

death in the form of an unexploded 250-pound bomb. It did not go off, however, but remained where it had lodged and during the days that followed was a very real threat. Eventually upon completion of the long haul to Ulithi it was removed by ordnance experts.

Due to the situation on the tank deck it was impossible to enter the tank deck and fire lines were dropped down vents in an effort to limit the fire. The crash had knocked out of commission several water lines, and in both the main and auxiliary engine rooms the situation was rapidly becoming untenable as smoke and heat made it impossible for the men there to continue fire fighting. Fumes from the fuel tanks increased the hazard and the ship was rocked repeatedly by violent explosions. Limited space already congested by 300 additional personnel, the Marine units, forbade easy movement of the fire fighters and Lt. C.C. Pearson of St. Petersburg, FL, the commanding officer, passed word for all hands to stand by to abandon ship.

Just before this word was passed one of the ship's smallboats had been lowered to pick up two men knocked off a nearby LST by an unidentified explosion. These men were rescued and the boat stood by to pick up personnel from its own ship. The port boat was lowered, life rafts released and the crew left the ship after destroying confidential records and equipment. Men in the water were picked up by their own boats and those from nearby ships. Captain Pearson then left the ship and was taken aboard a destroyer which was standing by. The entire sequence, from the time the guns first opened on the attacking planes until Captain Pearson had passed the word had taken less than half an hour.

Other ships in the unit approached the 884 and attempted to play streams on the fire but at that time they were unsuccessful. About an hour after leaving his ship, Lt. Pearson decided that the heavier portion of the ammunition had been exploded and it might be possible to get the fires under control. He requested permission from the commodore of the group to return to the 884 with a volunteer party. This was granted and a few minutes later a survey group composed of the captain, the executive officer, Lt. (jg) R.B. Day of Long Island, NY, the navigation officer, Lt. (jg) S.R. Geist of 1230 Park Ave., New York City, Lt. (jg) L.B. Frye of Wisconsin, the engineering officer and two enlisted men (the latter not identified in official report). A Marine officer also joined this party.

A fire main pump was started by Lt. Day and two streams of water were brought to bear on the fire. At 8:00 additional fire fighters came aboard led by Lt. (jg) H.B. Baker of Narragansett, RI, the ship's first lieutenant. Two more Marine officers came with this party which consisted of 15 enlisted men from ship's company. Following is a list of names given writer as the original fire fighting party which composed both volunteer groups. In addition to those above they are: Lt. (jg) T.L. Becton, Communications, Georgia, NC; N.C. Throneberry, Chief Motor Machinist's Mate, 551-567; R.D. Huff, Motor Machinist's Mate, 2/c, 512-381; G.H. Tucker, Motor Machinist's Mate, 3/c, 508-658; J.C. Taylor, Carpenter's Mate, 1/c, 557-791; H.W. Hartley, Signalman 2/c, 591-268; F. Bosley, Storekeeper 1/c, 581-353; J.J. Haas,