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NAVY DEPARTMENT
OFFICE OF THE CHIEF OF NAVAL OPERATIONS
WASHINGTON 25 D C

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19 Mar 45

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MEMORANDUM FOR FILE
ALL TIMES GCT

SUBJECT: Summary of Statements by Survivors of the MS BLENHEIM, U.S. Freighter, 5097 G.T., owned by War Shipping Administration, operated by Waterman Steamship Agency, Ltd.

1. The BLENHEIM was damaged by a German V-2 bomb at about 1516 GCT, 8 Jan 45, while at discharging pier 123, Antwerp, Belgium. Vessel did not sink but returned to the United Kingdom under her own power. Vessel is being repaired and will be returned to operations.

2. Ship was made fast alongside the pier, and day was overcast.

3. At about 1516 a V-2 bomb struck on the quay approximately 50' from the ship directly opposite the midship section on the starboard side. The concussion was terrific and extensive and caused all portholes to be blown inboard regardless of whether they were on the starboard or portside. Every bulkhead in the cabins and forecastles was broken or cracked. Two thirds of the dishes were broken. Water-pipes broke in many places, washbasins and radiators were ripped off of bulkheads.

Armed Guard quarters on the boat deck were a complete wreck, every bunk was ripped away from the bulkheads, clothes and miscellaneous articles were thrown about the room. Boat deck was a complete mass of wreckage. Three of the four lifeboats were damaged beyond repair. Every cabin in the starboard side and others on the port side were made unliveable. Outside and inside doors were blown off or damaged. Flying bridge was swept clean and wheelhouse and bridge was severely damaged. Radio equipment was destroyed. A deep crater was made where the V-2 hit and much sand and debris was scattered around. No information available regarding disposition of confidential codes.

4. The injured persons aboard the ship were taken ashore and hospitalized. Six merchant crew injured, 5 of them hospitalized; five Armed Guard injured, 2 hospitalized. Entire complement on board survived. At least 18 civilian dock workers were killed and many injured as well as several U.S. Army personnel injured and killed. About 10 or 12 freight cars, some loaded with Army gear, were destroyed.

5. No description of the V-2 bomb was secured. The Armed Guard Officer commented that this type of bomb does not make any sound in flight and cannot be seen.

BARBARA CONARD
Lt. (JG) USNR

Pl. Invt. file of BLENHEIM (2) X Survivors (12) X Navy Compt (12) JAW

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