



CLASSIFICATION REDUCED TO
UNCLASSIFIED
BY AUTHORITY OF
OPNAV INT. INST. 5510.1
DATED 15 JUN 53

By *Johnston* Date *1/11/56*

ACTION REPORT

ORIGINAL

USS INDIANAPOLIS

CA 35

NO SERIAL

26 AUGUST 1945

ACTION REPORT - USS INDIANAPOLIS 450 MILES EAST
OF LEYTE GULF 30 JULY 1945 - INCLUDING CIRCUM-
STANCES OF THE RESULTANT SINKING OF THE SHIP

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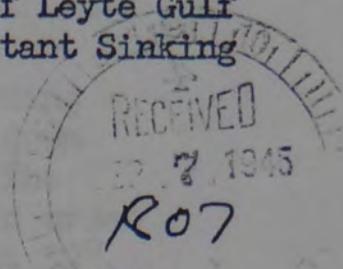
Naval Base Hospital #18, Navy 926
26 August 1945

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OPNAV INT. INST. 5810.1
DATED 15 JUN 53



From: The Commanding Officer.
To : The Commander-in-Chief, United States Fleet.
Via : Commander-in-Chief, U.S. Pacific Fleet and Pacific Ocean Areas.
Subject: Action Report U.S.S. INDIANAPOLIS 450 miles east of Leyte Gulf
30 July 1945, Including Circumstances of the Resultant Sinking
of the Ship.

Part I
General Narrative



1. The INDIANAPOLIS on 30 July 1945 was enroute GUAM to LEYTE GULF under orders to report on arrival to Commander, Task Group 95.7. The ship was steaming singly on course 262° T, making revolutions for 17 knots. Ziz-zagging had been discontinued at 2000, 29 July. (All times used are zone (-9½)).

2. At 0005, 30 July 1945 a violent underwater explosion occurred in the vicinity of frame 7 starboard side followed immediately by a second similiar explosion in the vicinity of frame 50 starboard side. These explosions were believed to have been caused by two torpedoes fired from an enemy submarine. A terrific blaze shot through the entire forward half of the ship immediately following the explosion, and the ship commenced flooding rapidly forward and to list to starboard. Because the second torpedo hit was in the vicinity of the I.C. Room, all ship's service telephones, M-C circuits, and all sound powered circuits with the exception of a few AA battery circuits and part of the 2JV circuit were put out of commission. Due to the lack of communications and the fact that the explosion caused the engine order telegraph to go out of commission, the OOD was unable to stop the engines. At 0008 the Commanding Officer instructed the Navigator to deliver the following message to Radio I: "We have been hit by two torpedoes, Latitude _____ N, Longitude _____ E, we are sinking rapidly and need immediate assistance." It is now known this message did not get out due to loss of power. Radio II transmitted an S.O.S. call on 500 K.C. which also apparently failed to get out due to antenna grounds. There was no electric power in the forward half of the ship.

3. All attempts to fight fire were unsuccessful due to loss of pressure on the fire main which is believed to have been caused by a ruptured fire main. By 0010, the list had increased to approximately 12° and at this time the Damage Control Officer reported to the Commanding Officer that the damage was serious. The Damage Control Officer was then directed to investigate the damage more thoroughly and to keep the Commanding Officer informed.

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Survivor Group
Naval Base Hospital #18, Navy 926
26 August 1945

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

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At approximately 0015 the Executive Officer reported to the Commanding Officer that the damage was extremely serious, the ship was going down rapidly by the head, and recommended that the ship be abandoned. The Commanding Officer immediately gave the order to abandon ship, this order was passed orally. The ship took a decided starboard list to about 30°, about a minute later another decided list to about 65° continuing to 90° where she remained about two minutes then plunged down by the head rolling completely over as she sank out of sight.

4. There was a 10 knot wind from the south west and a slight swell from the West. The current set south west, drift a little under one knot. The sky was cloudy with intermittent moonlight. It is estimated that 700 men got off the ship, and it is believed that about 60 of these men drowned the first few hours that they were in the water. The remainder of the men formed into the 7 following groups: (practically all men had either Kapok lifejackets or pneumatic life belts).

- 150 on 4 floater nets with no food or water.
 - 150 on 2 floater nets and 3 rafts with 9 standard ration cans and 2-3 gallon water breakers.
 - 300 without benefit of rafts, food, or water.
 - 50 without benefit of rafts, food, or water.
 - 19 on 4 rafts with food and water.
 - 10 on 4 rafts and 1 floater net, with 1-3 gallon water breaker, 1 can rations, and 1 box cigarettes.
 - 2 men on one floater net, no rations.
 - 1 man on 1 raft, 1 can ration, no water.
- These groups were not visible to one another.

5. During the following 4 days approximately 8 aircraft were sighted. All attempts to attract attention by use of flares, reflecting mirrors, one green marker dye, and yellow cloth were futile. Many men died from one or more of the following causes:

1. Injuries received aboard ship.
2. Dehydration and exhaustion
3. Drinking of salt water.
4. Miscellaneous-Sharks, drowning and pneumonia.

At about 1130, 2 August the southern group of survivors were sighted by a navy Ventura search plane. At 1230 other navy planes began arriving in the area to search and aid in rescue operations. One whaleboat and several rubber life rafts were dropped.

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The following rescue ships arrived on the scene at approximately 0030,
3 August:

U.S.S. REGISTER (APD-92)
U.S.S. BASSETT (APD-73)
U.S.S. RINGNESS (APD-100)
U.S.S. CECIL DOYLE (DE-368)

These four ships commenced rescue operations immediately. By noon 3 August,
all survivors had been picked up. 149 were taken to Fleet Hospital #114,
Samar by BASSETT. 169 were taken to Base Hospital #20 Peleliu Island,
Palau Group by CECIL DOYLE, RINGNESS and REGISTER.

6. The treatment given the survivors aboard the aforementioned
ships was excellent and in keeping with the highest traditions of the
naval service.

Part II

Preliminaries

1. Although the explosions were believed to have been caused
by two torpedoes fired by an enemy submarine, no submarine was seen and
no torpedo wakes were observed. Nothing was on the radar scope.

Part III

Chronological Order of Events

0005 Ship struck by one torpedo starboard side.
0005* Ship struck by second torpedo frame 50 starboard side.
0008 Contact report sent to Radio I. (This did not get out due to power
failure).
0009 S.O.S. Sent by Radio II. (This did not get out due to antenna being
grounded).
0013 "Abandon Ship".
0020 Ship Sank.

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Part IV

Ordnance

No comments.

Part V

Damage

1. Ship sank.
2. Summary of damage.
 - (a) Torpedo hit in the vicinity of frame 7, starboard side.
 - (b) Torpedo hit in the vicinity of frame 50, starboard side.
 - (c) Forecastle deck ruptured athwartships in the vicinity of frame 50.
 - (d) Communications deck ruptured athwartships at forward stack.
 - (e) Fire throughout forward half of ship.
 - (f) Immediate flooding by water and fuel oil of second deck from bow to frame #78.
 - (g) Bow broken and bent to starboard at approximately frame #9.
3. Damage control.
 - (a) All communications were lost.
 - (b) Central station destroyed.
 - (c) Patrol I abandoned due to loss of communications.
 - (d) Repair II abandoned due to fires, smoke, and fumes.
 - (e) Fire fighting and damage control measures were attempted by Repair III, General Quarters Damage Control Personnel, and volunteers surrounding the entire damaged area. Cessation of these measures was necessitated by rapid flooding and burning oil.
 - (f) All pressure was lost on the fire main.

Part VI

Special Comments

Communications:

- (a) Receiving apparatus destroyed in Radio I.
- (b) Power lost in Radio I.
- (c) Radio II transmitted messages keyed by Radio I.
- (d) Fire crept into Radio I from above at 0010 causing abandonment.
- (e) Radio II abandoned at about 0017.

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Navigation:

Steering control was lost immediately.

Engineering:

- (a) Circuit breakers on forward distribution board tripped out.
- (b) Steam pressure was lost immediately in the forward engine room, causing No. 1 and No. 4 main engines and all auxiliaries forward to stop.
- (c) Forward engine room abandoned at about 0010.
- (d) Immediately after the explosion vacuum was lost on No. 3 engine but 25 inches of vacuum was maintained on #2 main engine. 160 r.p.m. was made.
- (e) No. 2 fire and flushing pump was running at maximum speed maintaining a fire main pressure of 10 lbs in the after engine room.
- (f) No. 3 & No. 4 main generators continued to run.
- (g) No. 4 fireroom continued to supply after engine room with full steam pressure (300 lbs).

Medical:

- (a) The explosion caused a large number of casualties, exact number not known. The majority seen before the ship sank suffered from severe flash burn and fractured extremities. Very few of these survived the period of immersion. First aid treatment was being given up to the time the ship sank.

Part VII

Personnel Performance and Casualties

No comments. Submitted in separate correspondence.

Part VIII

Lessons Learned, Conclusions, and Recommendations

- 1. Recommend following:
 - (a) Hydrostatic releasing device for all life rafts and floater nets.
 - (b) Abolishment of pneumatic life belts.

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R. S. NO 12701
9 01733
REG. SHEET NO 110

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- (c) Abolishment of horsecollar type Kapok jacket.
- (d) Provide pocket in Kapok jackets containing sun hood and 11 oz. sealed can of water.
- (e) Replacement of wooden water breakers with 11 oz. sealed cans of water.
- (f) Men expend minimum amount of energy in water. Men should stay in groups even though no rafts are available.
- (g) Smoke pots for use in daytime.
- (h) Leave cardboard separators out of very flare containers and use space gained for more flares. Parachute flares replace present type so time of burning will be prolonged.
- (i) Several reflecting mirrors be furnished to each raft.
- (j) All rafts be equipped with radar reflectors.
- (k) All life rafts be "flat top" and "flat bottom" type because of discomfort in sitting on round type.

2. Again it has been demonstrated that a ship with such a small GM cannot survive underwater damage even though over sixty percent of the ship remains undamaged. List cannot be controlled fast enough to prevent her capsizing.

Chas. B. McVay 3.
CHAS. B. McVAY, III.

12 SEP 1945

1st Endorsement.

cc: CominCh (Advance copy)
CinCPac (3 advance copies)
ComCruPac
ComCru Division FOUR

From: CinCPac
To: CominCh

1. Forwarded.

2. If comment is considered appropriate, it will be included in CinCPac's Monthly Report of Operations in the Pacific Ocean Areas for the month concerned.

G. E. FRANK
By direction