the Island. The landing was to take place two days later.

At the time of PERRY's mining, the group was in starboard echelon formation, speed 14 knots. The first pass was in progress, SOUTHARD was in the van, followed by PERRY and PREBLE. Both sweepers had their port and starboard gear streamed while minelayer PREBLE dropped cans. PERRY was keeping station on the float trailed by SOUTHARD, and PREBLE on that by PERRY, on approximate course 215° true. The sea was calm with no swell, wind force 2 from the south south east, and the visibility was unlimited.

At 1419 the Commander Angaur Fire Support Group, RADM Howard F. K Kingman, USN in USS TENNESSEE, operating in the near vicinity had informed COMINDIV 5 that one more minesweeping pass was necessary before his group could close Anguar. COMINDIV 5 was also advised to keep outside of the

100 fathom curve. Immediately after this transmission PERRY struck. From the bridge of PREBLE, astern and on PERRY's starboard quarter, she appeared to lift bodily a foot or so. PERRY was enveloped instantly in a cloud of white smoke and steam. Minutes later she became dead in the water and assumed a list of 10° - 12° to port, her amidships section still billowing clouds of smoke. We rang up, "stop".

PREBLE was rigged for towing or being towed. A "Survivor's Rescue Bill", required by a recent Pacific Fleet directive had been newly drawn up and the crew instructed in it. In addition, practice drills had been conducted in the several weeks preceding the operation, and I as PREBLE's skipper felt the crew was reasonably proficient in carrying out its provisions. A drill at this sort of thing is difficult because it is nebulous and hard for the crew to grasp but Admiral Nimitz had ordered it so we had complied. However, the very fact that a bill existed for rescuing survivors, and the crew had practiced it, prepared them psychologically for the shock of the PERRY's mining. A self-inflatable rubber life raft had also been obtained. This was to be thrown in the water for survivors to cling to until the ship could take them aboard.

In evaluating the situation, immediately after the mining, I felt that if PERRY was to be salvaged I had two alternatives. The first was to lay alongside PERRY, make fast and then back clear with her lashed alongside,

rendering assistance meanwhile. The second was to stay clear and send over a boat to rescue survivors, then afterwards attempt salvage. Inasmuch as PREBLE had only one motor whaleboat, the time necessary to accomplish the salvage by the second alternative would be excessive and would probably result in a high loss of life as well as the ship itself. Men were already appearing in the water to starboard of PERRY as we watched. They needed to be rescued. A few rafts were thrown over. To lay alongside seemed the obvious solution. I made this decision.

Having determined to lay alongside it only remained for me to decide which side. Since PERRY was listing to port and might entangle her top hamper in PREBLE, if not even capsize on her, the starboard side seemed more favorable. However, the many people in the water and rafts to starboard of PERRY, plus the knowledge that the remainder of the unswept mine field would be to starboard, weighed against this choice. Then too, because of the onshore breeze, both ships would likely drift further into the field after coming alongside, and toward the enemy beach. This choice offered too many dangerous possibilities.

On the other hand the water to port had been doubly swept by the starboard sweep gear of SOUTHARD and the port sweep gear of PERRY. Thus the chances of PREBLE's striking a mine in coming along the portside seemed less. This was the determining factor. Consequently, the choice

of her port side was the logical one. Acceptance of the risk of capsizing had to be taken. I decided on the portside. The choice of the side made, I needed only to lay alongside, fast. Orders were given and 2/3 speed rung up. The die was cast.

But why <sup>had</sup> PERRY struck a mine at all? Aside from the fact that I knew PERRY had struck one, theoretically it shouldn't have happened. It did not know what actually had gone wrong. I could only assume that by bad luck the sweeping gear had somehow failed, or that she had struck a slow rising mine cut by SOUTHARD's gear.

SOUTHARD and PERRY were high-speed minesweepers which had been converted from four-piper destroyers <sup>in</sup> the Thirties. Their sweeping equipment was magnificently simple (in theory) but highly complex in operation.

Those familiar with minesweeping know there is a cutting device on a paravane towed from the sweeper's stern. This, in minesweep parlance, is called an otter. The otter seeks a predetermined depth as it swims out to starboard or port. When a mine cable comes in contact with the sweeper's tow wire, it is guided into jaws of the cutting device, or if the tow wire is serrated, it may be cut by the wire. When the mine cable is cut the mine rises to the surface where it can either be avoided or destroyed. The process of putting the gear into the water is called "streaming the gear". In a high-speed combat sweep where a broad area to be swept is desired, the sweepers stream their gear all to the same side and each

follows in the swept water of the other. The leading sweeper is supposed to steam outside the minefield on the first pass. Each ship always make sure that she remains in the "swept water" of the ship ahead. To do this each ship not only must steam just a bit to the side of the proceeding ships wake, but must not get outboard of the proceeding ships otter. The position of the otter is at all times indicated by a float, which moants a flag sometimes and is towed from the otter and appears on the surface above it. Each following ship must position herself correctly: between wake and the float. Thus, PERRY should have been in safe water. SOUTHARD's first pass was outside the field.

Officially designated a light Minelayer, PREBLE was one of a group of eight four-pipers that had converted also in the late Thirties. Losing their surface gun and torpedo batteries, they had sprouted instead two long trestle-like tracks down each side of the main deck upon which rode sixty WWI type mines, thirty ~~to~~ <sup>on</sup> a side, or a commensurate <sup>or</sup> smaller number of more up-to-date mines. The mines could be launched rapidly over the stern abaft the fan-like propeller guards, from whose appearance the well known term "fantail" was derived. A 20mm and 3"/50 AA gun battery were substituted for the 4"/50 surface battery while at the same time the little ships lost a stack when one boiler was removed. In the place of the boiler, extra fuel tanks were installed. This was done to give a greater cruising radius, or as the sailors said "to give longer legs". Thus technically their status was changed from four-pipers. Sailors still

affectionately called them four-pipers.

For this operation two or three minesweepers were used with one minelayer acting as mine destruction and dan buoy layer. Instead of launching mines off the tracks, the minelayers launched empty mine cases attached to a mine anchor. The cases were painted a bright yellow and mounted a yellow and red flag. They were officially designated as dan buoys. However, as the yellow and red flag was the international code signal for "O", which was then still spoken phonetically as "Option", these buoys soon became known to the task force as "option buoys". As the sweepers advanced, the minelayer was to mark the safe limits of the sweep by dropping these option buoys, along the border of the swept water.

The way it worked was quite ingenious. The mine anchor fell to the bottom paying out its cable as it descended, the case meanwhile bobbing on the surface until the anchor automatically stopped paying out cable 20 feet before it hit bottom. The option buoy then was pulled under 20 feet. After anchoring a firing mechanism released an extra 40 feet of the wire cable and the buoy appeared again on the surface. Thus each option buoy had slack in the cable up to 20 feet. This was felt to be sufficient to take care of the rise and fall of tide as well as the drag of the current. Thus the length of the cable was "tailored" for each buoy. It was a clever modification of the Mark VI Mine, and our Commodore deserved much of the credit for thinking it up and persevering to make it work.

In the event mines were swept, PREBLE's and MONTGOMERY's primary duty was to destroy them, which we did by 3" gun, automatic weapon, or

rifle fire. Often the mines would blow up with a roar and sometimes we had shrapnel come down on deck. However, just as often the mine case would only be punctured and slowly fill with water, sinking for all the world like an empty beer can in the wake of a boat.

It is probable that in the case of the PERRY, the mine was slow in rising after being cut or got dragged along by the sweep gear when it failed to cut and came up under the ship. The mine had exploded under the forward fireroom starboard side. But how had we gotten to this little knowfar off place-Palau?

- II -

When our Commodore counseled the two of us at a pre-sail conference before we commenced the Palau Operation that our jobs would be unlike anything we had ever done before, we were mildly quizzical. It was early September 1944 at Purvis Bay, the palm fringed harbour tucked away in the Solomon Islands, which had become one of our major naval advanced bases in War II. Neither Dan Drain nor myself dreamed we would do in the short space of the coming month the myriad and often bizarre things which we did. We ran the gamut from screening battleships to laying dan buoys. As we have seen, I had the trying experience of attempting to salvage a sister ship that had struck a mine.

We were both skippers of light minelayers. Lt. Dan T. Drain, USN had the MONTGOMERY (DM 17), launched at Newport News in 1919, and I had the PRESLE. By a curious coincidence my father had put her in commission at Bath in January 1920. At the time of the Palau operation, these ships



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were still performing valuable service although then in their twenty-fifth year. We skippers, give or take a year or two, were not much older. How would we react? We hoped we would measure up.

Our Commodore, Captain Robley W. Clark, USN was a youthful looking and inspiring officer who unfortunately later lost his life at Karama Retto. He had been recently promoted to Captain. Although he had the impressive new title of COMINTON ONE, he was green to the "mining" business. However, at our pre-sail conference he had made it clear he was not new to leadership and sailing. We were to lay our ships, he said, alongside any ship in trouble, rescue or tow her to safety and otherwise assist all vessels, aircraft, and personnel in any way possible. In short, we were given carte blanche to prove within our own youthful ability and our elderly ship's capability that we could be of value to the overall operation. He did not wish, nor did we, to be sent back to our former job of escorting convoys between Pearl Harbor and the Marshall Islands again. In other words this was to be our Commodore's bid to get us back into combat. We loved him for it.

Our minesweeping Group Commander was an experienced mineman, Commander Wayne R. Loud, USN, whose title was COMINTON TWO. <sup>He</sup> was actually junior to our Commodore, <sup>but</sup> because the Group's part in the operation was to be essentially a minelaying one, COMINTON TWO had tactical command. He flew his broad command pennant in USS HOVEY (DMS 11).

Late on the afternoon of 6 September 1944, MONTGOMERY and PREBLE sortied from Purvis Bay into Iron Bottom Sound in company with COMINTON

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TWO's high speed minesweepers. With Savo Island abeam to port, we laid course to pass through Indispensable Strait.

After transiting Indispensable Strait and taking departure in the gathering dusk on Cape Astrolabe, Malaita Island, our task force formed a circular cruising disposition. Guide was in flagship USS Louisville and destination, Palau. The speed was set at 14 knots. The old battleships and cruisers were in the center and destroyers, minesweepers, and minelayers in the screen.

The days spent enroute were characterized by smooth seas, clear skies, but with sudden rain squalls. Sailors new to the southwest Pacific soon noted with that these were over almost as quickly as begun.

On the 8th, antiaircraft practice was held by firing at a sleeve towed by one of the task force planes. PREBLE expended 850 rounds of 20 mm ammunition.

The smaller ships fueled from oiler USS PECOS on the morning of the 10th, trying out the new breast-line method in place of the old tow-alongside method. Without fuel-oil trunks built on deck, as in the Fletcher and Summer class destroyers, the four-pipers experienced much difficulty fueling at sea. Time was lost because three separate operations had to be conducted in order to fuel. First, the forward high tanks had to be filled, then the after tanks, and finally, the new amidships pre-fabricated tanks.

Wrestling the hoses around from one set of tanks to another was dangerous, especially in heavy weather.

During the afternoon and night of 11th, the task force broke up into three components for the immediate approach to the Islands. PREBLE and MONTGOMERY remained with the Eastern Peleliu Fire Support Group until 0330 on the 12th. Then all the minesweepers and minelayers speeded up and proceeded on ahead. The initial sweeping point was to be the southeast tip of Peleliu Island. PREBLE was about to commence her first unusual mission.

At 0530 COMINRON TWO in flagship HOVEY directed us by voice radio, "Carry out previous orders". Twenty-five-year-old PREBLE cracked on 26 knots and started out ahead, her lean old frame vibrating as her 27,500 horse power took hold. PREBLE's hull was not the only thing vibrating; her young crew and skipper, were alike aquiver with excitement.

PREBLE's orders were to proceed to an 8-fathom shoal midway between Angaur and Peleliu Island. Then with her siren sounding, she was to drop 20 depth charges at 200 yard intervals set to explode at 50 feet, along the southeast edge of the 100 fathom curve. PREBLE's job was to try to explode suspected acoustic mines by the sound of her siren. If this did not succeed it was believed the detonation of the 20 depth charges would take care of them.

According to rumor, in an air raid on Peleliu some weeks before, our aviators had seen antennae floating over this shoal. When the planes flew low to get a better look, there were sub-surface detonations. A new type of acoustic mine was suspected.

The run was made under the watchful eyes of the old battleships

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which were standing off/<sup>to</sup>the south. Their great bulks were a reassuring sight as we careened around the shoal, siren sounding.

Plumes of white spray rose as the shallow charges went off at 15 second intervals. It must have been a very curious sight to the crews of the battleships to see us speeding along as if pursued by the exploding depth charges. For us, it was a suspense filled five minutes. However, no antennae were seen, no mines exploded, and none subsequently swept over this shoal. No doubt the detonations our aviators saw were splashes from antiaircraft shells fired at them from the nearby Jap garrisons on Peleliu and Angaur.

PREBLE then joined the minesweeping formation taking station astern between the wake and the float. of the last minesweeper. The sweepers had meanwhile streamed their gear and taken starboard & echelon formation. MONTGOMERY and PREBLE began dropping their yellow option buoys at the safe limits of the sweep. The big ships had to close the island but remain in swept water.

On the first pass no mines were swept. MONTGOMERY and PREBLE each dropped three buoys, PREBLE's to starboard, MONTGOMERY's to port. While the high speed minesweepers were turning for the second pass, PREBLE "pointed" her bow at her option buoys so the sweepers could find them more easily and would know where to begin the new sweep. During the second pass, closer to Peleliu shore, LONG and HAMILTON soon swept several horned contact mines

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which MONTGOMERY stopped to destroy. FREELE joined at high speed and we found ourselves hotly firing at these evil looking things. They were the first we had seen of the enemy's and were very close to the fringing reef. This reef was later to prove a formidable obstacle to our marines in hitting the beaches. Considerable maneuvering with the engines was necessary to stay in place due to a heavy inshore set. Rifle fire from the beach in the vicinity of the reef began to pepper the water around us. On the shore we could plainly see the little spurts of flame.

MONTGOMERY reported, to our vexation, six mines destroyed to our three. We had to leave one barely awash. Later in the day it drifted down towards the tip of Peleliu Island where we finished it off. We used all calibers of gun including 30 calibre rifle fire. The remainder of the day was spent in mine demolition and option buoy recovery.

Such was the work of the minelayers on this and the following two days. By this time Dan Drain and the MONTGOMERY had gone north with Commodore Loud and his sweepers to clear Kossol Roads. Only we three were left behind. In the early afternoon of the second day, 13 September, the mining of PERRY occurred. Our attempt at salvage was in many ways a comedy of errors, but for sheer effort and grit it was <sup>a</sup>saga of sorts.

- III -

Upon approaching within 100 yards of her port quarter, I felt some trepidation about continuing because of the increasing list. There was a very real possibility that PERRY might capsize before FREELE got alongside.

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I stopped the engines and made a close examination through my binoculars. The self-inflatable rubber life raft was thrown over to some survivors who swam toward us. With dismay I saw that PERRY's motor whaleboat was being lowered on the side towards us. It was filled with men and about a dozen more were swimming in the water between us. This would prevent me from laying alongside. Under these circumstances it would mean crushing those in the boat and those in the water. In view of this and the capsizing threat, I postponed laying alongside. Instead I veered to port and approached parallel about 50 yards distant. Officers on PERRY's bridge were hailed and told that if she was in no immediate danger of sinking or capsizing, we would come alongside and tow her clear. During the approach, our boat had been readied for lowering. PERRY's officers said she was good for a while yet and to save the men in the water first. So our boat was lowered with instructions to pick up the injured and tow the rafts to us. I gave orders to stand by to tow. Three of our life rafts were dropped to assist men in the water.

I now planned to go ahead slowly, and send over the towing hawser from our stern to PERRY's bow. After making it fast, I planned to tow her clear through the swept water of SOUTHARD. Minelayers carried their towing hawsers on their sterns. At this moment instructions were received by TBS from Admiral Kingman for PREBLE not to get inside the 100 fathom curve. Our fathometer was already recording 50 fathoms under the keel, but I didn't tell the Admiral that. On reaching a favorable position by ranging up

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so my stern was even with PERRY's bow, we tried using a line throwing gun so we could pass the messenger. It disappointingly fell a few yards forward of PERRY's bow. Before another shot could be fired, my Executive Officer standing on the starboard wing of the bridge, shouted that he had sighted a mine. He pointed to something dark in the water about two fathoms beneath the surface and not more than 20 feet from the ship and abreast the focsle gun. To the naked eye it looked like a big sea turtle. With binoculars it was seen to be a mine all right, with even the horns plainly visible in the clear water. I fancied I also saw some Japanese markings on it, but in the hindsight of twenty years this does not seem so credible/<sup>now</sup>as it did then.

As PREBLE was making leeway, she was in imminent danger of striking this mine herself. All engines were backed full and position again taken abreast PERRY. I then directed that the towing hawser be brought to our focsle where it could be passed to PERRY over the bow. The officers on the bridge of PERRY were so informed. I also commenced to twist PREBLE in place in order to get her bow closer to PERRY, but short of the mine, in order to facilitate passing the hawser. Meanwhile PERRY's boat had become waterborne but apparently was damaged and could not be started. Fatally, it remained between us and PERRY.

Survivors now commenced swarming up PREBLE's side via rope ladders and cargo nets while PERRY's ominous drift toward the Jap-held shore began. All-hands laid topside to manhandle the towing hawser from the stern to the focsle. When preparations were sufficiently complete, and with about 60° angle between ships, PREBLE approached closely, but the line throwing gun

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failed to fire. Heaving lines were hastily thrown, but the wind freshened, and PERRY's bow fell off. All lines failed to reach. Frantic efforts were made to get fresh cartridges for the line throwing gun.

I determined to make a further effort to get closer. The line-throwing gun was now ready to fire again, but PERRY was seen to be abandoned except for about four officers and one or two enlisted men on the forecastle. With sinking heart I realized that this would be insufficient manpower to haul on board any very great length of our hawser. However, with luck and time I could send over a line handling party later. By again twisting PERRY and by the fortunate assistance of a boat from USS GUEST which had come up to help, the messenger was passed. It was made fast through PERRY's stern chock to fantail bits. Now PERRY had swung through an arc of about 120° was listing heavily to port, headed bows on for the beach. A quick glance showed 20 fathoms on the fathometer. It became apparent that both ships were in peril of striking further mines as neither were any longer in swept water. There was no time to send over a working party to haul in the messenger, even if our whale boat was available, which it was not. It was still picking up survivors. Securing the towing hawser was now out of the question. Nevertheless if care were taken, with a slow strain and a long catenary, I thought there was a reasonable chance of hauling PERRY clear, stern first. But how to get away fast with a sinking ship in tow?

During the period consumed by these operations, Admiral Kingman



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directed other ships to close the scene and render assistance. They did, sending their whaleboats, which were of invaluable assistance. These boats towed several life rafts and PERRY's disabled motor whaleboat to our port side. Meanwhile our boat brought some along the starboard side. As each delivered survivors it was sent out in search of more, including the SOUTHARD boat, which had by now delivered a medical officer, a pharmacist's mate, and medical supplies. This was greatly appreciated since PREBLE had no medical officer.

While injured and whole survivors came over the side, the ship was immobilized and drifting, so request was made to the Admiral for more boats so the remaining men could be taken out of the water. After seeing that this was attended to PREBLE, now herself bows on the beach, could commence towing and back clear. The remaining survivors were taken to U.S.S. GUEST. One hour and ten minutes after the mining I commenced the towing operation by backing slowly on one engine. We eventually paid out a total of 200 fathoms tow line composed of 2-inch manila messenger, 8-inch manila hawser, and 20 fathoms anchor chain. All hands were directed to keep a sharp lookout for mines. Almost immediately, one was reported to port abeam the galley deckhouse, which I visually confirmed. It was another moored horned type, about two fathoms under the surface and only 10 to 15 feet from the ship.

Since we were backing slowly anyway, no special maneuvers were undertaken except to speed up the starboard engine. Upon clearing this mine another was sighted close aboard to starboard. This one was also avoided

by use of the engines and carefully twisting the ship. Again PREBLE commenced slowly backing clear. About this time the focsle reported the 2<sup>nd</sup> messenger had begun to take up. Regretfully, it parted at the bitts on PERRY's fantail upon taking strain. If only there had been time to send people on board to heave in the tow line. Shortly thereafter the remaining officers and men on board PERRY were removed by a GUEST boat. The fact that the tow line had parted was reported via TBS to the Admiral, and I asked in as matter of fact voice as I could muster if it was desired for PREBLE to return and recommence the towing operation. The Admiral, thankfully, said no.

A mine was sighted off our port quarter when we had backed abreast of GUEST a few seconds later, so we stopped and lay to while heaving in the towing hawser by anchor windlass. During this period PREBLE could neither back down nor go ahead due to the tow-line over the bow and the mine astern. Thus we drifted down on GUEST, which finally managed to take the remaining survivors on board and get clear with a few yards to spare. I felt some concern about the tow-line fouling the mines while heaving in, but miraculously none did. Upon recovering the towing hawser and anchor chain, we rapidly made for safe water by going astern. All hands were much relieved but busily attending to the injured.

PREBLE's crew had turned to with a will. Uninjured survivors were stripped of their oil-soaked clothing, cleaned, and furnished with clean dungarees, shirts, and in some cases, shoes. All were transferred in some

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kind of an almost complete outfit. All had been given cigarettes, matches, and coffee by the crew. Before leaving, some favoured few had received a spot of brandy. I even lent the senior officer survivor on board twenty dollars for which a few months later I received the following letter:

"Dear Captain Baldrige,

Here's your \$20.00. Thanks a million for the loan.

The entire crew and all officers arrived San Pedro on the 21st. The men all got 30 days leave plus travel time. None of the officers has received orders yet.

I want to thank you again and repeat what a wonderful job you did. We are all very, very grateful to you. I certainly hope and feel pretty sure that you get some recognition for your marvelous job.

Best of luck to you.

Sincerely,

Tom Baggot  
LT USNR"

All hands performed their duties with cheerfulness and a hearty disregard for their personal safety. Throughout this trying operation of over two hours in the minefield, the slightest relaxation in vigilant lookout for mines, in the working of the engines, or in ship-handling might have caused the mining of PREBLE herself. The Executive Officer, and Chief Quartermaster who acted as helmsmen, were of invaluable aid to me in this respect.

Thirty minutes after reaching safe water we received instructions by TBS from the Admiral as to the disposition of the survivors. Shortly thereafter PREBLE transferred the ten most seriously injured to TENNESSEE by boat. PREBLE also went alongside light cruiser CLEVELAND and sent over 76 uninjured men. We received at the same time a moderate but welcome amount of fresh fruit and ice cream from the larger ship. Then we cleared CLEVELAND and ferried over by boat ten less seriously injured survivors to heavy cruiser MINNEAPOLIS. The exact number of survivors rescued by GUEST is believed to be in the neighbourhood of 55. In all only seven men were lost.

PREBLE's young Chief pharmacist's mate, Michael F. Cartmill, USN, performed his duties in his usual cool and competent manner. He administered blood plasma, morphine, and supervised the first aid. SOUTHARD's medical officer told me before leaving that Cartmill was deserving of the highest praise. He had sorted out the injured cases, diagnosed and treated them, tagging each casualty so that when they were transferred to TENNESSEE information of the treatment given each one was instantly accessible. I recommended him for advancement to Ensign (Hospital Corps), and he was eventually so advanced.

After the transfer a message was received from Admiral Kingman directing that the remaining personnel on board PERRY be instructed to try and anchor her ~~to~~ prevent grounding under the enemy's guns. I thereupon ordered one of my most trusted boatswain's mates to close PERRY and deliver the

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above orders. Floyd Fetzner, Boatswain's Mate Second Class, had been acting as coxswain of FREBLE's boat all afternoon. A giant of a man, he inspired confidence just to look at him. At this time I did not know that PERRY was completely abandoned. Although Fetzner knew she was abandoned, he instantly closed and boarded. PERRY was then within a few hundred yards of the shore with focsle awash and listing at a steep angle. (See diagram #2). He endeavored to connect the chain to the anchor and drop it, but the bending shackle was in the paint locker and this was already flooded. It must be remembered these four-pipers had "old fashioned" anchors and when underway they were catted and thus unshackled from their chains. Perceiving his difficulty and believing that PERRY might still be anchored, I determined to send an additional party.

A young Ensign on board under temporary duty orders in connection with a hydrographic survey volunteered. To Ensign James L. Thompson, USN I gave instructions to take five volunteers and anchor PERRY. In case efforts to anchor were unsuccessful, I told him to destroy the radar equipment and remove any classified material he found. Ensign Thompson selected the chief boatswain, a signalman, a carpenter's mate, and two seamen from among the many who volunteered. This party left immediately and joined the other already on board PERRY. The chief boatswain and the two seamen went forward to assist Fetzner on the focsle. While awaiting them Fetzner had covered himself and his group with tommy gun fire from the focsle. Ensign Thompson took the signalman and carpenter's mate with him to the bridge, where they went right to work.

As the bending shackle was beyond reach in the flooded paint locker, the focsle party tried to pass a wire strap instead. This was unsuccessful, but one can imagine the difficulties encountered. Even at the distance of my bridge I could see that they were under small arms fire. They were working up to their waists in water and were soaking wet. By now the whaleboat which had carried the second party over had taken up a patrol off the bow, and Fétzer was belligerently spraying sub machine gun bullets toward the beach from his position astraddle the king post. Meanwhile the remainder of the party was not idle. The young ensign's written report speaks for itself:

"Upon reaching the bridge, the radar shack was entered and steps were taken to demolish the radar gear with a sledge hammer; meanwhile another man entered the pilot house, removed an SCR-610 radio and passed it into the motor whaleboat which was called alongside. The SF Radar was smashed; the SC Radar was also smashed, but became loose from its moorings and was picked up<sup>and passed</sup> into the motor whaleboat.

About this time the FERRY began slowly to keel over so the party was forced to abandon her. While crossing the signal bridge, several books and pamphlets, the titles and contents of which were not noted, were picked up and thrown into the motor whaleboat".

Thus it was PERRY capsized before she could be anchored. The boarding parties clambered and crawled over her sides as she turned, walking to her bilge keel and finally jumping off into the water. The SF radar, the SC radar and SCR-610 radio and other items which were removed were subsequently delivered to PERRY's skipper who had been taken aboard GUEST.

From the bridge of the PREBLE this was a most dramatic if poignant sight. I had never seen a ship sink before and had always wondered what my reactions would be should I ever witness one. PERRY had been down by the bow and listing to port. Almost imperceptibly she had rolled over on her side. Then she apparently broke her back, for her bow and stern rose briefly in opposite directions. Both sections fell back slowly, gradually sliding under with hardly a ripple. There was no boiler explosion. Her grave was marked only by two widening patches of dirty colored water.

I believed that the leadership, fearlessness and resolution displayed by Fetzner merited reward. He had acted both as coxswain of PREBLE's boat, where he personally gave morphine injections and first aid <sup>to</sup> the badly wounded. He had headed the first boarding party. I felt the same about Ensign Thompson who had volunteered as leader of the second party. Therefore I recommended both of them for Silver Star Medals which they each afterward received. The other men who composed the boarding parties were recommended for formal Letters of Commendation which they also received. Fetzner thereafter displayed his gratitude to me by giving a good wet surprise kiss to my date at the ship's party held months later in the St. Francis Hotel. As the daughter of a Navy Captain she withstood this with aplomb.

Thus vanished in 18 fathoms of water a gallant little ship. Who would have ever guessed when she was launched in 1918 at the Mare Island Navy Yard she would meet this end? Few people had ever heard of Angaur before the Palau Operation. Probably no one on the launching platform in 1918 had visualized PERRY would ever be at this remote spot. By coincidence, I was on the launching platform when the present USS PERRY (DD 844) went down the ways in October 1945 at Bath, Maine.

- IV -

In retrospect it is easy to point a finger to this or that event as the turning point from which a successful salvage went awry. It is also easy to excuse the whole affair by accepting the premise that the PERRY probably would have sunk regardless of the salvage efforts.

The lesson of the foregoing story, however, and which merits it's retelling is the importance which our naval traditions and heritage played in preparing me and the crew for this test. A strong sense of duty and service is instilled in us from the time we are plebes at the Naval Academy. There is no substitute for training and discipline. It was not courage which sent me and my ship into that minefield, it was an ingrained sense of duty. It was the legacy left us by Nelson and John Paul Jones. There is hardly a schoolboy who was not thrilled to the famous words "England expects every man to do his duty". John Paul Jones epitomized this sense of duty

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~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

~~RESTRICTED~~

Narrative by: Lieutenant William N. Lindsay, Jr., USN  
Lieutenant J.A. Steward, USNR  
USS PERRY - DMS 17  
Sunk off Angaur.

**DECLASSIFIED**

The sinking of the DMS PERRY off Angaur Island on 13 September 1944 is described in considerable detail by Lieutenant Lindsay, the commanding officer. The ship was lost when it hit a mine. This narrative also includes a rather complete history of the earlier operations of the PERRY by Lieutenant Lindsay and Lieutenant Steward, the executive officer.

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~~RESTRICTED~~

Narrative by: Lieutenant William N. Lindsay, Jr., USNR  
Lieutenant J.A. Steward, USNR  
USS PERRY - DMS 17  
Sunk off Angaur.

Lieutenant Steward:

This is Lieutenant J.A. Steward, Executive Officer of the USS PERRY, DMS 17, speaking on November 8, 1944.

I reported aboard the USS PERRY in July 1942 and from that time I will give a little past history.

We went directly to the Aleutians area, after leaving the yard in July, and spent 14 months in that area. Most of the time we were on escort duty. We participated in the Attu Occupation in May 1943. Later we were in sweeping operations at Kiska during August 1943, and later, in September, we went back to the Yard for yard overhaul. This period lasted for six weeks.

After the yard overhaul, we went to Pearl Harbor where we spent a month and a half in training, in minesweeping training. This training consisted of four days a week, approximately, of exercises out at sea. After that we went to the Marshall Islands for the occupation in February.

During this time the minesweeping schedule was cancelled and we did escort duty only. From there we went down to the South Pacific and were an escort vessel until the Aitape Campaign in April. At Aitape we were sweeping and later we went to Saipan in June, we were a buoy-laying vessel in the sweeping operations. At Guam in July 1944, we were the sweeping vessel and helped sweep the harbors.

The next operation we were on was the Palau Island occupation in September. During the Aitape occupation, there was no opposition. We made two sweeps across the harbor before the transports went in. Outside of that there was absolutely no trouble encountered by us.

At Saipan we were the anti-submarine vessel after D-day for six or seven days. Each evening about dusk the Jap planes would come over although

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they did not get close to us, they would be in the vicinity and I personally saw five or six planes shot down from the ships in the transport area.

At Guam there was less opposition than Saipan. The planes would come over at dusk again, for approximately three or four days after D-day.

Lieutenant William Lindsay:

This is Lieutenant William Lindsay speaking, Commanding Officer of the PERRY. I had been on duty as Executive Officer of the USS ELLET and was detached from the ELLET in Eniwetok about the 12th of August 1944. By various means of transportation, I went south to join the PERRY and met the PERRY when she came back in from minesweeping training operations in the area around the Russell Islands in preparation for the mission which she last accomplished at Palau. The ship had just finished the rehearsal runs with other ships of the squadron and had come back to Purvis Bay to top off in fuel and provisions. At that time I went aboard and relieved Lieutenant Commander Ira G. Stubbart of command on September 2nd.

The following few days we spent in the Guadalcanal-Purvis Bay Area. We were underway two or three times to top off on fuel to go over to the Guadalcanal side of the bay to unload our hazardous duty publications, which is a list of secret and confidential matter which is ordinarily put in a more secure place when the ship goes out on a hazardous mission. As a result of this on the mission we had very few codes and ciphers with us.

We topped off in fuel and provisions and got underway from the Purvis Bay area on September 6. We were under the command and operating in company with Admiral Oldendorf whose flagship was the LOUISVILLE in company with a fire support group enroute to the Palau area. We acted as anti-submarine screening vessel on this trip, proceeded in company with the unit, topped off from tankers during the day of September 10th, D-day was scheduled for September 15th. Following our fueling, we proceeded to the Palau area arriving in that area on D-3, September 12th. We arrived there at dawn and in accordance with the operation plan the unit broke up and each separate part of that unit carried out its appointed missions.

We were operating with Mine Squadron 2 composed of the HOVEY, the SOUTHARD, the HAMILTON, the PERRY, the LONG, the MONTGOMERY, and the PREBLE. We were under the command of Commander W. R. Loud, who was Commander of Mine Squadron 2. At dawn on the morning of September 12th, we separated from the unit, formed in column and streamed our minesweeping gear. We were sweeping for moored mines with the S-type gear and acoustic mines with the acoustic hammers located in the bow of the ship and parallel pipes which we streamed out from a boom on the

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port side. The gear was streamed from each ship of the squadron and we proceeded on our regular mission in accordance with a plan which accompanied the operation order.

Our mission of the six ships that day was to sweep the area between Angaur and Peleliu Islands, paying particular attention to the island just south of Peleliu. Purpose of this was to clear out that area which was intended to be used as transport area when the transports arrived on D-day. We swept this area without incident until about 10 o'clock on the morning of September 12th. We were proceeding in echelon to port astern of the flagship, sweeping close in to the south-southwestern beach of Peleliu, the area where it was intended to make the main landing on D-day.

The ships in the van started to cut mines adrift and they began coming up to port. It seemed at the time they were 50 to 75 feet on our port beam. I'm not exactly positive how much farther away they were. They were pretty close. These were the first mines that had ever been swept by ships of the squadron. The squadron had encountered a few in the area around <sup>Awajalein</sup> and Saipan, but these were isolated instances and not general mining of an area as a defensive measure. I'm not exactly certain how many mines were swept. Reports aboard our own ship indicated there were nine to 11 mines swept that morning in close to the beach. The PERRY swept two, that we know quite definitely.

During this period, there was a loud explosion back on our port quarter and people on the fantail reported that our port sweep unit had been destroyed. Apparently, our paravane had cut a mine adrift, had fouled the mine and actuated it and in exploding it had destroyed the port paravane, the port float and about twenty-five feet of the sweep wire.

At this particular moment, the HAMILTON which was just ahead of us reported that she had a mine fouled in her port gear and her float disappeared from view. Because of the strong possibility that her port sweep was now dragging directly astern and would be ahead or slightly to starboard of us, we sheared to starboard and got outboard of the HAMILTON in order that if that mine did come loose it would not come up directly in the path of the PERRY.

We continued with the sweep on that particular pass and at its conclusion received permission to haul out and stream replacement gear on our port side. We did that and rejoined the unit about an hour and a half later, upon the completion of this streaming of the new gear. The unit continued to sweep these two areas just south of Peleliu Island, working south where we were sweeping on generally the direction northwest to southeast. Charts indicate a shoal area about half way between the two islands and indicate that the depth is eight fathoms. It was not known exactly what depth of water would be encountered there, but because of the necessity of being positive that the area was clear of all mines and because we had had advance information that controlled-

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type mines were located on this shoal, it was found necessary to sweep it.

As a result the unit made repeated passes across and in the immediate vicinity of the shoal. As a result more shoal water than expected was encountered and a number of ships lost various units of their minesweeping gear through their becoming fouled on the shoal. The PERRY lost one complete unit, both port and starboard sweep. We lost paravanes, floats, depressor and sweep wire. It was necessary to have this replaced and the SOUTHARD, which carried additional sweep gear, replaced this material for us late in the afternoon.

At the completion of the day, the assigned mission, sweeping these two areas, had been accomplished and in accordance with the operation plan the unit retired with the fire support group for the night. It was composed of old battleships, cruisers and destroyers, who had certain specified fire missions on the beach to accomplish. They fired deliberately all day long, eliminating different areas of Japanese resistance out on the beach, machine gun nests, barbed wire entanglements and places from which resistance was expected, areas which because of the heavy underbrush could be expected to offer resistance to troops landing were eliminated systematically.

Plans were for this type of fire to be continued for three days, up to D-day. Ships operated in conjunction with planes from carriers in the area to neutralize the area as much as possible prior to the landing. We retired with this fire support group for the night, the PERRY acting as an anti-submarine vessel in the screen. We returned to the area on the following morning just prior to dawn and left formation in company with the SOUTHARD to execute further sweeping duties. The remainder of Mine Squadron 2 had gone north under the command of Commander Loud to commence a sweeping mission in the Kossol Passage area which is a reef enclosed anchorage to the north of Babelthup, the main island of the Palau group. It had been learned prior to the operation that this area was very heavily mined and it was anticipated that if this area could be cleared of mines, it would make a valuable anchorage, sheltered anchorage, for the use of our ships in refueling and rearming during the course of the operation and subsequently.

The unit composed of the SOUTHARD and the PERRY under the command of Captain J.E. Brennon of the SOUTHARD proceeded to carry out a sweep mission of the areas immediately north of Angaur Island. The area involved was northeast, northwest and southeast of Angaur Island itself. Sweeps were commenced as the previous morning on northwest-southeast courses generally, working south as we progressed with the sweeps. We swept in fairly close to the beach on these courses, then commenced working on southwest-northeast courses clearing the area just northwest of Angaur Island. These missions were all completed without incident, the last sweep in that area coming around close to the 100-fathom curve which is as far as we were supposed to sweep. It was intended that YMSs and smaller boats would pick up the sweep from the 100-fathom curve and carry

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it in as close as it was possible for them to operate.

The only area left of our assigned area to accomplish was the southeastern part of area No. 5, which was just southeast of Angaur Island. The fire support ships composed of battleships and cruisers and some destroyers were lying off east of Angaur Island providing cover for the sweeps and underwater demolition vessels which were operating in the general area. They were executing their regular fire missions against beach installations and also using heavy machine gun fire at intervals to discourage any opposition from snipers on the beach who might try to interfere with the minesweepers' duties. All the people aboard ship were kept in helmets and lifejackets and on their battle stations, the ship being in material condition affirm in anticipation of small arms fire from the beach. However, none was encountered, neither rifle fire or any type of small machine gun fire was encountered, although for quite a period, the ships were operating within a thousand yards of the beach proper.

In sweeping the area southeast of Angaur Island, pass in close to the 100-fathom curve was made, then the unit formed in column and made a turn to port and headed back through the area on a northward sweep. Upon getting back in the area the echelon was again formed, the sweep was conducted and the unit passed through the area on a northward course. At the conclusion of this period the unit formed in column and completed a 180-degree column movement and headed back, again formed echelon and swept south through the area in making what was intended to be our next to the last pass through the area. While we were accomplishing this, a TBS message from the fire support group to Captain Brennon inquired as to how much longer would be required to complete our mission. Captain Brennon replied, "We should be completed inside of a half hour." Apparently the battleships and cruisers wanted to come in closer to obtain more accurate fire against their beach objectives.

Our southward sweep had been completed. Captain Brennon had signaled for the unit to form in column, the PERRY had formed astern of the SOUTHARD, a turn to port away from the area had been signaled and executed. The SOUTHARD had turned and headed almost due east, when suddenly the PERRY was hit by a sharp explosion which threw the ship sharply over to port. The ship took an immediate list of about 30 degrees and upon subsiding of the shock of the explosion she did not return to an even keel.

Immediate investigation indicated that the ship had apparently struck an enemy mine, starboard side, just aft of the well deck. The explosion ruptured No. 2 boiler which exploded. A large hole was open to the starboard side below the water line, eight to ten feet in diameter. It was roughly round. As a result of this, the forward fireroom was immediately flooded and two fuel oil tanks on the starboard side were ruptured, releasing great quantities of fuel oil in the area. The force of the explosion and the rushing of steam from the ruptured boiler carried quantities of fuel oil up onto the main deck in the

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superstructure.

Immediate investigation indicated that the bulkhead between Nos. 1 and 2 fire room had ruptured causing No. 2 fire room to flood. As a result all steam was lost and the ship was without power. The drag of the paravanes astern caused the ship to lose forward way very quickly and control of the ship was impossible. Because Angaur Island was Japanese-held, it was not due to be assaulted until D plus 1 day which would have been September 16th, this being September 13th, it was realized it would be impossible to cut adrift from the paravanes with the hope of beaching the ship and saving her. The ship was apparently in a mined area.

Immediately after the explosion, the PREBLE, which had been acting as mine destruction vessel operating astern of the unit, came up and tried to make an approach to come alongside the PERRY. Because the PERRY was swinging to the paravane, the line fired from a line-throwing gun from the PREBLE did not carry to the PERRY. It fell short in the water. The PREBLE then began operations attempting to get closer alongside but through observations from a plane from the USS TENNESSEE which immediately came to the scene and rendered all possible assistance, it was discovered that the PREBLE was also in this mined area and it became necessary for them to operate very cautiously in order that they should not hit one of these mines.

Conversation with the pilot later revealed that at one time the PREBLE had mines ahead and on both bows and that when she backed clear of the area she backed between two mines which gives an indication of the number of mines which were in the area.

Captain Baldrige of the PREBLE did a fine job of ship handling. He operated very carefully and kept lookouts posted inasmuch as it was possible to see the mines in the clear water with the help of the coaching from the plane. As a result he kept his ship in the area, enabling him to provide boats to assist in rescue work, kept his ship in close proximity to the PERRY, rendering all possible assistance without any damage to his own ship.

Immediately after the explosion, it was perceived that the ship was listing steadily to port. The initial list of 30 degrees was increasing perceptibly. As a result, because it was impossible to determine exactly how badly the ship was damaged below the second platform deck in the stowage spaces, it was feared that the ship would capsize to port.

When the ship had only six to eight inches of free board left to port, the order was given to abandon ship. It was seen that all personnel who had been injured were under the care of shipmates and all hands had originally had life jackets on, so that when the ship was abandoned, it was abandoned in a very orderly fashion and the injured people were given the best possible care.



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The PERRY carried two boats, a port and a starboard boat. The starboard boat had been rigged in on deck in order to accomplish repairs the day previous while transferring paravanes from the SOUTHARD to the PERRY, part of the planking had been stove in and it was necessary to effect these repairs. As a consequence, since it was rigged in, it was very difficult to get her in the water. It could have been done with a Jury rig but because the ship was listing to port it was thought advisable to keep all weights possible on the starboard side and the starboard boat was not launched.

The port boat was put in the water. During the launching the boat shipped some water back aft which interfered with the motor. As a result the motor was dead and was of no assistance. The boat, however, was paddled in the area around the ship and picked up a number of people who were in the water.

Boats from the FREELE came into the area immediately and picked up a large number of the PERRY personnel. The USS GUEST, which had been acting as anti-submarine vessel for the fire support group which was about 3,000 yards outboard of the sweep unit, came in as close as possible and sent her boats which rendered invaluable assistance.

Conversation with the pilot of the TENNESSEE plane indicated that the GUEST had narrowly avoided hitting a mine. As a result the ships were all ordered to stay outside of the 200 fathom curve in rendering assistance.

Immediately after the explosion, investigation by the ship's officers and certain of the enlisted personnel was made to discover the fate of the persons who had been in the fire room. The forward fireroom was flooded with sea water immediately and the water in the fireroom was coated with a very heavy film of fuel oil. It was not found possible to enter the fireroom. Hatch and ladder leading to this fire room which had been a pressure fire room, the companionway was collapsed so that it was not possible to use that ladder. Through the escape hatch a check was made and an attempt made to locate the personnel in the fire room, but because of the depth of water, it was not possible to enter and because of the thick film of fuel oil, it was not possible to detect any personnel inside the fire room even with the aid of powerful lights which were turned through the escape hatch. Every effort was made to locate the personnel, but no positive indication was received that anyone in the fire room was alive.

Some of us stayed aboard for about three-quarters of an hour following the explosion and during this time while regular checks were made, no indication was received of any personnel either living or deceased in the fire room. We had been running with the two forward boilers in operation on the main line with No. 3 boiler lighted off and boosted periodically. The type of operation we were doing, it was not necessary to have the full power from the three boilers, the No. 3 boiler had just been boosted prior to the explosion. As a matter of fact, the man who had checked the pressure and had finished another boiler, had

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just left the fire room prior to the explosion. As a result, there were no personnel in No. 2 fire room and there were no losses. The personnel from the engine rooms were not injured and were able to leave their stations on the order to abandon ship.

After the order to abandon ship had been given, a number of officers checked the different portions to make certain that all people had left the ship. Complete check was made forward and aft in the living compartments and in the engine spaces. It was made certain that there were no personnel left aboard ship. Because of the continuing list to port, it was not considered advisable to send too many personnel below decks because it was felt that the ship was on the verge of capsizing. As a result, although the majority of the confidential registered publications were removed from the ship, no attempt was made to open the locked safes below decks. Before the securing party left the ship, all such publications from the bridge area were removed, together with the ship's log. The pay accounts and ship's service money were recovered. The ship's health records were below in sick bay on the second platform deck and permission was refused the pharmacist's mate to go below to get them. Report was received that there was no water on the second platform nor the first platform deck.

As a result it was felt that the continuing list was due to the stowage spaces below the second platform deck being opened under water and taking water which was causing the ship to continue to list. This condition it was not possible to correct under circumstances.

Only thing that could have been done was to check and be certain that the water tight fittings to the second platform deck were tight and holding. As a result, it was felt that the wisest thing would be to bend all efforts to try to get the ship out of the mined area in order that a larger vessel could come alongside and furnish power, pumps and other assistance which might make it possible to save the ship.

Securing party remaining aboard, which was composed of Commanding Officer, the Executive Officer, the Communication Officer, the Engineering Officer and Assistant Engineering Officer and one enlisted man, R.A. Henderson, Fire Controlman 1st class went aft to the fantail. A line was brought over from the PREBLE by whaleboat, messenger line and this was heaved in by the party on the fantail. The PREBLE was maneuvering to avoid mines which made it very difficult to handle this line. That messenger line was hauled in and a light messenger line was brought in about three-quarters of the way, it was a line of about two inches. The PREBLE apparently ran out of Manila and started to feed over a wire cable. Because of the weight of the cable and the maneuvers necessary on the part of the PREBLE, it was found impossible to heave this line entirely in.

Perceiving from the motions of the PREBLE that she still was not able to devote her attention to the PERRY but was maneuvering to extricate herself at the particular moment, the line was secured and the securing party was directed to go forward to avoid any danger in case of sudden capsizing from the

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depth charges which were on the stern. These depth charges had all been set on safe prior to the ship's being abandoned.

The party went forward and made a final search of the bridge area to pick up all operation orders, registered publications, confidential signal equipment, etc., from that area. The few remaining ones were bundled up and assigned to the custody of the various members of the party. Then the party went forward to the forecastle to await the outcome of the PREBLE's maneuvering. While the party was on the forecastle the ship continued to list to port and when the port side of the main deck began to go under water, it was felt by the commanding officer that the danger of the ship's capsizing was so imminent that it warranted the party leaving the ship.

A boat from the USS GUEST was close aboard alongside and the party left the ship and went aboard this boat which took the party to the USS GUEST. The commanding officer had been aboard the GUEST only about 15 or 20 minutes when a boat from the PREBLE came alongside and an Ensign Thompson from the Hydrographic Unit stationed aboard the PREBLE for the operation and Chief Boatswain's Mate Fouccault from the PERRY crew came aboard. They had apparently gone aboard as part of a volunteer party from the PREBLE, had gone aboard the PERRY trying to drop the anchor to keep the PERRY from drifting onto the beach. The PERRY had been definitely drifting toward Angaur Island.

However, when the party went aboard, the condition of the ship was so precarious that it was not possible to get either of the anchors over. The party devoted their attention to wrecking the remaining radar and sound gear in the bridge area.

I was assured by Ensign Thompson that he had ripped out the sound gear and had jettisoned it, had fired a number of .45 calibre bullets into the remaining radar equipment and had removed the SC-1 radar unit, receiving unit, to the whale boat in which the party had come aboard. The unit was beyond repair. The unit had been damaged by the .45 calibre pistol bullets fired into it and in removing it, it was necessary to do so by means of a line to the boat, then it was dragged through the water to the boat so that the unit was beyond repair or much use, but it was removed from the ship and from the danger of compromise in case the ship did not sink.

The party left the ship when list continued and was relatively close alongside at the time the ship capsized. The explosion had occurred at 1418, zone minus 9 time on the 13th of September, east longitude date. It is not known exactly how long the commanding officer's party remained aboard, it was approximately three-quarters of an hour. The time is not known exactly. The party consisting of Ensign Thompson and the Chief Boatswain's Mate apparently left the ship 20 to 25 minutes after the commanding officer, they had gone aboard after the commanding officer had left. The ship capsized at 1605, zone

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minus 9 time, broke in half at the point of explosion and sank at 1607, zone minus 9 time.

Persons observing the ship from close aboard said that her bottom was ripped open, as they phrased it, "like a sardine can", from the vicinity of the fire room forward as far as No. 1 gun, which is apparently the point where the water entered which was causing extreme list.

A certain amount of this port list was undoubtedly caused as the result of the rupturing of the fuel oil tanks and water tanks on the starboard side of the ship. These tanks being emptied as a result of the list were much lighter than the full tanks on the port side. However, it would seem that this condition would eventually result in equilibrium and not in a continuous shifting as took place, that is if this were the only cause of the list, that the ship would have gone over to a certain position and then held that position, whereas the ship's continuing to go over seemed to indicate that she was continuously taking water below the second platform deck.

Upon the personnel arriving aboard the PRIEBLE and the GUEST they were given all possible assistance in a very commendable manner. The injured were taken care of promptly and dry clothes furnished to all hands. About an hour following their rescue, in accordance with instructions received from the commander of Task Group 32.5, personnel were transferred to larger ships of the fire support unit.

Wounded people were mostly transferred to the TENNESSEE. About 75 persons went to the USS CLEVELAND, 52 men and 8 officers went aboard the MINNEAPOLIS. In this latter group were two men who had been badly burned by steam and hot fuel oil topside, people who had not been below decks but because of the rush of the steam and the escaping steam and fuel oil had been badly burned topside.

These two men were Donald Otto Shoemer, Seaman 1st class and Paul Ray Burnett, Seaman 1st class. Burnett was suffering from very extensive burns on approximately 90% of his body area and following his transfer to the MINNEAPOLIS where he received all possible assistance as he had also aboard the GUEST, he succumbed to the effects of the burns and died at about 2000 on that night. Shoemer was burned on approximately 65% of his body and it was felt for a considerable period that he would recover. However, because of the extent of his burns and the toxic effect resulting from the inability of his skin to perform its normal function of excretion, the poison had gradually built up in his body and he died on September 16th.

Because of the imminence of D-day, no effort was made to evacuate the personnel from the ships to which they had been transferred. As a result those

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of us aboard had a very good view of the efforts of fire support ships in support of the landings. On D-1 day at Angaur Island or on D-day actually, after the whole operation, it was possible to observe very closely the work of the Underwater Demolition Teams in clearing the beaches and patrol water just off the beach in anticipation of the use of those areas by landing boats. Fire support accorded these people on this daring mission was really a fine tribute to the work of fire control people back on the beach.

By means of the modification which enables the .40mm battery to be cut into the fire control system controlling the five-inch battery, the ships were able to put covering fire very carefully and very accurately in brush and enfilading positions immediately adjacent to the beach where the underwater demolition people were working. Very often without assistance of control, the heavy machine guns will waiver and exact control was not possible, but this system the fire control exercise by the big ships was really a thing of beauty. Also by firing salvo fire, single shot salvo with quadruple mounts, very effective coverage was provided with a minimum expenditure of ammunition, a factor which is very important on these fire support missions which require three or four days for their execution.

The original plan was for the PERRY and the SOUTHARD to complete the sweep of the southeast area of Angaur Island on the morning of D-1 day, September 14th. Because of the loss of the PERRY and because the SOUTHARD had lost part of her gear and did not have further replacement, the SOUTHARD was not able to execute this mission. The SOUTHARD devoted her efforts the next day to sweeps along the southern end of Peleliu Island in anticipation of the main landings on D-day. The sweep of the area near Angaur Island was completed by YMS and AM vessels which came into the area at that time. I personally saw five or six mines swept and exploded by these ships on the following day, on D-1 day and on D day.

The landings on Angaur Island were not made until D plus 1 day. However, planes operating over that area subsequently reported that there were still 20 to 25 mines in this area. Apparently that shoal which projects from the southern tip of Angaur Island had been heavily mined. That was the area where the PERRY had been hit. The mines used, the mines swept and observed had appeared to be contact mines with a three to five hundred-pound charge.

From reports received from the sweeping operations progressing up North in the Kossol Passage area and from personal discussions with Commander Loud subsequently, it was learned that our previous information derived from intelligence sources regarding the location of mines in the Kossol pass area was really accurate. Nearly 300 mines were located and swept in that area and as Commander Loud expressed it, "Every place where our information indicated there were to be mines, they were found.", but there were some in addition to the ones indicated in the intelligence information.

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Intelligence information was so accurate that Commander Loud indicated that navigation in that area could be conducted from the positions where the mines were cut adrift. He said that the place where the mines would be contacted could be anticipated very closely. The DMS type ships swept over a hundred mines in this area during their operations.

Upon the arrival of the YMS and AM vessels in that area, they took over the duties and the DMS type ships took over various port director functions under the command of Commander Loud who executed the port director duties there during the early stages of the occupation. The HOVEY alone is reported to have swept 65 mines in the area.

In reviewing our Intelligence information, we had definite information that there were mines in the Kossol Passage area, also that some American mines had been planted in the immediate area north of Peleliu and around Babelthuap, but, of course, we had no operations in that area at the time and they didn't worry us particularly.

The only information we had regarding the location of mines in the Peleliu and Angaur area where the landings were made and the PERRY encountered hers was that they were probably contact type mines on shoal. These were not found there. Also we knew that the Japanese had used mines in the area and were on the lookout for them but we had no definite indication of their location in this particular area. The actual locations of the mines were where it would normally be expected that they would be found.

END

The U.S.S. Perry (DD-340/DMS-17) in World War II

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<u>Description</u>	<u>Source Code/Ident. No.</u>	
DD-340 refueling u/way from BB-38, 1932	NH	NH 86198
DD-340, port beam, Key West, 7/4/34	NH	NH 67111
DD-340, starboard beam, early 1930's	NH	NH 94831
Port bow, u/way, Mare Island, 7/22/42	NA	19-N-31943
Chart, Pearl Harbor, 12/7/41	NH	NH 83109
Focsle/bridge, refit, M.I., 7/23/42	NA	19-N-31937
Midships, refit, Mare Is., 7/24/42	NA	19-N-31938
Stern looking fwd., M.I., 7/23/42	NA	19-N-31934
20-mm Oerlikon, Mk. 4, 1942	NA	19-N-31965
Starboard bow, u/way, M.I., 11/2/43	NI	Order with photocopy
Sinking, s. quarter, w. <u>Preble</u> , 9/13/44	NH	NH 92987
<u>Perry's</u> disabled motor whaleboat	-	Personal collection
<u>Preble</u> (DM-20), p. beam prior to 11/43	NI	Order with photocopy
Sinking, stbd. beam, w. <u>Preble</u> (DM-20)	NH	NH 92988
USS <u>Guest</u> (DD-472), stbd. beam, u/way	NI	Order with photocopy
USS <u>Southard</u> (DMS-10), Mare Is., 6/9/42	NA	19-N-30511
USS <u>Tennessee</u> (BB-43) firing guns	NA	80-G-309926
Sinking, abandoned, starboard quarter	NH	NH 92989
Burial at sea, USS <u>Minneapolis</u> (CA-36)	-	Personal collection
USS <u>Cleveland</u> (CL-55), p. bow, 7/19/42	NA	19-N-32004
Survivors aboard <u>Cleveland</u>	-	Personal collection
Officer survivors aboard <u>Cleveland</u>	-	Personal collection
Direct stern view, Mare Island, 7/42	NA	19-N-31940
USS <u>Preble</u> (DM-20), port beam, 11/17/43	NI	Order with photocopy

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Key to Sources:

NH Naval Historical Foundation Photo Service  
Washington Navy Yard  
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E. A. Wilde, Jr.  
March, 2001





The U.S.S. Perry (DMS-17) in World War II

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Ships' Logs: (National Archives)

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- USS Minneapolis (CA-36), 9/13-16/44.
- USS Perry (DMS-17), 12/1/41-9/13/44.
- USS Preble (DM-20), 9/13/44.

Conversations:

- Elward F. Baldrige (C.O. of Preble on 9/13/44)
- Capt. George G. Ball, USN (Ret.) (Ensign on Perry, 12/7/41)
- Elmer J. "Mike" Michaels (survivor)
- Lt. Francis C. Pogue, USN (Ret.) (survivor)
- Cdr. Jack A. Steward, USNR (Ret.) (survivor)

Miscellaneous:

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E. A. Wilde, Jr.  
March, 2001



## Vet's Victory at Sea: Finding Lost Ship



RICHARD HARTOG / Los Angeles Times

Larry Tunks spent about two years planning his return to the North Pacific.

■ **Memorial Day:** O.C.'s Larry Tunks was aboard when it sank in '44, and he remembered where.

By H.G. REZA  
TIMES STAFF WRITER

Larry Tunks spent 55 years trying to forget the horror of World War II until the recurring image of his sunken Navy ship forced him to confront it.

Tunks was lured back to the North Pacific in an effort to find the U.S. minesweeper Perry, sunk off Palau by a Japanese mine. Others—experts armed with maps and wreck-diving experience—had tried to locate the warship for years. Tunks, equipped with his memory of the sinking, found it.

"Something just told me I had to go back," said Tunks, 78. "I'm a guy whose ship got sunk 55 years ago. Fifty-five years later, I went back and found it. I tried not to think about the war until this urge crept up on me. It turns out WWII and the Perry have always been a part of me."

Although Tunks did not plan it this way, finding the Perry is a fitting Memorial Day tribute to his eight shipmates who died in the mine explosion, he said.

Please see SHIP, A14

Tunks, a Huntington Harbour resident, set out April 27 to find his ship after about two years of planning. Never mind that others who make a living by finding and exploring World War II wrecks had spent decades and thousands of dollars looking for the Perry.

The ship, a destroyer converted to a minesweeper, is the only U.S. warship lost in the vicinity of Palau, where the bloody battle of Peleliu was fought in 1944 by U.S. ground forces. It rests on the sea bottom along with 38 Japanese ships sunk by the Americans in the battle for Palau, a nation of islands southeast of the Philippines.

Tunks found the Perry on May 1, the day before his birthday. It lies 240 feet down, about 700 yards offshore from Anguar, the southernmost island of Palau.

Tunks plotted the wreck's location over several months, drawing from U.S. Navy records of the sinking and a hazy recollection of events. Too old to dive that deep, he paid two divers to go down and find it while he waited anxiously above.

"There's no question it's the Perry. It's clearly an American ship and a destroyer," said Sam Scott, an Olympia, Wash., native who has been diving in Palau since 1983 and owns a dive shop there.

Scott and underwater photographer Kevin Davidson have made two subsequent dives to the Perry. Davidson, originally from Illinois, also lives on Palau. Since the ship's discovery, four divers who make a living taking thrill-seekers down to explore Palau's underwater wrecks have dived to the ship and affirmed its authenticity. An expedition of stateside divers is being formed to examine the Perry in June or July.

## Combination of Luck, Something to Go on

Tunks' finding is significant, said diver Bill Remick, who grew up on Kwajalein in the Marshall Is-

lands and tried to find the Perry five years ago. Remick, an Arizona state hydrologist, said he and other divers "have known only disappointment in our search for the Perry."

"I spent a small fortune looking for the ship," he said. "When you're looking for something that's 300 feet long and 45 feet wide, you need something to go on or a lot of luck. Sounds like Tunks had a little of both."

Tunks said the search for the Perry cost about \$10,000, which was paid by him and three fishing buddies who wanted to share his adventure.

Redding resident Dan E. Bailey, who wrote "World War II Wrecks of Palau," a picture book about Japanese ship and plane wrecks in the nation's lagoons, said he also searched for the Perry last year.

"It's one of very few U.S. warships that didn't go down in deep water," said Bailey, a longtime diver. "It's rare in the diving community to find one you can reach."

Part of the problem in searching for the Perry was that most divers were going by the Navy's coordinates for the spot where it sank. Tunks used his own calculations and memory of where the ship was in relation to the island when the mine exploded to determine that the Navy's coordinates were off by about 2,000 yards.

The Perry was moored at Pearl Harbor on Dec. 7, 1941, but escaped Japanese bombs. It steamed out of the harbor, and its gun crews were credited with downing a Japanese plane, according to the "Dictionary of American Naval Fighting Ships."

The ship's Pearl Harbor ties make it alluring to divers who explore World War II wrecks. The Perry lies at the limit of a safe tank dive, but it can be reached, Remick said.

Finding the ship unleashed a torrent of memories for Tunks. It was also a moment for rejoicing. When

the two divers he hired surfaced with thumbs up, Tunks said he tore his clothes off and jumped in the water between them in celebration.

Like many World War II veterans, Tunks put the war out of his mind when he returned in 1945 to his Lincoln, Neb., home. Eventually, he settled in Southern California, where he worked as a mechanical engineer. He seldom gave his old ship, on which he had served for three years, a thought.

But Tunks said that changed in 1998, when he read "The Greatest Generation," a book by NBC news anchor Tom Brokaw about ordinary Americans who preserved democracy by fighting fascism in World War II at home and on the battlefield.

"It was Brokaw's book that got me thinking about finding my ship," Tunks said. "Reading it gave me a new understanding of what my generation did. Many of us were poor but patriotic. [Brokaw's] right. We may just have saved the world."

The old sailor gets emotional when he talks about Sept. 13, 1944, the day that his ship went down. The Perry, a flush-deck destroyer commissioned in 1922, had been sweeping the water for mines in preparation for the upcoming Peleliu invasion.

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**'It was [Tom] Brokaw's book that got me thinking about finding my ship. Reading it gave me a new understanding of what my generation did.'**

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LARRY TUNKS

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"It was frightening," Tunks said. "The mine exploded under the boil-

ers, sending steam and hot oil gushing throughout. I saw a man walk out of the engine room with melting skin. An awful, awful sight."

Two minutes after the mine tore an 8-foot hole in the hull, the Perry's captain gave the order to abandon ship. Tunks, a member of a 3-inch-gun crew, jumped over the side with the rest of the men.

The 120 or so surviving crew members—their heads bobbing in the water—were unwitting targets for Japanese riflemen on Anguar. Fortunately, none was hit. They were picked up by two other ships that came to the rescue.

An after-action report of the incident dated Sept. 23, 1944, says the crew reacted coolly "and in accordance with the highest Navy traditions." Although the ship was listing 30 degrees to port and in danger of rolling over, crew members managed to scoop up "service records, pay accounts, ship's service funds, registered publications and navigation records" before abandoning ship, the report says.

A Navy spokesman in Hawaii said the Perry is still Navy property and is considered a grave site. However, no decision has been made about how to proceed with identifying it, he said.

It was happenstance that Tunks ended up on the Perry, the only ship on which he served.

He was in the U.S. Army's 35th Infantry Division in Arkansas when he was ordered to change services. Tunks was discharged from the Army on Oct. 25, 1941, and told to report to the Navy.

"I was the only one from my unit who was sent to the Navy," Tunks said. "One day I was in Arkansas, a couple of weeks later I was in San Diego. I never asked why. I just did as I was ordered. That's how things were in those days. You did as you were told."

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### About The Editor

E. Andrew Wilde, Jr., Commander, USNR (Ret.), received his commission through the NROTC Program at Dartmouth College in 1950. Following graduation he saw action off Korea aboard the USS Douglas H. Fox (DD-779) when this destroyer dueled with numerous North Korean shore batteries in the Sea of Japan. Many of the photographs he took during this period have been donated to the Naval Historical Foundation, and two of them appeared in the coffee-table book, The Navy, published by the Foundation in 2000. After completing three years of active duty he began a civilian career in public accounting and later in management positions at Raytheon Company in Waltham, Massachusetts.

In 1993 he developed a strong interest in naval history and began editing a series of illustrated ships' histories primarily of U.S. destroyers sunk in World War II. Primary source documents such as action reports, ships' war diaries, medal citations and muster rolls are included in these histories as well as many firsthand accounts. His booklets are not for sale, but he sends complimentary copies to the survivors and to the families of crewmembers killed on these vessels.

Commander Wilde is a life member of the Naval Historical Foundation and the U.S. Naval Institute.





Historical Compilations by the Editor:

(Destroyer/Destroyer Escort Hulls in World War II)

<u>United States Ship</u>	<u>Date Sunk/ (Damaged)</u>	<u>Area</u>	<u>Killed/ Wounded<sup>1</sup></u>
<u>Aaron Ward</u> (DD-483)	04/07/43	Guadalcanal	42/139*
<u>Barton</u> (DD-599)	11/13/42	Guadalcanal	164/32
<u>Borie</u> (DD-215)	11/01/43	North Atlantic	27/00
<u>Colhoun</u> (APD-2)	08/30/42	Tulagi	51/18
<u>Corry</u> (DD-463)	06/06/44	Normandy	24/55
<u>Cushing</u> (DD-376)	11/13/42	Guadalcanal	72/67
<u>DeHaven</u> (DD-469)	02/01/43	Guadalcanal	168/40
<u>Douglas H. Fox</u> (DD-779)	(05/17/45)	Okinawa	10/36
<u>Drexler</u> (DD-741)	05/28/45	Okinawa	158/54
<u>Duncan</u> (DD-485)	10/12/42	Guadalcanal	48/35
<u>Emmons</u> (DMS-22)	04/06/45	Okinawa	60/78
<u>Fiske</u> (DE-143)	08/02/44	North Atlantic	33/65
<u>Glennon</u> (DD-620)	06/10/44	Normandy	25/49*
<u>Halligan</u> (DD-584)	03/26/45	Okinawa	160/43
<u>Hammann</u> (DD-412)	06/06/42	Midway	84/63
<u>Laffey</u> (DD-459)	11/13/42	Guadalcanal	59/114
<u>Lansdale</u> (DD-426)	04/20/44	Mediterranean	49/76
<u>McFarland</u> (AVD-14)	(10/16/42)	Guadalcanal	12/13
<u>Meredith</u> (DD-726)	06/09/44	Normandy	35/28
<u>Monssen</u> (DD-436)	11/13/42	Guadalcanal	145/37
<u>Perry</u> (DMS-17)	09/13/44	Angaur/Peleliu	8/17
<u>Preston</u> (DD-379)	11/15/42	Guadalcanal	117/26
<u>Spence</u> (DD-512)	12/18/44	Luzon, P.I.	315/24
<u>Strong</u> (DD-467)	07/05/43	Cent. Solomons	45/61
<u>Walke</u> (DD-416)	11/15/42	Guadalcanal	82/48

\* \* \* \* \*

Notes:

\* Total for two engagements with the enemy

1 Including those presumed dead more than a year subsequent to the date they were reported missing either due to enemy action or by drowning.

E. Andrew Wilde, Jr.  
Commander, USNR (Ret.)  
June, 2005



Locations Where Historical Compilations by the Editor  
Are Available For Researchers

- <sup>1</sup> Air Zoo, Guadalcanal Campaign Collection, Potage, Michigan  
ECU Manuscript Collection, Joyner Library, Greenville, NC  
Louisiana Naval War Memorial Library, Baton Rouge, Louisiana
- <sup>2</sup> Maine Maritime Museum Library, Bath, Maine  
Mariners' Museum Research Library, Newport News, Virginia  
Mystic Seaport's G. W. Blunt White Library, Mystic, Connecticut
- National Archives II Library, College Park, Maryland
- <sup>3</sup> National D-Day Museum Library Collection, New Orleans, LA  
National Museum of Pacific War, War Studies, Fredericksburg, TX
- Naval Historical Center, Navy Dept. Library, Washington Navy Yard  
\_\_\_\_\_, Operational Archives Branch, Washington Navy Yard  
\_\_\_\_\_, Ships' Histories Branch, Washington Navy Yard
- Naval War College, Naval Historical Collection, Newport, RI  
N.Y. Public Library, 42nd & 5th Ave., Room 315, New York, N.Y.
- <sup>2</sup> Portland Public Library, Portland Room, Portland, Maine
- <sup>4</sup> Tin Can Sailors, Inc., Research Library, Somerset, Massachusetts  
US Naval Academy, Nimitz Library Special Collections, Annapolis  
U.S. Naval Institute, History Division, Beach Hall, Annapolis, MD
- U.S. Navy Memorial's Research Library, Washington, D.C.  
USS Slater (DE-766) Library, Albany, New York

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Notes:

- <sup>1</sup> Only ships which participated in the Guadalcanal Campaign:  
Aaron Ward, Barton, Colhoun, Cushing, DeHaven, Duncan, Laffey,  
McFarland, Monssen, Preston, Walke.
- <sup>2</sup> Only Bath-built ships: DeHaven, Drexler, Emmons, Meredith,  
Spence, Strong
- <sup>3</sup> Only ships sunk off the Normandy Beachhead: Corry, Glennon,  
Meredith
- <sup>4</sup> By appointment only: (508) 677-0515

E. A. Wilde, Jr.  
June, 2006





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