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Narrative by: Lieutenant John J. Griffin, Jr., USNR
USS EMMONS, DMS22, lost at Okinawa.

Lieutenant Griffin was the senior surviving officer aboard the DMS EMMONS when the captain was blown overboard as five Jap suicide planes fatally hit the ship off Okinawa on 6 April 1945. The captain was rescued and is expected to come to Washington when he recovers. Lieutenant Griffin tells of his own "miraculous" escape and the escape of several others. He also cites several instances of heroism.

Film No. 383
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Narrative by: Lieutenant John J. Griffin, Jr., USNR
USS EMMONS, DMS22, lost at Okinawa.

Lieutenant Griffin:

The following narrative is being submitted by Lieutenant John J. Griffin, Jr., USNR, Gunnery Officer aboard the USS EMMONS, DMS22.

This report is being given in the absence of commanding officer, Lieutenant Commander Eugene Foss, II, who at the present time is a casualty now in the United States Naval Hospital, Honolulu. I'm merely concerning my remarks today with the action on April 6. Lieutenant Commander Foss originally placed this ship in commission at the Bath Iron Works on December 5th, 1941 and stayed with it up until the time the ship was sunk off Ie Shima. His amplifying remarks regarding the history of the EMMONS probably can be told with much more accuracy and in a better manner than I, since my reporting to duty aboard the EMMONS was on May 3, 1943.

With regard to the action on April 6th, (1945) this vessel was in company with the USS RODMAN, DMS21, which at that time was the senior ship under the command of Commander Kervin. We were engaging in supporting operations of Sweep Unit 11 in the northern Okinawa area George 3 just east of Ie Shima in the Ryukyu Islands.

About 1515, local time, combat information center informed all stations over the circuits that two enemy aircraft had been reported by the USS MACOMB, DMS23. The MACOMB at the time was operating in an adjacent vicinity. I, at the time, was in the main battery director, checked the indicator bearing and saw two enemy planes making a dive bombing attack on our sister ship the RODMAN. All guns were brought to bear but it was too late since the RODMAN had already suffered a suicide hit on her forecastle and immediately broke out into flames.

The second plane attacked, dropped a bomb, veered off in a dive and headed astern. We immediately took that plane under fire but as the range continued to open and a solution was not obtainable, we did not produce any effective results. However, the plane disappeared over the horizon.

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With the RODMAN in flames and the intensity of the flames growing, preparations were made to go alongside and give whatever assistance could possibly be rendered. Fire hoses were broken out on deck and Captain Foss signalled the RODMAN as to what they desired to be done. Their fire parties and repair parties were able to get the flames under relative control so it was unnecessary for us to go alongside the ill-fated ship.

CAP DID FINE JOB

At this time numerous bogies were reported in the area and the combat air patrol planes, which were giving support at the time, did a splendid job of engaging these enemy craft in dog fights. I am safe in saying that at least 50 enemy planes were knocked down by the splendid, courageous and brave flying of the planes that were carrier-based. It was quite a treat to see the fearless manner in which these aviators conducted themselves during this afternoon turkey shoot. However, it appeared that the enemy planes did not choose to engage the pilots, that is, the Navy pilots. They were more intent to concentrate on accomplishing their mission and crashing the vessels that were in the immediate vicinity.

While we were supporting the RODMAN many attacks were directed against us. Tonys, Vals and Zekes were identified as predominant. We definitely shot down six planes before we suffered the first of five suicide hits. Also we had close misses, approximately four, which were so close to the skin of the ship that they did not cause fatal damage but severed the seams in the bulkheads.

The first hit which we took was on the fantail. I don't know the size of bomb carried by this plane, but the minesweeping gear was blown up over number two stack and everything aft of frame 175 was completely missing. The explosion was terrific and all personnel in that area are either dead, missing in action, or severe casualties.

The second was on the starboard side of the pilot house, which caused a terrific explosion and fire. I believe it was on this hit that Captain Foss was blown clear, (as he was on the wing of the bridge), blown clear into the water where he was later picked up by a life raft and then in turn transferred to an AM, minesweep, in that area.

The third hit came on port side of combat information center. This hit caused terrific damage, and coupled with the fires of the second hit, made the forward area untenable to continue fighting. At the time I was in the director. Every plane that came in strafed. Bullets ricocheted off the director as well as parts of the plane that were exploding upward. Fortunately every man in the director, namely the assistant gunnery officer, pointer, trainer, radarman and sight setter, was able to extract himself and make to the main deck. How this was accomplished I don't know. But it is miraculous that I am alive and able to give this narrative.

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The fourth hit came on the starboard side of number three five-inch gun. Although not as direct a hit as the other three, it caused a hole below the waterline and also small fires. The fifth hit came near the waterline at frame 30 on the starboard bow. This hit was below the waterline, caused considerable damage and flooding in the forward area.

BRIDGE AREA DESTROYED

The entire bridge area was completely destroyed. Fire raged in all spaces from frame 67 forward to gun one and from the main deck up. There was absolutely nothing remaining of the decks from the main deck to the bridge overhead. Several fires were started in the after part of the ship, and they'd break out spasmodically but we were unable to completely extinguish them. The proportions of the fire and the exploding ready boxes made fire fighting extremely difficult, with the handling rooms and ammunition exploding at irregular intervals.

The fire mains were damaged to such an extent that water was unable to be supplied; however, the sprinkling systems in that area were in order and actually did manage to put out fires in the handling rooms. The water pressure couldn't be brought over 60 pounds at any time after the casualty occurred.

The topside fire hoses, which were spread out on deck and stowed on the outside of the bulkheads, were useless because of the many holes and cuts which resulted from the strafing attacks. Long leads had to be taken from the engineering spaces, broken out on deck and with the low pressure it was practically impossible to control the intensity of these fires. Flooding at that time was in progress in the forward and after part of the ship but the surprising thing is that the engineering spaces were not damaged at all. They were intact and, in my estimation, that is the reason why we stayed afloat as long as we did.

At this time I might say that it was late in the evening, probably about 8 o'clock. We were on deck taking care of the wounded the best we possibly could, when a suicide plane came in on the port beam about 25 feet off the water ready to give us the final coup de grace. Out of a clear sky one of the Navy planes swooped down on this enemy craft and executed the greatest deflection shot I ever hope to see, splatting and exploding this plane about 200 yards on our beam. We all thought that we were finished at this point. I breathed a sigh of relief immediately after that, tried to get the number of the plane to find out who this missionary from heaven was and that probably is the answer why we had a few survivors. It was remarkable.

After the second and third hits for some reason or other the word was passed throughout the ship to abandon ship. The origin of this order cannot be determined. I have tried to investigate where the authority emanated from but do date I haven't received any adequate explanation. It would appear to me that, amidst hysteria, some members of the crew passed this word and imme-

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diately everyone started to jump over the side.

I came down from the main battery director. I realized myself as the senior officer. All personnel in CIC were killed. The executive officer's station was in there. The captain was not on board. And I immediately gave orders or rather countermanded orders to abandon ship.

There were several small craft in the vicinity but apparently they did not choose to come alongside the burning hulk and we did the best we possibly could to control these terrific fires and take care of our many casualties.

About six o'clock, 1800, after I'd consulted the chief engineer and the first lieutenant who was on board at the time as to the condition of the spaces below, it was decided that we would have to abandon ship, but we were going to stay on as long as we possibly could. The reasons were that the port main engine was inoperable. There was no means of steering the ship as the rudder had been blown off. We couldn't control fires due to the combination of the intensity and the low pressure on the main. The ship was taking more water and began to settle precipitously at the stern and likewise there was imminent danger of explosion of both magazines and fuel tanks and the entire battery was out with the exception of two 20 mm. guns.

HULK SUNK BY FLAGSHIP

We were finally rescued by the PGM 11 at about 1930. Captain George, the commanding officer, showed marvelous skill in bringing his ship alongside. At that time it was only my intention to transfer the wounded, and after that had been done to have the PGM 11 train its hoses on the forward part in an effort to quench the fires. However, just about that time the upper handling room of gun two exploded, causing a rather large explosion, and then I decided that we could do nothing more than to order all hands to abandon ship. Hose lines, however, were still being directed on the fire. All the engineering spaces were secure. And I'm absolutely certain that all secret and confidential communication publications were destroyed. There was little fear of the ship drifting into enemy beaches because at that time other large craft were coming over the horizon to try to give us assistance.

All during this time while we were in this condition the RODMAN likewise was having her problems, too. She had taken three hits. She had shot down I don't know how many planes but I understand approximately four. She had near misses and her fires were as great an intensity as ours.

While we were on the PGM 11 en route to Kerama Rhetto where we were later transferred to the hospital ship, USS GOSPER, APA 170, higher authority was advised of the possibility of saving the ship. It was reported, however, later on the following day that the hulk was sunk by the USS ELLYSON, DMS 19, our flagship.

While we were on board there were six officers and 57 men who remained

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at their stations to the end and fought desperately to save the EMMONS from destruction. I feel certain that had aid arrived earlier that probably the vessel might have been able to be salvaged.

The wounded were cared for at the scene to the best of the ability of the men aboard and acts of heroism were seen on every side. During this three-hour air battle all the guns fired beautifully and the fire control equipment functioned perfectly. On one occasion two planes were coming in on the starboard hand, the five-inch battery got one and the 40 mm. got the other simultaneously. It certainly was a grand exhibition of gunnery.

GOT PLANE WITH COMMON PROJECTILE

I might add at this time that the action which took place earlier in the morning when we were attacked by aircraft, although we made no hits, ammunition was expended which probably could have been used in this afternoon's engagement. Gun three in one particular instance ran so low of ammunition that she was forced to fire starshells and common projectiles. While in local control the gun captain shot down one Jap plane using a common projectile which is something out of the ordinary. Probably was more luck than skill.

We only had sufficient ammunition for one more attack remaining when everything went out of condition. Probably the fact that we did not have ammunition in our magazines and handling rooms was a blessing in disguise as I am quite certain that we would have exploded the magazines and the ship would have gone up much sooner than it did.

While we were aboard one of the main worries was the condition of the fuel tanks and whether they would be able to still keep their fuel integrity. It so happened that the fuel tanks were in the following conditions: A 2 was empty, A 3 and 4 were in ballast, A 5, 6 and 7 filled to about 95%, C 2 and C 402 filled 95% with diesel oil, C 3 and 4 ballast, C 7 and 8 filled 80%, C 9 and C 10 empty, C 401 filled to about 95% and C 9 and C 10 were about to be ballast when general orders was sounded. Why these spaces were not ruptured I don't know.

With regard to any further amplifying comments regarding the action I believe that Lieutenant Commander Foss, upon his return to active duty, can furnish other incidents that happened prior to his being forcibly ejected from the bridge. Also he can give a more learned and accurate, detail report regarding the history of the EMMONS in such actions as Normandy, Cherbourg, Southern France and submarine hunts in through the waters of the Mediterranean.

Lieutenant Porter:

Lieutenant Griffin, would you mind enlarging on the situation in the fighter director when you succeeded in getting out?

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Lieutenant Griffin:

During the attack I was in control outside the hatch and as the planes

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came in the strafing bullets were ricocheting off the director. At the time of the second hit flames enveloped the entire bridge area as well as the flying bridge. However, I still had communication with the guns, immediately told them to throw their battery in the local control and the gun captain to take over. It was immediately after I had issued my last order when the third plane came in and hit on the opposite side. At this point the flames grew greater in intensity and it was easily recognizable that we could no longer stay in the director. We had no communication. All guns were not functioning in automatic and I issued the order to abandon the director.

I, for one, grabbed ahold of the radar antenna and jumped down to the flying bridge. As I arrived there the deck plates were hot. Ensign Elliott was there who at that time probably performed the greatest feat of bravery aboard. He threw himself before five enlisted men, took machine gun bullets in his back, parts of the plane in his body, later died in my arms.

From that point I went down the ladder aft of the flag bags, made the main deck and from there on we started doing the best we possibly could do fight the fires and take care of the wounded.

Other men in the director, namely Lieutenant Merrill, Seaman Young, Gunner's Mate Leistman, Radarman Robinson, and Fire Controlman Diehl later reported that they made their way out the same way I did.

Another incident that occurred which probably would be interesting to comment on is the work done by Fire Controlman Hudson and Boatswain's Mate Flanagan. These two men were responsible for rescuing Lieutenant Williamson and Lieutenant Nelson and 20 enlisted personnel from the area of the wardroom. The wardroom was completely enveloped in flames and smoke. Hudson forced his way up from his battle station which was in plot, up through the provision hatch, into the wardroom passageway, through the upper handling room which was in flames, up through the ladder in gun one, tried to reach the men in the wardroom through the upper handling room of gun two, was beaten back as a result of the intense flames, but due to his determination and bravery tried to force a passage through the chief's quarters.

He gained entrance to the chief's quarters through the hole in the starboard side which was made by the fifth hit. He was unable to accomplish that feat so he retraced his steps, came back, put the fires out in gun one, went down the ladder and finally got word to these men who were trapped to come up through the ladder in gun one. It was a remarkable feat of bravery and recommendations have been made for Boatswain's Mate Flanagan and Fire Controlman Hudson.

The muster of crew showed there to be 121 survivors, 65 wounded in action, 34 missing in action, and 16 killed in action. The personnel who have been listed as missing in action have been changed to the status of killed in action. Amongst the officers there are six survivors, six wounded, six missing and one

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killed. The officers listed as missing in action have been changed to the status of deceased.

Various members of the crew reported to me that while they were in the water and in whaleboats that enemy planes strafed them. I tried to make an investigation of this point but as far as I am concerned there is little credence for such a report.

Captain Wright:

Griffin, were there any cases of privation during loading or ammunition firing or anything like that.

Lieutenant Griffin:

Captain, with regard to the battery itself probably the most interesting and outstanding thing reported to me was the fact that when we were so low in ammunition that we were firing starshells and common projectiles, that in many instances loading crews were actually loading and firing special ammunition with the plastic nose on fire and cartridge cases with the cork on fire. Some of these loaders and powdermen kept on loading and firing ammunition in this condition causing burns to their hands and arms. It was quite a tribute to the ship to see that boys know what to do under conditions such as that. It proved that the long drills and exercises that we have had were of some definite benefit.

Captain Wright:

Griffin, as a result of this experience what recommendations do you have that might be helpful in further conduct of the war?

Lieutenant Griffin:

The thing that struck me and a recommendation which I would like to offer at this time is the fact that first aid, instead of being made an electoral subject amongst officers and crew, should be made compulsory. By that I mean that a man should be able to know how to take care of advanced casualties such as dismemberments and serious burns. Medical instruction in the past had been given by the doctor and many classes were held but it so happened that when the time came to administer to a casualty that many did not know what to do. As a result of that I feel that all men should be made to take a course of instruction and pass an examination to help the other individual when it comes to a situation of aiding the wounded.

Lieutenant Porter:

Lieutenant Griffin, I understand that your name is spelled G-R-I-F-F-I-N. Will you kindly spell the name of Ensign Elliott and the other men that you mentioned.

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Lieutenant Griffin:

The spelling of the names of the men who were in the main battery director are as follows: Young, Y-O-U-N-G; Leistman, L-E-I-S-T-M-A-N; Robinson, R-O-B-I-N-S-O-N; Diehl, D-I-E-H-L; Merrill, M-E-R-R-I-L-L. The two men who acted so bravely in rescuing the two officers and twenty enlisted men are Flanagan, F-L-A-N-A-G-A-N; and Hudson, H-U-D-S-O-N. The officer who was killed as a result of strafing is Elliott, E-L-L-I-O-T-T.

-- END --

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ROUGH DRAFT

Narrative by: John J. Lt./Griffin, Jr., USNR
USS EMMONS, DMS22
Lost at Okinawa

Recorded: May 24, 1945
File No. 383
Rough Transcript: Arienta, Y 2/c
May 25, 1945

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Lt. Griffin:

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The following narrative is being submitted by Lt. John J. Griffin, Jr., USNR, Gunnery Officer aboard the USS EMMONS, DMS22. This report is being given in the absence of commanding officer, Lt.Comdr. Eugene Foss, II, who at the present time is a casualty now in the United States Naval Hospital, Honolulu. I'm merely concerning my remarks today with the action on April 6. Lt. Comdr. Foss originally placed this ship in commission at the Bath Iron Works on December 5th, 1941 and stayed with it up until the time the ship was sunk off Ie Shima. His amplifying remarks regarding the history of the EMMONS probably can be told with much more accuracy and in a better manner than I, since my reporting to duty aboard the EMMONS was on May 3, 1943.

With regard to the action on April 6th (1945), this vessel was in company with the USS RODMAN, DMS21, which at that time was the senior ship under the command of Commander Kervin. We were engaging ~~reporting-operating~~ in supporting operations of Sweep Unit 11 ~~and~~ in the northern Okinawa area George 3 just east of Ie Shima in the Ryukyu Islands. About 1515, local time, combat information center informed all stations over the circuits that (2) enemy aircraft had been reported by the USS MACOMB, DMS23. The MACOMB at the time was operating in an adjacent vicinity. I, at the time, was on the main battery director, checked the indicator bearing and saw two enemy planes making a dive bombing attack on our

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All guns were brought to bear

sister ship the RODMAN, but it was too late since the RODMAN had already suffered a suicide hit on her forecastle and immediately broke out into flames. The second plane attacked, dropped a bomb, veered off in a dive and headed astern. We immediately took that plane under fire but as the ~~rain~~ range continued to open and a solution was not obtainable, we did not produce any effective results. However, the plane disappeared over the horizon. With the RODMAN in flames and the intensity of the flames growing, preparations were made to go alongside and give whatever assistance could possibly be rendered. Fire hoses were broken out on deck and Captain Foss signaled the RODMAN as to what they desired to be done. Their fire parties and repair parties were able to get the flames under relative control so it was unnecessary for us to go alongside the ill-fated ship. CAP Did Fine Job At this time numerous bogies were reported in the area and the combat air patrol planes, which were giving support at the time, did a splendid job of engaging these enemy craft in dog fights. I am safe in saying that at least 50 enemy planes were knocked down by the splendid, courageous and brave flying of the planes that were carrier-based. It was quite a treat to see the fearless manner in which these aviators conducted themselves during this afternoon turkey shoot. However, it appeared that the enemy planes did not chose to engage the pilots, that is, the Navy pilots. They were more intent to concentrate on accomplishing their mission

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and crashing the vessels that were in the immediate vicinity. While we were supporting the RODMAN many attacks were directed against us. Tonys, Vals and Zekes were identified as predominant. We definitely shot down (6) planes before we suffered the first of five suicide hits. Also we had close misses, approximately four, which were so close to the skin of the ship that they did not cause fatal damage but severed the seams in the bulkheads. The first hit which we took was on the fantail. I don't know the size of ~~the~~ bomb carried by this plane, but the minesweeping gear was blown up over number two stack and everything aft of frame 175 was completely missing. The explosion was terrific and all personnel in that area are either dead, missing in action, or severe casualties. The second was on the starboard side of the ~~port~~ pilot house, which caused a terrific explosion and fire. I believe it was on this hit that Captain Foss was blown clear (as he was on the wing of the bridge), blown clear into the water where he was later picked up by a life raft and then in turn transferred to an AM, minesweep, in that area. The third hit came on port side of combat information center. This hit caused terrific damage, and coupled with the fires of the second hit, made the forward area untenable to continue fighting. At the time I was in the director. Every plane that came in strafed. Bullets ~~[illegible]~~ ricocheted off the director as well as parts of the plane that were exploding upward. Fortunately every man in the director, namely the assistant

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gunnery officer, pointer, trainer, radarman and ~~sight~~ sight setter, was able to extract ~~themselves~~ himself and make to the main deck. How this was accomplished I don't know. But it is miraculous that I am alive and able to give this narrative.

The fourth hit came on the starboard side of number three five-inch gun. Although not as direct a hit as the other three, it caused a hole below the waterline and also small fires. The fifth hit came near the waterline at frame 30 on the starboard bow. This hit was below the waterline, caused considerable damage and flooding in the forward area. The entire bridge area was completely destroyed. Bridge Area Destroyed Fires raged in all spaces from frame 67 forward to gun one and from the main deck up. There was absolutely nothing remaining of the decks from the main deck to the bridge overhead. Several fires were started in the after part of the ship, and they'd break out spasmodically but we were unable to completely extinguish them. The proportions of the fire and the exploding ready boxes made fire fighting extremely difficult, with the handling rooms and ammunition exploding at irregular intervals. The firemains were damaged to such an extent that water was unable to be supplied, however, the sprinkling systems in that area were in order and actually did manage to put out fires in the handling rooms. The water pressure couldn't be brought over 60 pounds at any time after the casualty occurred.

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The topside fire hoses, which were spread out on deck and stowed on the outside of the bulkheads, were useless because of the many holes and cuts which resulted from the strafing attacks. Long leads had to be taken from the engineering spaces, broken out on deck and with the low pressure it was practically impossible to control the intensity of these fires. Flooding at that time was in progress in the forward and after part of the ship but the surprising thing was that the engineering spaces were not damaged at all. They were in tact and, in my estimation, that is the reason why we stayed afloat as long as we did.

At this time I might say that it was late in the evening, probably about 8 o'clock. We were on deck taking care of the wounded, the best we possibly could, when a suicide plane came in on the port beam about 25 feet off the water ready to give us the final coup de grace. Out of a clear sky one of the Navy planes swooped down on this enemy craft and executed the greatest deflection shot I ever hope to see, splatting and exploding this plane about 200 yards on our beam. We all thought that we were finished at this point. I breathed a sigh of relief immediately after that, tried to get the number of the plane to find out who this missionary from heaven was and that probably is the answer why we had a few survivors. It was remarkable.

After the second and third hits for some reason or other the word was passed throughout the ship to abandon ship . The origin of this order cannot be determined from but to date I

(over)

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I have tried to investigate where the authority emanated

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haven't received any adequate explanation. It would appear to me that, amidst hysteria, ~~that~~ some members of the crew passed this word and immediately everyone started to jump over the side. I came down from the main battery director I realized myself as the senior officer. All personnel in CIC were killed. The ~~erector~~ executive officer's station was in there, the capatin was not on board. And I immediately gave orders or rather countermanded orders to abandon ship. There were several small craft in the vicinity but apparently they did not choose to come alongside the burning ~~hulk~~ hulk and we did the best we possibly could to control these terrific fires and take care of our many casualties. About six o'clock, 1800, after I'd consulted the chief engineer and the first lieutenant who was on aboard at the time as to the condition of the spaces below, it was decided that we would have to abandon ship, ~~that~~ but we were going to stay on as long as we possibly could. The reasons were that the port main engine was inoperable. There was no means of steering the ship, as the rudder had been blown off. We couldn't control fires due to the combination of the intensity and the low pressure on the main. The ship was taking more water and began to settle ~~perseverously~~ precipitously at the stern and likewise there was imminent danger of explosion of both magazines and fule tanks and the entire battery was out with the exception of two 20mm. guns.

Hulk Sunk By Flagship (2)

We were finally rescued by the PGM 11 at about 1930. Captain George, the commanding officer, showed marvelous skill in bringing his ship alongside. At that time it was

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/my intention ~~only~~ to transfer the wounded, And after that had been done to have the PGM 11 train its hoses on the forward part in an effort to quench the fires. However, just about that time the upper handling room of gun ~~11~~ two exploded, causing a rather large explosion, and then I decided that we could do nothing more than to order all hands to abandon ship. Hose lines, however, were still being directed on the fire. All the engineering spaces were secure. And I'm absolutely certain that all secret and confidential communication publications were destroyed. There was little fear of the ship drifting into enemy beaches because at that time other larger craft were coming over the horizon to/give us assistance. All during this time while we were in this condition the ~~ROBBIN~~ RODMAN likewise was having her problems, too. She had taken three hits. She had shot down I don't know how many planes but I understand approximately four. She had near misses and her fires were as great an intensity as ours.

While we were on the PGM 11 enroute to Kerama Rhetto where we were later transferred to the hospital ship, USS GOSPER, APA 170, higher authority was advised of the possibility of saving the ship. It was reported, however, later on the following day that the hulk was sunk by the USS ELLYSON, DMS 19, our flag ship.

While we were on board there were 6 officers and 57 men who remained at their stations to the end and fought desperately to save the EMMONS from destruction. I

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The wounded were cared for at the scene to the best of the ability of the men aboard and acts of heroism were seen on every side. During this three hour air battle all the guns fired beautifully and the fire control equipment functioned perfectly. On one occasion two planes were coming in on the starboard hand, the five-inch battery got one and the 40mms. got the other simultaneously. It certainly was a grand exhibition of gunnery. Got Plane With Common Projectile

I might add at this time that the action which took place earlier in the morning when we were attacked by aircraft, although we made no hits, ammunition was expended which probably could have been used in this afternoon's engagement. Gun three in one particular instance ran so low of ammunition that she was forced to fire starshells and common projectiles. While in local control the gun captain shot down one Jap plane using a common projectile which is something out of the ordinary. Probably was more luck than skill.

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we would have exploded the magazines and the ship would have gone up much sooner than it did.

While we were aboard one of the main worries was the condition of the fuel tanks and whether they would be able to still keep their fuel integrity. It so happened that the fuel tanks were in the following conditions: A 2 was empty, A 3 and 4 ~~was~~ were in ballast, A 5, 6, and 7 filled to about 95%, C 2 and C 402 filled 95% with diesel oil, C 3 and 4 ballast, C 7 and 8 filled 80%, C 9 and C 10 empty, C 401 filled to about 95% and C 9 and C 10 were about to be ballast when general quarters was sounded. Why these spaces ~~were~~ not ruptured I don't know.

With regard to any further amplifying comments regarding the action I believe that Lt. Comdr. Foss, upon his return to active duty, can furnish other incidents that happened prior to his being forcibly ejected from the bridge. Also he can give a more learned and accurate detail report regarding the history of the EMMONS in such actions as Normandy, Cherbourg, Southern France and submarine hunts in through the waters of the Mediterranean.

Lt. Porter:

Lt. Griffin, would you mind enlarging on the situation in the fighter director when you succeeded in getting out?

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Lt. Griffin:

During the ~~se~~ attack I was in control outside the hatch and as the planes came in the strafing bullets were ricocheting off the director. At the time of the second hit flames enveloped the entire bridge area as well as the flying bridge. However, I still had communication with the guns, immeditely told them to ~~stow~~ throw their battery in the local control and the gun captain to take over. It was immediately after I had issued my last order when the third plane came in and hit on the opposite side. At this point the flames grew greater in intensity and it was easily recognizable that we could no longer stay in the director. We had no communication. All guns were not functioning in automatic and I issued the order to abandon the director. I, for one, grabbed a hold of the radar antenna and jumped down to the flying bridge. As I arrived there the deck plates were hot. Ensign Elliott was there who at that time probably performed the greatest feat of bravery aboard. He threw himself before five enlisted men, took machine gun bullets in his back, parts of the plane in his body, later died in my arms. From that point I went down the ladder aft of the flag bags made the main deck and from there on we started doing the best we possibly could to fight the fires and ~~took~~ take care of the wounded. Other men in the director namely Lt. Merrill, Seaman Young, Gunner's Mate ~~Leason~~ Leistman, Radarman Robinson, and ~~Mar~~ Firecontrolman ~~Diehl~~ Diehl later reported that they made their way out the same way

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I did.

Another incident that occurred which probably would be interesting to comment on is the work done by Firecontrolman Hudson and Boatswain's Mate Flanagan. These two men were responsible for rescuing Lt. Williamson and Lt. Nelson and 20 enlisted personnel from the area of the wardroom. The wardroom was in ~~complete~~ completely enveloped in flames and smoke. Hudson forced his way up from his battle station which was in plot, up through the provision hatch, into the wardroom passageway, through the upper handling room which was in flames, up through the ladder in gun one, tried to reach the men in the wardroom through the upper handling room of gun two, was beaten back as a result of the intense flames, but due to his determination and bravery tried to force a passage through the chief's quarters. He gained entrance to the chief's quarters through the hole in the starboard side which was made by the fifth hit. He was unable to accomplish that feat so he retraced his steps , came back, put the fires out in gun one, went down the ladder and finally got word to these men who were trapped to come up through the ladder in gun one. It was a remarkable feat of bravery and recommendations have been made for Boatswain's Mate Flanagan and Firecontrolman Hudson.

The muster of crew showed there to be 121 survivors, 65 wounded in action, 34 missing in action, and 16 killed in action. The personnel who have been listed as

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missing in action have been changed to the status of killed in action. Amongst the officers there are six survivors, six wounded, six missing and one killed. The officers listed as missing in action have been changed to the status of deceased.

Various members of the crew reported to me that while they were in the water and in whaleboats that enemy planes strafed them. I tried to make an investigation of this point but as far as I am concerned there is little credence for such a report.

Captain Wright:

Griffin, were there any cases of privation during loading or ammunition firing or anything like that?

Lt. Griffin:

Captain, with regard to the battery itself probably the most interesting and outstanding thing reported to me was the fact that when we were so low in ammunition that we were firing starshells and common projectiles, that in many instances loading crews were actually loading and firing special ammunition with the plastic nose on fire and cartridge cases with the cork on fire. Some of these loaders and powdermen kept on loading and firing ammunition in this condition causing burns to their hands and arms. It was quite a tribute to the ship to see that boys know what to do under conditions such as that . It proved that the long drills and exercises that we have had were of some

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definite benefit.

Captain Wright:

Griffin,

As a result of this experience what recommendations do you have that might be helpful in further conduct of the war?

Lt. Griffin:

The thing that struck me and a recommendation which I would like to offer at this time is the fact that first aid, instead of being made an electoral subject amongst officers and crew, should be made compulsory. By that I mean that a man should be able to know how to take care of advanced casualties such as dismemberments and serious burns. Medical instruction in the past had been given by the doctor and many classes were held but it so happened that when the time came to administer to a casualty that many did not know what to do. As a result of that I feel that all men should be made to take a course of instruction and pass an examination to help the other individual when it comes to a situation of aiding the wounded.

Lt. Porter:

Lt. Griffin, I understand that your name is spelled G-R-I-F-F-I-N. Will you kindly spell the name of Ensign Elliott and the other men that you mentioned.

Lt. Griffin:

The spelling of the names of the men who were in the main battery director

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are as follows: Young, Y-O-U-N-G; ~~Leasman~~ Leistman, L-E-I-S-T-M-A-N; Robinson, R-O-B-I-N-S-O-N; Diehl, D-I-E-H-L; Merrill, M-E-R-R-I-L-L. The two men who acted so bravely in rescuing the two officers and twenty enlisted men are Flanagan, F-L-A-N-A-G-A-N; and Hudson, H-U-D-S-O-N. The officer who was killed as a result of strafing is Elliott, E-L-L-I-O-T-T.

End